

# SWP

# discussion bulletin

Published by the  
**SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

116 UNIVERSITY PLACE  
NEW YORK 3, NEW YORK.

Vol. 20, No. 2

January, 1959

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THE NEW YORK ELECTION CAMPAIGN  
AND THE LIQUIDATIONIST POLICY OF THE SWP MAJORITY

By Gross

The majority's policy of uncritical support to the ISP slate in the 1958 New York State elections was unprincipled and liquidationist in character. But this is only the visible and more obvious aspect of a fundamental watering down of Trotskyism, and an attempted transformation of the proletarian revolutionary party into a party of petty bourgeois radicalism.

The question before the party today is not merely how to evaluate the 1958 election campaign, but the larger question: does the majority want to retain the party program, or does it, like Bartell and Clark in 1953, want to "junk the old Trotskyism"? Flexible tactics require all sorts of adjustments and modifications in emphasis. They require working with all kinds of people, some even considerably to the right of the ISP people. But whatever the tactical considerations may be, whatever real opportunities may arise for fruitful work of some special kind, there must be clarity and agreement on the basic program itself.

We propose to show here that the majority leaders' conduct of the New York campaign was part of a more general petty bourgeois orientation and a basic rejection of the proletarian line. We propose to show that the majority leaders are altering, and in effect have already altered our basic program.

In the New York Local, the majority leaders now consider it disruptive and indeed almost anti-party to suggest that some young comrades should go into industry and try to lead the workers. This attitude would be incomprehensible, if we did not understand that the present orientation to the petty bourgeois radicals is an organic one. That is, the approach to these elements is not an attempt to win them to the proletarian line of revolutionary Trotskyism; it is an attempt to accommodate Trotskyism to the line of petty bourgeois radicalism.

To test the truth of this statement, let us turn first to the very beginning of the ISP campaign: the first proposal for it in the Political Committee, December 20, 1957.

At that time, Comrade Dobbs proposed that the question of "co-existence" be set aside for the purposes of the campaign. We objected to this, explaining that this would be a joint propaganda campaign with people whose biggest difference with us was precisely on the questions of socialism-in-one-country, world revolution, and the peaceful co-existence of the Soviet Union with U.S. capitalism, that is the peaceful coexistence of the workers with the bosses. These questions are all linked together and they concern the essence of Trotskyism. Both the success of the American socialist revolution, and even the defense of the Soviet Union (as well as the successful struggle against the Moscow bureaucracy) depend in the final analysis, on our destroying the illusion of "peaceful co-existence" among the advanced workers and radicals. This is a fundamental question.

And the campaign was to be a propaganda campaign, primarily a campaign of ideas, (not of action) in which this question was bound to be raised in some form or other.

The Guardian, which is the chief organ of our electoral allies, propagates the pernicious anti-revolutionary theory of co-existence, thus constantly emasculating the class struggle, week in and week out. We were to say nothing about this, and presumably they were to say nothing -- at least not from the campaign platforms. But even if they said nothing, there would be at the very least a great misunderstanding in the radical movement. Whatever boldness and initiative we showed by joining in an action with people who had formerly refused to talk to us etc., would be dissipated and overwhelmed by the confusion resulting from our not making a clear differentiation on this point. In a campaign propagating ideas on radio and TV, our silence on such fundamental ideas while supporting the campaign of those who opposed us, might easily be interpreted as agreement with our opponent-allies.

Life proved however, that not only was there a silence on our part, and hence a misunderstanding in the radical movement; there was a corresponding volubility on the part of our allies, who took every opportunity to tell their position on co-existence. In this instance, as in many others, it was they, who provided the ideological leadership for the campaign, not we. We supplied the forces, the work, the organization, the "legs." They supplied the candidates --- and the political leadership.

In ordinary affairs, it often happens that the pretended leaders are only "front men" and there is a "power behind the throne." But in this case, it was the political line of the front men that prevailed. The right wing of the coalition led the left.

It was the line of Lamont and McManus which prevailed, --- and not alone in the election campaign, but in the pages of the Militant. In the Militant of August 4, for example, the resolution of the ISP petition workers' rally of July 24 was partially reprinted without editorial comment, in a prominent "box." In addition to saying that the hopes of the world were directed toward a Summit Conference (between Moscow and Washington, -- bureaucrat and capitalist), the quotation stated that there should be a "world settlement" between the Soviet Union and the United States. According to our old program, such a "settlement" can only be a class peace at the expense of the revolutionary movements of the world, including a double-cross of the Communist Party ranks throughout the world.

This resolution was voted for unanimously by the comrades of the SWP who attended the rally in force. Now even if this was done under discipline, and under protest, or under the compulsion of an impossible situation, it would still have been necessary for the education of the comrades, to explain to them what the real meaning of such a resolution is. But nothing was said about the resolution. It was the line of Lamont and McManus which prevailed --- and inside the party.

On August 6, the present author wrote a resolution to the PC protesting this business and demanding a change of line. This resolution was never acted upon. But at the PC meeting of August 18, the majority leaders appeared to be changing their line back to Trotskyism. Comrade Stein gave an extended talk on co-existence at that PC meeting. It was a revolutionary-sounding talk and the minority voted to approve its line. It was significant, however, that several majority comrades abstained from the vote, and some other majority comrades who voted in favor of the line, expressed important reservations in the discussion, one saying flatly that the party should have openly demanded a "Summit Conference" in the Mideast crisis.

However, when Comrade Stein made his report to the New York Local about a month later (it was now nearly two months since the petition workers rally we spoke of, and no comment had been made in the Local), both his tone and content were considerably softened down from his speech at the PC. Moreover, in discussing the subject of co-existence and related subjects for nearly an hour, he did not find time to mention the rally in question, the resolution in question, nor to mention the line of the Guardian (which was being sold in the back of the hall), nor above all, to mention the line of the Militant itself, and its equivocal stand on summit conferences, co-existence and so on.

Furthermore, it was about this time (Sept. 8) that the Militant carried the disgraceful headline and article building up Chiang Kai-shek as the leader of U.S. imperialism's war machine, (instead of its stooge). This fits in quite well with the line of the Guardian, not to mention the New York Post, but not with the line of revolutionary Marxism. Nothing at all was said about this in the New York Local. And only Comrades Gross, Cowley and Wood objected to it in the resident Political Committee.

There can be no other explanation for such conduct than the fact that the majority leaders are themselves watering down their previous positions and do not feel so strongly about them as they once did.

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Meanwhile, Lamont and McManus turned out to be considerably to the right of the patched-up platform that had been agreed upon. Of course Lamont had made it quite clear that he was accepting the nomination so he could propagate his "peace" campaign, knowing in advance that we had promised to say nothing against "co-existence," and his peace position was well known, so one could hardly say he surprised us in this respect. And the petty bourgeois pacifism and petty bourgeois radicalism of both these individuals is after all rather basic to their personalities, and we would hardly expect to reform them in their time of life. We could even welcome the fact that these men show some real courage as against the capitalist reaction, they stand up for the Soviet Union (in their own way), and they sponsor progressive and unpopular causes in the interest of the working class. They can be utilized and supported by proletarian revolutionists, and we should have so utilized them long ago. But the trouble today is that the majority leadership allowed them to

utilize the SWP instead of vice versa. By the end of the campaign, "our" candidates had brazenly supported capitalist Democrats (Lamont, a Republican) and after they had sworn a solemn oath (at least McManus) to abjure the Democrats. When Lamont said "Dulles must go -- and Stassen must take his place," McManus' Guardian quoted the remark innocently -- if not approvingly -- in its lead editorial of Sept. 29.

Now this could be just one of those amusing episodes of petty bourgeois light-mindedness that the revolutionary party frequently has to endure from its middle class allies -- and it could be a subject of innumerable jokes and anecdotes at future party socials and get-to-gethers --- except for one thing: The line of the Militant conciliated with the line of Lamont and McManus. The Militant slapped Lamont so lightly on the wrist in its editorial that it did not even mention the name of Stassen. When the present writer made a motion to the PC that Lamont's action be clearly repudiated, the PC did not take it up for over two weeks, and even then the Secretariat proposed laying the whole matter over to the Plenum.

To make matters worse, Lamont addressed an ISP "workshop" meeting a week after the Stassen remark, and announced that he was now going to say he was for "some liberal Republican" to take Dulles' place, "because Eisenhower, being a Republican, couldn't be expected to appoint a Democrat." He added that "the ideal thing would be to have Walter Lippman" for Secretary of State, -- but this was "too much to hope for."

