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AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD
AND SWP TASKS

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By the Political Committee

FOR A RETURN TO REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM:
THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS
IN THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD AND SWP TASKS

1. The American Trade Unions and the State

In one of his last articles, Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay, Trotsky wrote: "There is one common feature in the development, or more correctly the degeneration, of modern trade union organizations in the entire world: it is their drawing closely to and growing together with the state power." At the time of writing, this conclusion may have appeared premature for the American trade unions, particularly the CIO, which in 1940-41 was experiencing a new wave of insurgency and conducting militant strike battles on a dozen fronts against the industrial giants. Scarcely a year later Trotsky's thesis was fully confirmed.

After "Pearl Harbor," the trade union bureaucracy of the AFL, CIO, Mine Workers and Railroad Brotherhoods -- Stalinists included -- lined up to a man behind American imperialism, and became the apologists and salesmen of its predatory war. The bureaucracy became the chief agency for integrating the trade unions with the war machine, restraining and disciplining workers, stamping out strikes, imposing the wage freeze, pushing the speed up, initiating labor-management committees and, in general, it sought to convert the trade unions into "labor battalion" appendages of the imperialist state.

The 1945-46 historic strike wave, which saw 4 million workers manning the picket lines and American capitalism challenged on an imposingly all-national scale, refurbished the tarnished reputations of the trade union bureaucracy, and made it appear as if the "no-strike pledge" sellout of 1942-45 was a temporary phenomenon, due to the exceptional circumstances of the war.

The events that followed demonstrated that the bureaucrats' betrayal of the war years and their attempt to integrate the unions with the imperialist state -- was the norm; and the relative independence of the trade union bureaucrats in the 1945-46 strike struggles -- was the exceptional circumstance.

During the war years, the struggle of militants against the bureaucracy in the main CIO unions gradually built up mass support until the left wing was able to swing 40% of the votes against the no-strike pledge at the 1944 convention of the auto union. At the same time, "wild cat" strikes became increasingly common in both the auto and steel industries and the authority of the leadership was waning. With the war's end, the accumulated grievances and resentments of the workers, dammed up hitherto by the wartime no-strike pledge, burst forth in a great cataract of strikes.

The bureaucracy quickly placed themselves at the head of this strike movement to forestall the creation of a more militant rival leadership. But no sooner did the unions gain a victory and the strike wave subsided, than the bureaucracy rushed back into the arms of the capitalist state. It attempted to re-solidify its alliance in the vain hope of warding off the blows of the extreme forces of reaction and for protection against the militant sections of its own membership.

This basic, direct and growing subservience of the trade union

bureaucracy to the capitalist state is illustrated by the following crucial facts:

1. The Murrays and Greens have been tub-thumping for the Truman Doctrine and shipped AFL and CIO officials with the American Military Mission to Greece to help put over Wall Street's program of military dictatorship and impart to it a labor and democratic veneer.

2. The bureaucracy enrolled as a direct agency of the State Department to sell the Marshall Plan as a "civilian rehabilitation job" and a prize package of "humanitarianism," and lead within the world labor movement the counter-offensive against the Stalinist attacks on the plan.

3. They emerged as direct flunkies and timeservers of Washington, performing innumerable chores to facilitate the execution of Wall Street's imperialist program and the intensification of its "cold war" against Russia. Among a few of the more notable achievements of the bureaucracy along this line are: (1) Helping to split the Stalinist-dominated trade union federation in France and setting up a rival trade union body with a pro-American orientation; (2) Intervening in the Italian elections and advising the Italian unionists to vote for the Christian Democratic party, the capitalist party of Wall Street and the Vatican; (3) Splitting of the Stalinist-dominated Latin American trade union federation and setting up, under Washington's aegis, a rival body, etc.

4. The bureaucracy gave aid and comfort to the red-baiting campaign unloosed at home by the government and the capitalists, and they themselves actually flooded the union movement with **this same** anti-labor poison.

5. To all this is added their present desperate attempts to prop up the Democratic party and prevent its disintegration, coupled with their attack on all third party adherents. The bureaucracy is determined to uphold and keep the unions tied to the two-party system of capitalist politics.

Thus, to properly appraise the trends and relations in the American trade union movement, we must start with the towering fact that the trade union bureaucracy has deliberately and consciously allied itself with the imperialist state, seeks to act as its "labor agency" both at home and abroad -- and that this alliance determines all big questions in the trade union movement.

These developments demonstrate to the hilt Trotsky's trade union thesis. Quoting again from Trotsky's article: "The intensification of class contradictions. . . produce a situation in which imperialist capitalism can tolerate (up to a certain time) a reformist bureaucracy only if the latter serves directly as a petty but active stockholder of its imperialist enterprises, of its plans and programs within the country as well as on a world arena. Social reformism must become transformed into social imperialism in order to prolong its existence, but only prolong it, and nothing more."