Comrade Murry Weiss, who attended the same meeting, more or less repeated the line of the Militant editorial, and said that the idea of "Dulles must go" was all right. In fact, it was revolutionary in essence, and reminded him of the stormy demands of the Petrograd workers in 1917, -- but that we (and Lamont) just shouldn't add anything about capitalist replacements, and everything would be all right.

The only way to deal with such astonishing and almost disarming artlessness is to ask the following question: If Ben Davis were to raise the same slogan in the same way as Lamont, would Comrade Weiss have found such a plausible formula to help him out? Comrade Weiss might answer the question by saying that Ben Davis is not coming our way, but that Corliss Lamont is. On the contrary, it is we who are going Corliss Lamont's way. It was the Right which was leading the Left. And in this case, the Left even provided the Right with the most sophisticated rationalization for its own seduction.

When the Guardian's November 3rd editorial statement called on its readers to support capitalist Democrats in "thousands upon thousands of election districts," the Militant said nothing, the New York Local majority leaders said nothing, and the Political Committee said nothing. And yet there are party members who believe that McManus was "coming in our direction." Was it not the duty of the majority leaders to disabuse the membership of this belief, especially since it was they who had encouraged it in the first place? Since the majority leaders said nothing, it is a fair assumption is it not, that they are going in the direction of McManus?

The line of the majority was that the primary progressive aspect of the campaign was the fact that it was waged under a "socialist" label, and was a "break" from capitalist politics. Let us assume that such a label and such a break would alone justify an uncritical support of the campaign, and justify our watering down the line of Trotskyism on the fundamentals. We then have to ask the question: what was the candidates' attitude to the label and the "break," such as it was? When Lamont implied that even the label should be dropped (at the ISP steering committee's election post mortem on Nov. 13) and McManus called for the support of thousands of capitalist Democrats, it is clear that these men were repudiating even that portion of the program that the majority pin-pointed to justify its support. When the SWP leadership says nothing about this, it is clear that the ISP is leading the SWP; the Right is leading the Left.

Such a "socialist" label, and such a "break" -- even such a false and equivocal one, might still provide us with a vehicle for the tactic of critical support, just as the candidacy of Norman Thomas or Ben Davis might do. But just as we would have to explain Thomas' relation to the State Department right in the middle of such "support," we would also have to condemn his support of the Democrats; and just as we would have to condemn Ben Davis' relation to the Moscow bureaucracy right in the middle of such "support," we would have to repudiate his support of the Democrats; and just as we would have to explain McManus' relation to the bourgeoisie, his dependence on bourgeois parliamentarism and capitalist democracy, his opposition to the proletarian revolution in the United States, his utopianism on the Soviet Union etc., we would also have to condemn his open support of the Democrats. Even from the majority's own point of view, that is, the point of view that "independent political action" was the main and key point of the campaign, it would have been necessary for them to expose McManus' support for the Democrats. But they did not do this.

In fact, the New York membership was told at various times that McManus was "moving toward us," Lamont was "making progress" etc. This was a mixture of nonsense and falsehood. On the one hand it was a sign of the majority leaders' ignorance of the real situation and a kind of sheltered innocence about smart "practical" politicians and their ways; on the other hand, it was a sign that the majority leaders were no longer so intransigent about revolutionary Marxism as they had been in their youth.

The majority leaders never once in the New York Local (let alone in the pages of the Militant) called attention to the petty bourgeois political line of the Guardian. And here we are pushing the sale of the Guardian in New York, and on the West Coast, it appears, we are even sponsoring "Guardian Clubs." Under these circumstances a failure to call attention to the petty bourgeois line of the Guardian, at least among our own comrades, is tantamount to endorsing that line or else implying that the differences between it and the line of Trotskyism are not very great. This is liquidationism.

Under some conditions, and if carried out in the proper ways, the Guardian Club activity might be fruitful for revolutionary socialism. But the present activity, like the ISP activity, bears

the stamp of petty bourgeois radicalism, not of proletarian flexibility. And the majority leadership is responsible for this.

The Guardian has made very clear that it conceived the present campaign in the same spirit as the Wallace campaign of 1948. It even ran a series on "Ten years of the Guardian" during the campaign in which it quoted its own remarks on the beginning of the Wallace campaign. (Here the majority leaders missed an opportunity to remind the Guardian that the Progressive Party had been in their opinion a third capitalist party.) The ISP campaign was indistinguishable from the Wallace campaign, except that the latter was more militantly conducted by more workers and student youth and was attacked viciously by the bourgeoisie.

Part of the present minority called for critical support of the Wallace campaign, as all of the present minority called for critical support of the ISP campaign, -- in order to contact and work with radical minded youth and militant workers whatever their illusions about Stalinism, co-existence, socialism-in-one-country etc. and in order to mobilize workers politically against the capitalist parties -- but not in order to give up our own position on these fundamental and crucial questions.

By giving up our revolutionary right to criticise our allies, we gave our allies the ideological leadership of the bloc. But this was not a mere clumsy tactic, not a mere ingenuousness on the part of the majority leadership, but a change in their political line. This is indicated by the stubborn resistance of the majority leaders against any criticism of their approach to the campaign, and their justification of every stage and every aspect of the campaign, and especially by their refusal to hold any kind of educational in New York in the last year on the political character of the Guardian milieu.

### Defense Of The Soviet Union

One healthy result of the whole regroupment campaign is that the majority leaders recalled -- after the lapse of nearly a decade, -- that they were for the defense of the Soviet Union. And they spoke and wrote on this concept more often than in the previous 10 years of the Cold War and the witch hunt. It was a pity that this had to be done under the pressure of the Stalinists and semi-Stalinists of the ISP whom we were attempting to recruit.

It was of course necessary to prove that we were indeed the defenders of the Soviet Union. But as revolutionists, we should explain that we are the real defenders of the Soviet Union, and the Communist Party only pretenders to this title. We should explain that we are for the unconditional defense of the whole Soviet bloc against imperialist attack. This was always Trotsky's formulation and it was infinitely to the left of Stalinism, inextricably bound up with the concept of revolutionary defeatism in the imperialist countries. We have to make this concept more explicit, take the initiative on this away from the Stalinists. At the same time however, we must clearly defend the revolutionary base of the Soviet Union from its oligarchic bureaucracy. It is all right to defend

the Soviet Union in general, against imperialism without always mentioning the bureaucracy; but when we join a propagandistic united front with Stalinists or Stalinized radicals, to defend the Soviet Union, then we must, on pain of succumbing to Stalinism, also make known our position on the bureaucracy.

### The Political Revolution

If the majority leaders rediscovered the defense of the Soviet Union, they began to soft-pedal the proletarian overthrow of the Soviet bureaucracy -- and this proletarian overthrow had been, in their opinion an actual movement actually taking place, which had motivated and brought about the whole regroupment process.

The SWP ad in the Guardian, February 3, 1958, had listed several points for a rough minimum agreement with other radicals on an election campaign. Missing among these points was of course the question of co-existence, for the reasons given earlier. But prominent among them was the question of political revolution. It was phrased badly. And the Stalinists easily made it appear to be a reference to political counter revolution, but nevertheless it was meant to imply the proletarian regeneration of the Soviet Union. This point was completely by-passed and finally dropped in the course of the campaign.

The reason for this was that the majority did not wish to offend the Guardian milieu. This milieu is of course critical of the Soviet leadership, but could not conceive any overthrow of that leadership except one that would aid Dulles and the capitalist class of the United States. The majority leaders unfortunately so express their ideas of political revolution as to indeed give this impression. The truth is that Trotsky's concept of the political revolution was profoundly defensist in character and militantly anti-imperialist. Formulations could easily be found to express this clearly to our allies and to the radical workers in general. For example: we are for the overthrow of the Soviet bureaucracy in order to create a genuine communist leadership in the Soviet bloc. We are for a Soviet leadership that is fundamentally opposed to United States imperialism, and that will conduct the defense of the workers' states in a revolutionary manner, helping to extend the October Revolution throughout the world. If we make it plain that we are more opposed to U.S. imperialism than Khrushchev is, if we do not prove this merely by references to the past, to Spain, Germany, etc., but by the living class struggle and world conflict of today, then whatever our allies' opinion of the validity of our line, they can have no misunderstanding of its motivation, -- nor for that matter can the rank and file CP members either.

To merely raise the question of political revolution in the USSR only from the point of view of restoring democracy, is insufficient. The pro-soviet political revolution must always be regarded as an integral part of the world proletarian revolution. And it cannot be regarded otherwise. The real question is not the restoration of opposition movements in the Soviet Union, but the question of world revolution and above all the American road to socialism, which the Soviet bureaucracy has the greatest interest

in road-blocking. Moreover, in the cold war, anti-Soviet atmosphere of today it is impermissible to raise the question of the political revolution in the Soviet Union without in the same breath calling for the overthrow of capitalism in the United States -- and making it crystal clear that the latter is more important to us than the former. The weakness of the majority leaders derives not merely from their wish to get along with new allies. On the contrary, their concept of political revolution has been weakened and watered down over a number of years. They have dropped Trotsky's proletarian revolutionary anti-Stalinism for a vulgar bourgeois anti-Stalinism.

### Proletarian Anti-Stalinism And Bourgeois Anti-Stalinism

Here it is instructive to review the positions of the Militant in the last year or so concerning the Kremlin, the CP, etc.

The paper opposed the Stalinists on the suppression of Hungary, on the shooting of Nagy, on the treatment of Pasternak, and of course on the undemocratic actions of the Soviet bureaucracy generally.

But it said little or nothing about the Stalinist retreat before DeGaulle, the Kremlin's failure to send substantial military supplies to the Indonesian CP, who it is well known have the numbers to take the power, if they had the weapons. It ignored the policy of CP support to Nehru in India, the disgraceful parliamentary Milwaukee-sidewalk-and-sewer type of socialism the Stalinists are conducting in Kerala. On July 20, 1956, there was supposed to have been a "free election" between North and South Viet Nam -- it is probably the one place in the world where such a "free election" would turn out in favor of the working class and there would have been a working class unification. But the Stalinists let the date go by in silence. And the Militant also.

What is peculiar about these two lists? It is peculiar that the things the Militant criticised the Stalinists for, and the things the Militant did not criticise them for, were the same things the bourgeoisie criticised them for and did not criticise them for. (This is not to say that the things the bourgeoisie criticises are necessarily good for the workers.) It is not Stalinist pressure, basically, that caused the situation in our party; it is bourgeois pressure.

### The Bourgeois Anti-Stalinists, Gates, Fast and Clark

It is necessary to refer here to the majority line of a year ago on the personalities of Gates, Fast and Clark. It appeared to the majority leaders at that time that these people were leading a large movement out of the CP that was essentially leftist in character. At that time, editorials were written in the Militant on the subject, and John Gates was welcomed and approached by the Militant for comradely conversations. Of course there is nothing wrong in principle with having a talk with a right winger. What is wrong is telling the radical movement that you believe the man to be a left-winger. --- The right wing bourgeois organ, the Herald Tribune also had an editorial about Gates when he quit the Communist Party entitled "Welcome to John Gates." Since Gates had announced

that he intended to "rejoin the American people," the Herald Tribune knew that its welcome was sent to the right address and would be well received. But the Militant did not seem to understand anything at all about Gates. And just before our last plenum when we discussed Gates, Fast, Clark etc., this ex-communist, ex-Stalinist and ex-radical, (in that order) John Gates, appeared on TV and crawled in the mud of bourgeois respectability in front of the reactionary Mike Wallace. And there was no comment from the majority leaders or from the Militant.

The minority characterized Gates, Clark and Fast for what they were, bourgeois anti-Stalinists going to the right. The minority was one hundred percent in favor of approaching those who had quit the Communist Party, even if they mistakenly believed Gates to be a left wing, would-be revolutionary. What the minority opposed was the painting up of Gates, Clark and Fast as left wing opponents of the Moscow bureaucracy, when in reality they had already proved amply that they were making their bid to be of service to the liberal bourgeoisie. But the majority leaders did not understand all this, or if they did, would not admit it.

This Gatesite right wing tribe travelled so fast in the direction of the bourgeoisie that they did not pause long enough in the "center," -- that is, the center between Stalinism and the bourgeoisie, -- to form a political group or a "centrist party" as the leaders of the majority had hoped. So life compelled them to drop their conciliation to the Gates group for the simple reason that the Gates group had ceased to exist. But the majority leaders did not thereby drop their own bourgeois anti-Stalinism, and above all they never found time, nor saw the necessity to evaluate their own course toward the Gatesites, or even to make a public evaluation of Gates or the Gatesites.

At first glance the majority leaders' subsequent swing to the Guardian group seems to be a 180 degree turn in the opposite direction. That is, the majority leaders now turned to people who had cut some of their organizational ties with the Kremlin, but were far more enthusiastic peddlers of the general Stalinist line than the Gatesites. True, they were to the left of Gates, insofar as they still wanted to oppose the bourgeoisie and stay in the radical movement. But they had generally close connections with the CP and rightly considered Gates, Fast and Co. as renegades. But the Guardian and the Gatesites have some things very much in common: -- their pacifism, their parliamentarism, their position on co-existence, their belief in socialism- in-one-country, their rejection of Bolshevism (i.e. genuine Bolshevism). These are the bourgeois aspects of Stalinism that the anti-Stalinists and the semi-Stalinists have in common. And it is toward these aspects of Stalinism that the majority leaders have developed a conciliatory attitude over a rather lengthy period. But qualitative changes occur only after a long series of quantitative changes. The full blown conciliationism evinced last summer was the open outcome of a more or less hidden process over the period of the Cold War.

It is also necessary to explain here, why the question of Hungary, which agitated our party so much a couple of years ago,

seems to be no longer with us. Where the Gatesites generally agreed with our majority on Hungary, it appeared that most of the new allies in the Guardian group held the position that Hungary was a counter revolution. The majority leaders formerly thought that Hungary was going to be a watershed in the radical movement, -- with all those who believed it a revolution, regrouping in the direction of the SWP, and that tiny minority who believed it a counter revolution regrouping with the CP, which was going to fold up and die anyway. But things did not work out that way. The majority leaders found themselves approaching the Guardianites and soft-peddling their own Hungary position, and more than that, their position on the political revolution, itself.

And there was a symmetrically opposite development inside the SWP.

While the majority leaders were conciliating with those who held the Stalinist position on counter-revolution-in-Hungary, -- on the question of "peace," on "co-existence," in effect, on "socialism-in-one-country," and above all, on the petty bourgeois, parliamentary road to socialism at home --- the minority became a bloc of comrades inside the SWP who indeed took opposing positions on evaluating the events in Hungary, ( the present writer believing that the events constituted a counter revolution). But these comrades agreed on the principle of, and need for, the proletarian political revolution in the Soviet bloc, agreed on the world revolution, and above all, the socialist revolution in America and the kind of party necessary to achieve it. Moreover this minority bloc also agreed on not conciliating with Stalinists, Gatesites, Guardianites or anybody else on these issues.

### The Question Of Tactics

The majority leaders quite naturally justify their whole line and their liquidation of previous political positions, the watering down of others, and the total obliteration of still others, as tactically motivated, -- that is, as only a temporary expedient that will be corrected later on. Of course there is no "sincerometer" yet invented which can determine how much the majority leaders really intend to do this. But even if there were such a thing, and even if it disclosed that they did in truth intend to change back to Trotskyism later on, the logic of politics is such that they will simply not be able to change later on, nor will they want to change later on, no matter what they think of their own course right now. They themselves will have been changed by the consequences of their own line.

For one thing they are not taking the trouble to educate the membership about the political character of the people with whom they are maneuvering. If this course were uncorrected, the political character of the comrades themselves would change. The political character of the party itself would change.

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Comrade Trotsky laid down the following elementary axioms for those who would engage in maneuvers:

"In a maneuver, one must always proceed from the worst and not the best assumptions with regard to the adversary to whom concessions are made, or the unreliable ally with whom an agreement is concluded. It must be constantly borne in mind that the ally can become an enemy on the morrow..... The import and the limits of a maneuver must always be clearly considered and demarcated. A concession must be called a concession and a retreat a retreat." (Third International After Lenin, pp 138, 139 )

It is all right and sometimes very necessary, to enter, fuse, combine, or unite with other organizations, but only in order to fight for the revolutionary line -- and not at some date in the far distant future, but as a living, continuous policy. Tactics, we must remind our comrades, should always be subordinated to principles. --"It was not flexibility that served (nor should it serve today) as the basic trait of Bolshevism, but rather granite hardness." (Trotsky, same book, p. 141, emphasis in original.)

To do class struggle work with another party that holds a false position on world revolution and has illusions about co-existence etc. is one thing; but to create a party with such false positions, and to build up its leaders to the public and to our own membership, that is quite another.

As a matter of fact, the majority leaders for years resisted any kind of work in the ALP when that organization was a much larger, more dynamic and youthful group than it is today. During the years of the cold war and the witch hunt, there was also the possibility of approaching and working with the ALP people as there is now. These people began diverging with the CP on some issues such as independent political (ballot) action, as early as 1952-53 and in some respects even earlier. Certainly a way could have been found to approach them without giving up one principle of Trotskyism. We could have engaged in many class struggle actions with the ALP'ers and in fact could have initiated some such actions with them, and yet have pounded our own revolutionary political line with them and won some individuals to Trotskyism. The minority was in favor of this tactical approach then, and it is for it now.