2. The Anti-Labor Offensive and the Retreat of the Unions

The CIO industrial union movement came into being and established its right to existence in violent clashes with the industrial barons. This was testimony to the revolutionary stirrings and potentialities of the American working class. But no sooner did it bring the robber barons to their knees and inaugurate large-scale improvements in the living standards and working conditions of the industrial workers, than it exuded -- because of inadequate political development of the workers -- a new bureaucracy which proceeded to forge an alliance with the Roosevelt administration, and through this medium with American capitalism itself.

In return for keeping the industrial workers chained to the administration, Roosevelt rewarded the trade union bureaucracy with small concessions such as the Wagner Act, Wages and Hours Law and minor patronage favors.

This alliance and policy of granting concessions to the labor bureaucracy was carried over right into the war. As compensation for the latter's wartime sellout of the workers, Roosevelt guaranteed the bureaucracy the integrity of their union organizations and treasuries through the promulgation of a bastardized form of union shop -- "maintenance of membership."

This arrangement proved highly advantageous and satisfactory to the trade union bureaucracy during the Second World War. Despite the no-strike pledge and wage freeze, they not only retained their organizational strength, but actually expanded their membership with the wartime expansion of industry. The trade union membership figures rose from approximately ten million in 1941 to fifteen million at the close of the war. The bureaucracy for its part was fairly successful in maintaining "national unity" throughout the war. They prevented strikes, partially through repression and terror, but in greater measure, because the living standards of workers in war industries improved slightly, due to increased hours of work with overtime premium pay and the rise of hourly wage rates because of the shortage of labor.

The bureaucracy cherished great illusions that it was possible to indefinitely prolong this kind of relationship with the capitalist government by keeping "progressives" like Roosevelt at the helm of the ship of state.

Meanwhile, American capitalism emerged from the Second World War with an internal debt of 260 billion dollars and was confronted with the necessity of building a world empire in the midst of unparalleled ruin, continuing decay of capitalism, and stormy outbursts of socialist and national revolutions the world over. The leading capitalist circles came to the conclusion that the Roosevelt policy of trying to harness a vigorous labor movement by means of concessions to the bureaucracy had to be finished with; that this policy had become a luxury they could no longer afford; that they could not embark on their farflung world schemes and commitments while permitting the existence of a volcanic mass movement liable to erupt in their faces at any moment.

So with V-J Day, ensconced securely on their mountain of money bags and shielded by the scandalous "carry-back, carry-over" tax laws which permitted them to raid the public treasury while their plants remained shut, the robber barons decided on a head-on assault to smash the unions in direct combat.

The strategy of the capitalists proved faulty and their calculations mistaken. Large sections of the middle class were still friendly to the union cause and the returning veterans joined forces with the strikers. The attack of the industrialists crumbled in the face of the solidarity of the CIO unions and the massive character of their counter-offensive, as well as the AFL and General Strike movements. Never before in American labor history did the trade unions display such perfected organization, tenacity, staying power and self-confidence. The labor movement emerged out of the fight stronger than when it began the engagement and with a sizable wage victory.

Following this initial setback, the monopolists decided to attain their ends in stages. As the strike wave ebbed, they forced the Federal Government to discard its mask of pseudo-neutrality maintained during the big strike struggles, and to openly take leadership of the drive to tame the unions. Truman proceeded to break the Railroad strike in the spring of 1946 and the mine strike in the fall of the same year. Concomitant with this re-emergence of the government as open strikebreaker, the press and radio were mobilized to swamp the country with "lynch-labor" propaganda and to work up an atmosphere of witch-hunting hysteria. Under cover of the red-baiting smokescreen, and utilizing their monopoly of all the levers of government, the capitalist rulers scuttled all price controls and unloosed another spiral of inflation that wiped out the wage gains won by the workers in the strikes and permitted the great corporations to continue their profiteering orgy.

The trade union bureaucracy was scared stiff by this new offensive of capital. It sought protection by further retreating, humbling themselves and currying favor with the so-called "liberal" forces in the government, while at the same time, cracking down all the more ruthlessly on the militant and independent elements in the unions, who, to their way of thinking, were needlessly provoking the "reactionary forces."

The workers, watching the panic-stricken retreat of their leaders and sensing that pure-and-simple economic strikes were no longer an adequate means for defending their living standards, drew back from struggle. Bewildered and stunned by the new developments, they adopted a policy of watchful waiting.

The Wall Street plutocracy, far from being appeased by the precipitate retreat of the trade union bureaucracy, moved to press the battle home. They stepped up their red-baiting to such proportions that it literally inundated the whole country. The battle lines of American imperialism on a world scale had in the meantime grown sharply demarcated and its strategic objectives clarified and concretized. The mounting red-baiting now became, at one and the same time, the generalized formula for the anti-labor offensive at home, (designed to house-break the unions and beat down the standard of living preparatory to fastening a military dictatorship upon the American people), and the

re-armament program and perfection of alliances abroad to clear the decks for war against the Soviet Union. At the climactic moment of this labor-baiting uproar, they sank the knife into labor with the passage of the Taft-Hartley slave law. This law is the legislative symbol of the break with the guiding Rooseveltian policy of granting concessions to the trade union bureaucracy, and strikes as savagely at the latter and its positions and privileges as it does at the rights of the rank and file worker.