And it was not a lack of tactical wisdom that caused the majority leaders to oppose such a tactic in past times. It was not merely "sectarianism" as Bartell and Clark charged. It was fear of the witch hunt. It was fear of being associated with people who were so unpopular and so persecuted, and a feeling that the opportunities for "large" recruitment were but slight. But today, the majority leaders who were apparently so intransigent about "conciliation to Stalinism" when they attacked Bartell, are now approaching the ALP with a vengeance, but not with the program of Trotskyism. Now the witch hunt has let up, somewhat and things are easier. But the opportunities for large recruitment are not what the majority leaders thought they were, so they find themselves going further and further to the right in their political line so as to more easily recruit individuals from this now-shrunken milieu to the Trotskyist party. But in changing their own basic line, they are

making the party itself less Trotskyist. They are becoming recruited to their allies' program, rather than vice versa. This is the political essence, although not the organizational form, of liquidationism.

The majority leaders have tried to convince the ranks that the whole affair is just a question of finding a way to get physically closer to other radicals, and not at all a matter of adapting our principles to theirs. And of course, not one member of the minority would have any objection to finding ways of approaching the radical movement. We are not Stalinophobes, or vulgar bourgeois anti-Stalinists, but revolutionary Bolsheviks who wish to intervene in every kind of radical activity or class struggle actions that we are physically able to do. For example, the present author on August 18, submitted a memo to the PC for critical support to the candidacy of Ben Davis in the New York councilmanic race. Needless to say, this was not done with the intention of building up Ben Davis as a genuine socialist, but with the intention of appealing to the workers over whom Davis has influence, differentiating our program from Davis' in the process, and pounding the daylights out of Stalinism politically. As the memo said in part:

"Critical support also means that we can criticize the CP's basic pacifist and class-collaborationist world political line. We can subject the CP to a withering Trotskyist criticism, while at the same time we can point out that a vote for Davis is a break with the capitalist parties. Ben Davis is an outstanding victim of the class war. We can hail him as such, while at the same time we can prove that he can't conduct the class war while remaining in the Communist Party."

The PC did not see fit to adopt this line, or in fact even to discuss the question. And once again the only conclusion we can make is that the majority leaders are more concerned with organizational opposition to the CP than they are interested in energetically advancing the political line of revolutionary Trotskyism against pacifist, petty bourgeois Stalinism. The fact that Ben Davis was later ruled off the ballot did not eliminate the value of the tactic either. In fact, the rank and file CP members had been convinced by this time that they did not have a friend in the world outside of the CP itself. A forthright support for the candidacy combined with an honest straightforward condemnation of Davis' politics, and an explanation of our own, would have got a hearing from the CP rank and file --- although of course it would have enraged and frustrated Ben Davis himself much more than the whole ISP campaign.

Such an approach of critical support would have been a tactic. It would not have given one inch on principle, and in fact would have been a means for making our principles known to a wider audience. The same basic approach could have been applied to McManus and Co. But this practical difference has to be noted: namely that McManus has less real active followers for us to talk to than Ben Davis has. The biggest ISP meeting (if we can call the Harold Davies meeting an ISP meeting) attracted all of 800 people. But the 39th anniversary meeting of the CP at Carnegie Hall just one week later was attended by 1500. Moreover, the meeting was spirited by

comparison with the Davies meeting and showed relatively high morale, -- especially on the question of the proposed write-in campaign for Davis.

Of course neither the size nor the spirit of meetings is decisive in these affairs. But since the question of "tactics," "flexibility" and "realism" has been raised, it is worth thinking about.

But if we failed to make any positive approach to the Davis campaign, this is not a principled question in and of itself any more than the majority's failure to have intervened in the ALP milieu years ago. If we agree on the basic principles of Bolshevism, we can to an extent overlook what some of us may consider a lost tactical opportunity. Suppose, however, that the majority comrades did make an approach to the Davis campaign, but in the course of it, started to tell the public and even some of our own comrades that some of the Stalinist ideas weren't so bad after all, and weren't really so far removed from our own. This would be conciliationism and a beginning of liquidation of Trotskyism.

This is just what happened with respect to the ISP. Instead of giving critical support, the majority leaders merely stated once or twice that we had some differences, but in general, went along with the most outrageously petty bourgeois Stalinist expressions of humanism, "good will," pacifism, and utopian reformist nonsense. It was just the opposite of critical support. It was uncritical support, and political endorsement in almost every instance. We could have showed how the candidates called themselves socialists and should be supported insofar as the voters could express an opinion for socialism by voting for them. We could have showed that socialism could never be achieved by the parliamentary methods of McManus and Lamont, -- but that the workers could begin mobilizing the forces for the socialist revolution, if only on the basis of a ballot vote at this time. But instead of this, we made it appear that McManus himself was a revolutionary socialist, or the next best thing. We made it appear that the ideas of McManus were ideas calculated to prepare the road to socialism. Furthermore, in the course of the campaign, McManus said and wrote things which were violations of the most elementary principles of socialist electoral practice, e.g. calling himself a "populist," explicitly calling the Guardian "Progressive" rather than socialist, and emphasizing this calling for the support of "thousands of Democrats."

Neither the majority leaders nor the Militant nor the New York leadership ever said one open word against this line of McManus. Thus they helped to disorient and miseducate not only the radical public in general, but our own membership.

### Regroupment vs Bolshevism

Insofar as the word "regroupment" is taken to mean a simple approach to the radical movement, and insofar as it only implies tactical adjustments in order to recruit radicals to the program of Trotskyism, why there can be no argument whatever between Trotskyists over this matter. But the word itself was coined

shortly after the 20th Congress by the Gatesite, right wing Stalinists, and by those who wanted to "unite the left" because they felt that the "small" 17,000 member CP (of 1955) had been too isolated, too sectarian, and especially, too unpopular.

Insofar as this supplied us with an organizational opening to meet hundreds of radicals, it was of course necessary to take it with both hands and make use of it. But at the same time, it was necessary for us to make a clear differentiation between our concept of regroupment (if indeed we had a different one) and the petty bourgeois unity-mongers idea. Their idea was to create a new "American" type party with pacifist and parliamentary illusions, out of the break-up of the CP and the general exhaustion of the old radical movement. Our idea was, or should have been, to get together with those elements who were revolutionary-minded, who were oriented to the class struggle, who were willing to fight imperialism on a national and on a world scale, and who wished to build a vanguard party. Our line should have been to appeal to these elements, to attempt to separate them out of the general melange of radical-liberalism and Stalinism that was coming apart at the seams. Our line should have been to counterpose revolutionary regroupment to the reformist regroupment that was actually beginning to take place. We could have effected this in several ways, including, perhaps, election campaigns, the creation of new organizations, clubs, committees and so on. The question of exactly what tactics to employ would have been an entirely secondary one, and not a matter for serious differences, as is the case at present.

Whatever some of our comrades may mean by regroupment, (and it is indisputable that the great majority of them want to be Bolsheviks) the petty bourgeois mass of "regroupers" two years ago -- most of them are now gone with the wind -- were dead set against Bolshevism. And we never explained this, even to our own membership. True, this group in general were breaking from Stalinism. But it was significant that in their break they were far more concerned with the idea of civil liberties for deposed capitalist elements after the coming American socialist revolution, they were far more concerned with absolute guarantees against the degeneration of the leading party, (rather than the creation of any fighting organization at all), they were far more concerned with the parliamentary road to socialism -- than with any class struggle approach or with any kind of revolutionary perspective at all.

And they said so. In the "speak bitterness" meetings at the Jefferson school all through the summer of 1956, they made this crystal clear. In turning against Stalinism, they made it pretty clear that they were washed up with communism also. Contrariwise, the "orthodox" Stalinists in the CP made an appeal to the ranks on the basis of building a Bolshhevik party, and for the class struggle road to socialism. This was a false appeal, a demagogic appeal. And our majority leaders should have exposed it. Our majority should have proved that our party is the real Bolshevik party, and the Stalinists are fakes. Our majority should have explained the opportunism of the CP. But instead, it explained the "sectarianism" of the CP. (No joking, this is exactly the characterization which Comrade Ring employed on several occasions.)

The trouble was that in fishing in the troubled Stalinist waters, our majority leadership played up to the weaknesses of the Stalinists and ex-Stalinists, rather than their strong points. It played up to their anti-centralism in playing up to their anti-bureaucratism. It played up to their parliamentarism and anti-class struggle feelings ( which were not absolute, and could have been modified by us) in playing up to their anti-bureaucratism. It should have made clear that the SWP is infinitely more in favor of the class struggle road to socialism than Wm.Z. Foster and the CP. It should have made clear that the SWP is for genuine democratic centralism in order to carry out a genuine revolutionary program (not merely for the sake of democracy as such). The centralism of the CP is not in every case an undemocratic centralism. But it is a centralism to carry out a treacherous and non-revolutionary line. We do not offer the ex-CP'ers a haven where things will be physically easier, or the sacrifices will be less. We intend to build a party where there is going to be more centralism, more discipline, more self-sacrifice than in the CP, because we have to do this in order to make the revolution. But our majority leaders could not say these things even by implication, because they were conciliating with a petty bourgeois, anti-revolutionary current. These people in general, wanted a softer party, an easier party, and above all, a bigger party, than the CP.

Naturally, the majority leaders did not consciously understand all this. Certainly they did not consciously understand that a big party simply was not in the cards, and therefore most of these people would disappear. The majority leaders even talked a short time ago about our creating a "centrist party" in order to forestall the more extreme rightists in this group from starting "their own" centrist party. Thus the majority leaders were victims of roughly the same delusions as Mike Bartell had been at an earlier stage of regroupment. But they learned nothing from the experience of Bartell. (Bartell himself, learned nothing from his own experience and the demise of his "Socialist Unity Forum." He jumped from there onto the passing bandwagon of the ISP).

If this appreciation of the majority leadership is too harsh, it can easily be corrected by them. It is only necessary to explain openly to the radical movement, and especially to our own membership, that our intention is the diametrical opposite of the petty bourgeois regroupers. It is only necessary to show that we are the revolutionary regroupers, and although we participate in election campaigns as Lenin taught us to do, we have no parliamentary illusions and are preparing the class struggle road to socialism, and it is the only road.

### Dictatorship of The Proletariat

No one would expect McManus and Lamont to advocate the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and no one should make that a condition for critical support of these politicians. If there was no election where our support was involved, we might even ignore the politics of Lamont and McManus. We might not care much whether they supported the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat or not. But when we were calling upon people to vote for them, and

calling upon our comrades to work so hard for their election, it was doubly necessary for us to say that these men were against the proletarian dictatorship. It was necessary at the very least, to say this to our own comrades. But this was never done. McManus himself said it. But this was covered up.

We are for the abolition of U.S. capitalism and the creation of a workers state in the United States. This is the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Our great teachers explained that many radicals, even bourgeois radicals, recognize the existence of the class struggle, but refuse to prosecute it, and refuse to recognize the final climax of the class struggle in the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is to say the successful revolution itself. Of course Lamont cannot be numbered even among those bourgeois radicals who recognize the class struggle. (He stated to the present writer that he thinks the class struggle is passe.) But we can support the idea of socialism in supporting Lamont, if we make clear that Lamont's leadership in getting socialism is a false leadership, and an inadequate, impossible leadership. As civil libertarians and friends of the party, Lamont and McManus can of course play a progressive role, and in fact are a rarity on the American scene. What makes them bad is not their own characters, but the fact that we put them up as leaders, and consequently help them to belittle our own program.

We can build up the movement for socialism without building up the leadership of Lamont. Likewise, we can support friendship for the Soviet Union in supporting Lamont, if we make it clear that Lamont's idea of "friendship" is government to government, capitalist to bureaucrat, whereas our idea of friendship is workers defense of the Soviet state against imperialism, and irreconcilable opposition to the rule of the bureaucracy.

The minority's criticism of the ISP campaign does not hinge on the politics of Lamont or McManus, however, but on the politics of our own majority. Where do they themselves, the majority leaders, stand on the concept of the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat in America? Do they not show by their softness to McManus and Lamont's attitude that they themselves are not serious about it?

Partially because of the reactionary personal dictatorship of Stalin, Khrushchev etc., but infinitely more because of the bourgeois propaganda, there is a widespread popular opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is necessary to adapt pedagogically to this opposition, but never politically or fundamentally. We are for the revolutionary regeneration of the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet bloc, and the revolutionary establishment of it in the rest of the world, --- especially in the United States. To those who think this idea is to smacking of personal dictatorship, it must be answered that the proletarian dictatorship is not a slogan and does not have to be sloganized. It is a concept, or more correctly a program. It can be a thousand times more democratic for the workers than bourgeois democracy, which is in reality one of the forms of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

But however the program is popularized (workers democracy, soviet democracy, workers government, etc.) it must win cadres to the idea that the workers have to smash the bourgeois state and establish their own. This is the essence of the matter. The greatest historic defeats of the working class in the twentieth century came about precisely because the workers' leadership glossed over, ignored or distorted this cardinal point. As Trotsky put it shortly before his death, "Our whole program for this epoch can be summed up in the four words: dictatorship of the proletariat."

### Bourgeois Pacifism And Stalinist "Co-existence"

Some majority comrades may feel that the purely tactical requirements of the campaign really did compel the party to soft-pedal its line on co-existence, that McManus and Lamont might have quit in the middle of the campaign if we had seriously pushed our own program etc., etc. Leaving aside for the moment whether this is a correct argument for Bolsheviks to use, what about the question of bourgeois pacifism and Otto Nathan?

Otto Nathan is not running for any office. And he has even resigned from the ISP. Yet he has spoken at the SWP forum, the Harold Davies meeting, the Bronx Socialist Forum, and we have been involved in work with him. Why do the majority leaders not criticise his line, which is in such fundamental opposition to Marxism? (Tom Kerry raised a difference with Nathan in the SWP forum, but the subsequent Militant article suppressed this and quoted Nathan's bourgeois pacifism (Feb. 10, 58) without editorial comment.) We believe this is not due merely to a false concept of tactics, but due to the fact that these leading comrades are actually softening their own line on bourgeois pacifism.

We are raising here, not the question of working with Otto Nathan, who is a well meaning and even in some respects, a sort of socialistic man, but the question of what our own line is. Much may be gained from forums and debates with Nathan. And that which may be especially gained is a platform to advance our own ideas as against his. However, if we are weak about our own ideas, unsure of them, inclined to junk some of them in the interest of recruiting more people to less powerful ideas, that is reformist ideas, -- why then it would make sense to treat Nathan as the majority leaders do.

But Otto Nathan only articulates in especially classical and pessimistic form, what has befallen a great number of radicals. And it is our duty to fight his ideology, and especially now. A large section of the radical movement has recently fallen into prostration before the atomic bomb, and now believes that socialism is a distant dream, the class struggle being either too risky or too remote. Victims of this mode of thought are now more numerous than victims of the atomic bomb itself. (Nathan is only an especially pathetic, articulate, and prominent one of the victims.) They preach that socialism must come through peace. But Marxism has always maintained that peace can only come through socialism. This is a diametrically opposite concept, and not merely in its logical symmetry, but in its most profound essence. Those who are opposed to war and violence as such, that is in principle, are in reality

also opposed to the struggle for socialism. They can be recruited to the ranks of the socialist revolution only with the most drastic of revolutions in their own thinking, not to mention their way of life.

The party should of course utilize anti-war demonstrations, anti-bomb parades, etc. to advance the revolutionary line. But the fight against war is first and foremost the fight against the ruling capitalist class, and the destruction of its power to make war. This struggle in itself is a form of war, -- class war. In the course of this class war, it is not impossible that the capitalist class will try to use atomic bombs against its own working class, if such a thing should become practicable from a military point of view. (Remember the Paris Commune) The pacifist cries of disarmament do not succeed in disarming anybody except the revolutionary workers who fall for the pacifist ideology. With the fullest sympathy for the good intentions of the victims of bourgeois pacifism, with the most vigorous defense of their rights and with full credit to their occasional heroism, we must ruthlessly stamp their ideology out of the revolutionary movement.

"Competitive co-existence" is only the Stalinist form of the essentially bourgeois pacifist delusion. And never was it so important for the working class to be cleansed of this delusion as it is today. Yet it is precisely today that we are confronted with the majority leaders' softening on this question. It is one thing to critically support politicians who have this delusion. But it is another thing to remain silent while they energetically spread their delusion over radio, TV and in their press.

The question of "co-existence" recapitulates the whole struggle of Trotskyism against Stalinism, the concept of world revolution as against "national" socialism, and the theory of socialism in one country. The theory of "co-existence" is, on the international arena, the same theory of peaceful transition to socialism as is the most tepid socialist reformism on the national arena.

According to the Marxist view, there can be no peaceful change over from capitalism to socialism, or even to individual workers states. Likewise, there can be no perspective for the peaceful evolution of the Soviet bloc into a classless society under the gun muzzles of world capitalism. The constant threat of war compels the Soviet to spend unheard of proportions of its national production on the military (an even greater proportion than in the United States, by the way). This fact alone, not to mention the outrageous amount of production devoured by the parasitic bureaucracy, is a great preventive brake on the achieving of socialism. Only the revolutionary destruction of imperialism can remove this brake.

On the other hand, the contradictions of imperialism, only temporarily and relatively softened by world prosperity, impel it inevitably toward a solution in war. At some yet-to-be-determined point, imperialism will come face-to-face with the fact that it must try to destroy the Soviet bloc, or be destroyed by its own contradictions. No ruling class in history has been known voluntarily to surrender its privileges. The arrogant Wall Street colossus is not likely to be an exception.

Our task is to prepare the vanguard, and to arm it with the understanding of its revolutionary task against its imperialist enemy. In this connection, we must expose the congenital tendency of the Soviet bureaucracy to make treacherous deals with imperialism at the expense of the world revolution in the vain hope of maintaining "peaceful co-existence." We must show the Soviet bureaucracy as an inconsistent fighter and therefore a treacherous (to the workers) fighter, against imperialism. We must explain that this is because of its privileged position within the Soviet Union, and while we hate inequality and parasitic privileges, our main grievance against the bureaucracy is its cowardice and collaboration with imperialism which flows from its privileged position.

The majority leaders were understandably anxious to convince the new allies that our opposition to the concept of "co-existence" had nothing in common with Dulles' opposition to it. That is to say, we are unalterably opposed to any attack on the Soviet Union, and approach the question from a position diametrically opposite to Dulles. But if this is all presented statically, academically, lifelessly, it only means that we are the same kind of pacifistic opponents of U.S. war as the petty bourgeois Stalinists are, rather than international proletarian revolutionists. And our allies' discovery that we are not so bad after has been in reality due to the fact that our position has moved toward the Stalinist position. This probably began to happen some time ago, before the 20th Congress and not under the pressure of any conciliation to the Kremlin, but in response to the same pressure that made the majority leaders soft on the bourgeois pacifism exemplified by Otto Nathan.

### A Positive Approach

The majority leaders accuse us of "negativism" because we object to their conciliationism with the petty bourgeois line of their allies. But the minority proved capable of jumping into the campaign more positively and more effectively from any practical point of view than did the majority. In Buffalo, the campaign was a real, live, class struggle-type action. The comrades utilized it to intervene in the Jimmy Wilson case, and proved to be a major factor in commuting Wilson's death sentence to life imprisonment. They utilized it to create the Mothers' Alliance to Smash School Segregation. They encouraged the Mothers' Alliance to demand a general one-day school stoppage from the Board of Education in sympathy with the mothers of Little Rock, and they mobilized 60 women, mostly Negro, to invade City Hall on this issue. They later encouraged the Mothers' Alliance to demand free lunches for working class children, and inspired a similar mobilization on this issue too. All of these efforts gained nation-wide publicity.

They got a store-front headquarters which they kept open days and evenings during August, September, and part of November. While the comrades were still busy getting 3500 signatures in 10 counties to help get the ISP on the ballot, they received the help of scores of Negro workers including boys and girls, in getting the 5000 signatures for Jimmy Wilson. In fact the great bulk of the Jimmy Wilson signatures were obtained by non-political people who became interested in working class politics during the imaginative campaign launched by our comrades.

The news on the Jimmy Wilson case was headlined from day to day in signs on the store window. News of the ISP campaign was combined with this. Pictures and newspaper clippings were also posted on the window. Working people constantly stopped by to look, and often to come in and talk.

Socialist ideas were translated into the day to day problems of the workers. And often the question of some individual grievance against the relief and welfare authorities took precedence over any discussion of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, or even the election of Corliss Lamont to the U.S. Senate. And yet it was not necessary to water down the program of Trotskyism. It was not necessary to come out for co-existence of the workers and the bosses; it was not necessary to talk about putting Stassen in as Secretary of State; it was not necessary to call for the election of Democrats; it was not necessary to whitewash the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union any more than the trade union bureaucracy at home or the welfare bureaucracy in the city of Buffalo.

It is one thing to translate great ideas into the workers' idiom, or to transmute them into the language of action. It is quite another thing to alter the ideas themselves, or to begin watering them down and even compromising with their opposites.

There are many new comrades who have very little experience in the mass movement, (some through no fault of their own) and consequently find it difficult to understand this dialectic. Having so little experience, it is difficult for them to understand how much thoughtful planning and effort goes into this kind of campaign (not to mention the courage to withstand the red-baiting attacks, etc.) And since the question of sectarianism and flexibility has been raised, there are also few who understand how hard it is to overcome the inertia of "ordinary" radical activity in order to have this kind of campaign, and how much maneuverability is required by all participants.

Such comrades may be deceived into thinking that compromises on program are a sign of Bolshevik flexibility, while practical compromises in life and action, taking the working class at a given stage, and advancing its interest, are a sign of some kind of "sectarianism."

In this connection, it is helpful to look at the votes the ISP obtained in New York and in Buffalo. The vote in New York reflected the passivity and general decline of radicalism. And it also reflected the kind of campaign that was conducted in N.Y. The vote in Buffalo was a sign of the smoldering resentment of the working class against the present conditions they have to endure. And it also reflected the kind of campaign that was conducted in Buffalo.

In New York City, McManus' 1954 vote of 44,500 fell to 23,500 in 1958, a drop of  $47\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. But in Buffalo, McManus' 1954 vote of 484 rose to 590, a rise of 22 per cent. And in the greater Buffalo area (which includes the industrial town of Lackawanna) it rose still more sharply.

It is equally significant that the humanist liberal, Lamont, led the slate in New York City with some 37 thousand votes to Mulzac's 27,000. But in Buffalo, Mulzac received 925 votes to Lamont's 743. This was an indication of the relatively stronger working class and pro-Negro aspect of the Buffalo campaign.

The Buffalo comrades followed the rule that an election campaign is only the parliamentary shadow of the class struggle itself, even at best. And they fought a class struggle campaign. In New York City this was not done. The majority comrades say that this was because of the legal difficulties in getting on the ballot. But in the previous New York City election, the mayoralty election of 1957, there was little legal difficulty, and there was no class struggle campaign either. However, in the previous Buffalo campaign, that is, in 1954, the comrades launched a campaign for surplus food for the unemployed, mobilized a working class housewives' caravan to Washington for this demand, and were partially responsible for actually securing this food a little later on. The action gained an 8 column, front page headline in one of the two capitalist papers in Buffalo, and was reported all over the country by the Associated Press.

#### For A Proletarian Orientation

The majority leaders tell us that the workers are not ready for great struggles, that it would be suicidal to send our precious cadres into the mass movement, that the radical intellectuals are the only people "equipped and willing to listen" to our program. This is a false approach, and fundamentally a petty bourgeois approach. It fails to take into consideration the deep material pressures upon the working class, and observes only the ideological nimbleness of the petty bourgeois radical. It is also a complete and programmatic reversal of the position the majority took against the Cochranites in the split of 1953.

If the whole regroupment campaign had been a campaign of revolutionary regroupment as opposed to a campaign of petty bourgeois regroupment and helter-skelter, indeterminate "unity of the left," it would have inevitably included the intervention into the problems and activities of the working class. Naturally petty bourgeois types would join us in such a campaign, and naturally we would try to recruit them to our ranks. They would be "equipped and willing to listen" to our ideas to the extent that we proved the validity of these ideas in some concrete struggle. Moreover, those workers whom we could mobilize for some militant action would be even better "equipped and willing to listen" to the ideas of how to fight for wages, housing, equality, etc. This does not mean that we could recruit many workers to the ranks of the party right now. For one thing, it requires a much greater break with personal ties for a worker to function in the party at present than for an educated petty bourgeois. (Contrariwise it requires a much greater break with class ties for the petty bourgeois. But this has not been emphasized of late.) And personal ties tend to outweigh class considerations when the class as a whole is not moving.

The so-called regroupment campaign has now been going on a long time. And majority leaders tell us that the "process" has only begun. It is time to call a halt. It is time to turn to the workers. It is time to go back to Trotskyism before a whole generation of young cadres becomes hopelessly petty bourgeoisified.

It is necessary to proletarianize our young people if only so they can understand what the struggle for socialism is all about. Without some sort of experience in the class struggle all the books are only mountains of words. We can have the utmost flexibility in dealing with opponent organizations, planning maneuvers, joint actions, etc. But we cannot give up our proletarian orientation or our proletarian program. And what is in question today is not a matter of tactics, organizational approaches to allies and potential allies, but nothing less than the program of Trotskyism.

November 24, 1958

To the Political Committee and the National Committee:

MEMORANDUM ON THE UNITED SOCIALIST TICKET

by Murray Zuckoff

The uncritical acceptance by the SWP of the present Call for a United Independent Socialist Election Conference in New York State reveals clearly that the original regroupment line of the SWP expressed in the statement, "The Regroupment of Revolutionary Socialist Forces in the U.S.," by the NC is being abandoned. What began correctly, on the part of the SWP, as a proposal for the regroupment of revolutionary socialists has now entered the phase of regroupment of "honest socialists," and "socialist-minded forces," indicating a retrograde development not a progressive one. Without an honest-o-meter to gauge the sincerity and "honesty" of the "socialist-minded forces," one can only try to evaluate the actual program of these forces to discover, not their "honesty" or "mindedness" in the first instance, but the objective scope of their socialist ideology and orientation. The Call is the first concrete manifestation of the nature of the socialist convictions of various Stalinist dissidents, ex-Trotskyists and pacifists.

After weeks of collaboration and elaboration of a Call which would be suitable to the Humanist Lamont, the pacifist McManus, the civil-libertarian DeHean, the semi-Stalinist Selsam, the left Social-Democrat Nathan and Trotskyist Weiss and Kerry, what has emerged is not a Call for United Socialist Election activity but the faint echo of People's Frontism. The Call constitutes a faracial unity between the shadow of Stalinist reformism, petty bourgeois socialism, and the SWP. The negotiations, which began with the idea of developing a genuine United Socialist Ticket based on a class struggle policy (see our Regroupment pamphlet and 5 points submitted to the National Guardian) succeeded in whittling down, obscuring and blunting the original proposals beyond recognition. The SWP has at best become a captive of this political conglomeration or, at worst, an object of manipulation by these petty bourgeois forces. The leadership of the party has been extremely reluctant to seriously evaluate the nature of this grouping, where it is heading, our attitude toward it, and the precise relationship of the SWP to this grouping in the election campaign.

It is imperative, in my opinion, to extricate ourselves from this swamp and to devise a revolutionary tactic with regard to this grouping, sharply differentiating our program from the proposed orientation projected by the Call. Otherwise the election campaign will be transformed from what is in principle permissible, an electoral bloc, to what is in principle impermissible, an ideological bloc with alien tendencies. This in turn poses the most serious problem for our party -- Adaptationism to a petty-bourgeois current.

Nature of the Discussion

After weeks of discussing the prospects of a United Socialist Ticket and the actual progress of the negotiating committee in formulating a Call, the final form of the Call has been published. During the actual branch discussions comrades saw neither the Call nor any of the formulations in it, although three of our leading comrades were on the negotiating committee and could have made it available without too much difficulty. Actually, the Call was in the hands of non-party people some time before the comrades in the branch saw it. (As of this writing comrades still have not seen it, although the YSA, which has both party youth and non-party youth, had a discussion on the Call itself last Saturday, May 3).

It is small wonder that in all the weeks of discussion about the campaign very little, and that reluctantly, was said about the Call except "It's being worked on," "Don't you have any confidence in the leadership of the SWP. Are you implying that there is any capitulation to Stalinism?" This, in spite of the fact that the Call was at the heart of the discussion; this in spite of the fact that numerous comrades sought to get clarification on the nature of the Call; what we were pressing for in the negotiating committee, what the ideological nature of the National Guardian was, and the committee as a whole; what the forces were that the various tendencies represented on the committee could rally. Comrades who raised questions for clarification were labelled "doubters" who were raising questions not constructively, but doing it in order to "harpoon" the election campaign. Small wonder indeed!

### Nature of the Call

The Call is the worst sort of People's Frontism, a shamefaced anti-monopoly people's coalition. There is not even the barest intimation of a class struggle policy nor the vaguest indication that classes even exist in the United States. It calls to "all the people of our country," to "citizens of all walks of life," to "conscientious people," to fight the "political machines of our State and Nation." There is no mention, let alone an analysis of the class nature of these "machines." The nature of the "economic system" of this country is mentioned once in a paragraph that will be discussed later on.

The demands formulated on all the burning issues of the day, could just as well, or very likely and with more fervor, have been written by the New York Post (which is not part of this committee). The perspective and alternative to the present intolerable economic and social conditions both in New York and nationally is the "search for peace and a better way of life, and for a world of brotherhood and equality among men and nations." Humanist! Pacifist! Stalinist! but not revolutionary socialist.

What are the forces fighting for this alternative? "Throughout the house of labor [interests of bureaucratic leaders and rank and file are identified -- MZ] is heard the repeated demand for an independent political course. The forces [?] [Class forces or men of good will? -- MZ] for social change in our country are seeking a common [?] meeting ground to present to the people of our country alternatives to a course of greed, brutalization and repression." Any one call fill this bill with whatever content is most suitable. Instead of rejecting this Call as social-reformist, most of the leading comrades embrace this as the best possible under the circumstances, not perfect to be sure, but a workable minimum. If the essence of the Call were just this, it would have to be characterized at best as non-socialist: "Independent," yes, "Progressive," yes. "Socialist-minded?" -- not being a mind reader I would have to pass. But this is not all that is contained in the Call.

### The Paragraph

"In a world in which a billion people are engaged in building a socialist order as an alternative to capitalist anarchy, American capitalism is disclosing its inability to utilize the gigantic productive capacity, natural resources and skilled labor of our country to provide a future of economic security, peace and freedom for the people."

The paragraph at best is a non-sequitur both from a literary and political point of view. But taken in the context of the Call as a whole, this paragraph, and especially the phrase "engaged in building a socialist order" constitutes adaptationism to Stalinism and is contrary to the ideas of Trotskyism on the Soviet Union and the East European countries.

If this phrase had appeared in our press or literature it could be overlooked as an imprecise phrase but one which could not be mistaken as Stalinist oriented. Any reader would know where the SWP stood with regard to the Soviet Union. But this phrase, appearing in the context of the entire Call, and taken together with the signers (excluding Joyce) of the Call can leave only one impression -- that the Soviet bureaucracy and the Soviet working class are identified with each other in their interests, methods and goals. It compromises the SWP which has consistently fought against the Soviet bureaucracy and for workers democracy.

It is of some importance to note that the Sunday Worker of May 11 uses the same phrase. In an article entitled "May Day Rallies Reflect Resurging Enthusiasm" it states: "Countries with a billion people, building socialism, celebrate May Day..." This should at least dispel the arguments of some comrades who insist that the Stalinists cannot and will not accept this phrase as correctly characterizing the reality of the Soviet zone.

The struggle of Trotsky against Stalin was precisely over the question of building Socialism in one country. Our recent struggle against Clarke-Pablo was over the very same question. Haven't we consistently pointed out that socialism was being thwarted by the role of the Kremlin oligarchy? Didn't Trotsky characterize the Soviet Union as a deformed workers state with a transitional economy halfway between capitalism and socialism and marked by all kinds of contradictions? In its foundations there are the elements necessary for a socialist society; on the other hand, in the superstructure and in Soviet society itself there are forces and tendencies which are directly anti-socialist. It is necessary to take all of these into account in estimating the real character and direction of Soviet development. The Soviet economy, represents a higher system of property and production relations; but in order for the methods of planning to be genuinely socialist in tendency, they would have to be under democratic control and with the direct participation of the producing and consuming masses themselves. That is why we attacked the Stalinist oriented formulation "nationalized in form, socialist in essence" of George Clarke. What is it doing in the Call? How is it that one of our leading comrades helped formulate it?

In the context of the present Call this can only serve as a left cover for an otherwise bare-faced reformist call. This paragraph in particular, as it now stands must either be rejected as antithetical to revolutionary socialism or linked up clearly with the struggle for workers democracy in the Soviet zone.

Even as a tactical concession to assure a broad participation of "socialist-minded" people this concept has no place. Especially when we are dealing in the main with "Stalinist-minded" individuals.

This cannot even be justified as a United Front tactic. "Before we unite," Lenin wrote, "and in order to unite, we must first draw sharp and definite lines of demarcation." United fronts and blocs among socialist tendencies reveal not only what they have in common but more clearly and sharply how they differ. That is the whole point to the united front tactic. The fact that even many comrades view this election campaign as a united front tactic shows that there are recognized differences between the SWP and the other tendencies, otherwise we would be

urging fusion. Before uniting we must probe our differences to the bottom. This has not been done. Blurring over fundamental differences can lead, with best of intentions notwithstanding, to adaptationism. The projected election campaign is of a propaganda nature which necessitates the sharpest demarcation of programs and principles.

In spite of the fact that our original "minimum" demands disappeared in the course of negotiations, leading comrades insist in defending the present Call as a "realistic beginning of a new stage." Their willingness to accept the unity of "socialist-minded" groups represents a shift to the right compared to our previous call for unity of "revolutionary socialists." The beginning of the new stage is a step backwards compared to the end of the last stage. This shift to the right, or adaptation of our comrades to this petty bourgeois current, is revealed in sharper fashion when we consider this paragraph inserted into the Call by our comrades. This paragraph makes the Call anti-Trotskyist at least with regard to the Soviet Union.

### McManus and 1955

An impression is being created that the National Guardian elements had no independent political orientation prior to the 20th Congress. Proof? Their critical support of our candidates in 1956 and 1957. Further proof of this contention is adduced by the apparent willingness of McManus and the National Guardian elements to fight for a "United Socialist" ticket. Aside from the dubiousness as to the kind of socialism the National Guardian is willing to fight for, aside from the fact that accepting the word socialist does not necessarily qualify them as socialists, witness for example Norman Thomas' tenacity in clinging to the word socialist, there is another important fact not yet discussed.

In 1955 McManus, before the 20th Congress and the regroupment process unfolded, issued a Call for Independent Political Action in the National Guardian of January 10. Compared to the present Call this was far more militant and "socialist minded." Denouncing the two party system and those of the Left who gave uncritical support to congressmen, senators, and governors, he called for a "party of peace, jobs and rights. It must be anti-imperialist, understanding and friendly to world socialism [this formula without our help -- MZ] and itself prepared to consider socialist solutions for our own country's welfare."

Certainly the point of departure as anti-imperialist, not merely anti-political machines, merited consideration. Peaceful co-existence is introduced as a "comprehension that more acceptable ideas than capitalism are sweeping the world and in time coming our way." This is linked up with the "tremendous strides of the past 10 years -- against colonialism, against exploitation, toward self-determination and toward socialism. They will not be contained or set back." The international aspect as a part of the struggle by the oppressed against their oppressors is not even mentioned in the present Call. Further on, McManus continued to note that "political party campaigning for peaceful co-existence must be prepared to understand the reality of socialism and further, not to rule out its application in confronting domestic economic problems as well as world relations." This, he concluded, "must be presented and understood in the United States if the people of this country and the world are to have before them any workable alternative to the apocalypse of atomic ruin inherent in the policies of Dulles and Stevenson."

Not quite revolutionary socialist. But not quite pacifist muddleheadedness either. Certainly, in words at least, more appealing from a class point of view than the present Call in spite of all the classical Stalinist demagogy.

How did we treat this Call which in retrospect is at least as "radical" as the present Call? The Militant in an editorial rejected the Call, as it should have. Comrade Cannon in a letter to Murry Weiss dated March 4, 1955, wrote: "The editorial says: 'We reject the McManus proposal.' We do that, to be sure, as the proposal now stands; but we don't have to say so yet. Our approach should be a little more subtle and flexible, and we should not exclude the idea of participating in conferences which might take shape in response to the McManus Call."

Nothing in it about collaborating with McManus for a different call, no mention of the fact that it isn't perfect, but the best under the circumstances. Comrade Cannon doesn't even pose critical support of the Call, let alone a fond embrace as currently practiced; just "participate in conferences," in order to probe for elements "not yet contaminated by the fall-out of Stalinism." "The American Guardian Monthly Review outfit, as far as I know," Cannon continued, "does not object to the general ideology of Stalinism on any important point. They are willing to endorse everything from the Moscow Trials to the Second World War and the pacifist ballyhoo for co-existence, if only they are allowed to do it as an independent party...The great bulk of these dissident Stalinists are worn-out people, incurably corrupted by Stalinist ideology, who haven't the slightest intention or capacity to do anything but grumble at the official CP and to demand a stagnant little pond of their own to splash in."

Instructively enough, Comrade Cannon, in the same letter, counterposes these dissident Stalinists to the Musteites and the left wing of the SP in 1934 and 1936. The latter two, "were essentially progressive, even if somewhat confused, break aways from the IDEOLOGY Emphasis in original -- MZ of the labor bureaucracy, the old guard right wing socialist and the Stalinists."

An incontestably correct distinction which has become blurred in the present situation. The important difference between the National Guardian "socialists" and the Musteites and SP left wingers was the break in ideology. The present group of petty bourgeois radicals is still ideologically committed to the old course in spite of the 20th Congress and because of the subsequent parallel development of Sputnik in the Soviet Union and the deepening crisis in the United States. The bulk of them still demand a stagnant pond without the organizational responsibilities and ties to the CP.

An important problem is posed -- how does it happen that before the 20th Congress, regroupment and the crisis on the Left, McManus wrote a Call that was more "radical" and to the left of what he agrees to presently? What does this indicate so far as the objective direction of motion of McManus and the National Guardian "socialists" are concerned? In essence, I believe, it signifies a move to the right. The 1955 Call was a response, primarily, to the dissolution of the ALP and its sabotage by the Stalinists. The 1958 Call is supposed to be a response to a regroupment process of revolutionary socialists. Yet this present Call is clearly a step backwards. How is this to be explained? Essentially McManus and the other signers (with the exception of Joyce) are swayed more by bourgeois pressure at home than by the conflicts of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Kremlin. They are swayed more by bourgeois pressure than by the pressure of the working class; more by what the diplomatic relations are, at any given

moment, between the US and the Soviet Union than by the relative ascendancy of the SWP compared to the CP. The National Guardian and its periphery, while stunned by the 20th Congress nevertheless finds it possible to temporize with the present Soviet leadership because international tensions have eased somewhat. This makes the Soviet Union more palatable to petty bourgeois public opinion and makes the dissidents a little less critical.

(The development of the regroupment process between 1956 and the present time, our estimate of it, the theoretical and tactical problems posed by the levelling off process since the departure of Gates from the CP, our uncritical estimate of Clark, Fast, Gates, our flirtation with pacifist ideas in the Militant and ISR together with recent innovations on the Soviet Union, the political revolution and critical support of heads of states like Tito and Gomulka will be dealt with in a separate document.)

### What Next?

It is incumbent upon the party to be the most resolute campaigners for a United Socialist ticket and for the regroupment of revolutionary socialist forces. We cannot permit radical workers who are seeking to break with Stalinism, ideologically and organizationally, to be derailed by this petty bourgeois current, which represents the back door to Stalinism. The original regroupment policy of the SWP is capable of winning these workers to the banner of socialism. Many elements, even in this petty bourgeois current, can be won over too, if we pursue a more resolute policy. They are not adverse to revolutionary ideas. They remain inert only so long as there are no social pressures upon them to move. A genuine United Socialist campaign could invigorate them with new, revolutionary perspectives. But our present regroupment policy of equivocating, compromising and placating the National Guardian can only serve to hinder the leftward move of the radical forces. It can only serve to send them back to the petty bourgeois stream of pacifism, humanism, and Stalinism. We cannot inspire radical workers to join hands in forging a regroupment of revolutionary socialist forces while adapting ourselves to the language and thinking of petty bourgeois socialism. We cannot move forward while running backwards.

The party must reject the present Call as an abandonment of a genuine United Socialist ticket. The Call represents the ideology of social reformists, not revolutionary socialists.

The party must clearly and decisively differentiate its views, both publicly and internally, from the present Call which: (1) blurs the class struggle ("all people of our country"); (2) identifies the trade union bureaucracy with the rank and file union members ("house of labor"); (3) identifies the Kremlin bureaucracy with the Soviet masses ("a billion people engaged in building a socialist order"); (4) abandons the socialist alternative ("world of brotherhood"). The SWP cannot equivocate on any of these fundamental questions. It must counterpose our transitional demands on these four issues.

It was wrong in principle for the party to sign and accept the Call as representing the basis for a genuine socialist ticket. We must reaffirm our demand for a United Socialist ticket on the basis of clearly defined class struggle demands, stressing the Socialist, not merely united character of the forthcoming election campaign.

The party must make clear that the unification of socialist forces on the basis of such demands would be a genuine step forward in the struggle for Socialism in the United States.

SWP representatives could come to the conference to participate constructively, be prepared to project a class struggle orientation and to propose concrete measures in the fight for the immediate needs of the working class and its allies.

It would be wrong for us to boycott the conference or to come there with ultimatums. But it would be equally wrong, and in the long run more disastrous, not to be prepared to fight for a Socialist campaign.

May 7, 1958