Did this finally shake the bureaucrats out of their torpor? It only made them all the more determined to cement an alliance with the "liberals" in the government, and to further convince the powers-that-be that they could be counted on as loyal servants of the imperialist state. The trade union bureaucracy, with but few exceptions, got on their knees and grovelled before the Slave Labor Law -- a law which aims at nothing less than the progressive strangulation of the trade unions.

This underlines Trotsky's generalization:

"Monopoly capitalism does not rest on competition and free private initiative but on centralized command. The Capitalist cliques at the head of mighty trusts, syndicates, banking consortiums, etc., view economic life from the very same heights as does state power; and they require at every step the collaboration of the latter. In their turn the trade unions in the most important branches of industry find themselves deprived of the possibility of profiting by the competition between the different enterprises. They have to confront a centralized capitalist adversary intimately bound up with state power. Hence flows the need of the trade unions -- insofar as they remain on reformist positions, i.e., on positions of adapting themselves to private property -- to adopt themselves to the capitalist state and to contend for its cooperation. In the eyes of the bureaucracy of the trade union movement the chief task lies in 'freeing' the state from the embrace of capitalism, in weakening its dependence on trusts, in pulling it over to their side. This position is in complete harmony with the social position of the labor aristocracy and the labor bureaucracy, who fight for a crumb in the share of super-profits of imperialist capitalism. The labor bureaucrats do their level best in words and deeds to demonstrate to the 'democratic' state how reliable and indispensable they are in peacetime and especially in time of war. By transforming the trade unions into organs of the state, fascism invents nothing new; it merely draws to their ultimate conclusion the tendencies inherent in imperialism."

The CIO bureaucracy in the short space of 12 years has completed an evolution which the European labor bureaucracies took several scores of years to compass. The CIO bureaucrats justified their class-collaboration policy in the Roosevelt days by the slow but steady advances that the unions were able to make. Today they seek to justify their tie-up with capitalism, not on the basis so much of achievements or advances, but on the grounds that without this tie-up, labor would find itself engulfed in even worse calamities.

During the Second World War, the bureaucracy, in return for its alliance with the imperialist state, received "Maintenance of

membership" and the "Little Steel Formula." In the postwar period, in return for their enthusiastic sponsorship of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, they got -- the Taft-Hartley Law! Following in the footsteps of the pre-Hitler German trade union leaders, the American labor bureaucracy seeks, within an ever narrowing framework, to adapt itself to the needs and demands of the imperialist state, and by its "reasonableness" and "dependability" to purchase the right of existence. All this, naturally, will not save the Murrays and Greens in the end any more than it saved the German trade union leaders.

The American plutocracy has already successfully carried through the first two stages of its program to domesticate the unions and draw their claws. It has thrust the country into a frenzy of reaction, isolated the unions and turned "public opinion" against them; it has mobilized all the agencies of government behind its anti-labor crusade and the federal government has unabashedly stepped forward as the chief strikebreaker; it has chained the unions with heavy legislative shackles and terrorized the bureaucracy into abject submission; it has involved the unions in fratricidal warfare. Now the plutocracy is moving to cash in on these initial victories by still further hacking away at the workers' living standards and thus reducing the union organizations to a fraction of their former influence and authority.

Does the blueprint of the American plutocracy call for the outright destruction of the unions on the Hitler model and their replacement with state-sponsored company unions? Or do they intend to permit the existing bureaucracy to exercise the privilege of policing the workers by means of bureaucratized unions drained of all independence and vitality? These questions, like many others, will only be answered by the developments of the class struggle.

3. The Stalinist and Native Bureaucracies, and the Bureaucratization of the Unions.

With the establishment of the CIO, there quickly emerged a new bureaucracy, which was composed of two distinct and separate parts.

The first was the native bureaucracy, or, as it is commonly called, the "right wing," grouped around Lewis and later, Murray. Nurtured in the soil of an alliance with a "friendly" administration, and constantly forced to operate through the medium of innumerable government boards, commissions, etc., this core of the new CIO bureaucracy took on, from the first, a definite social democratic coloration. This is in contrast to the older AFL bureaucracy, which even during the Roosevelt administration, retained vestiges of its former pure-and-simple unionism with its tinge of anarchist isolation and suspicion of the state.

The other section of the newly emerged bureaucracy was Stalinist, or Stalinist-dominated, commonly misnamed the "left wing." This section, led by the Communist party and through it, by the Kremlin, executed in the CIO unions all the twists and turns of Stalinist policy.

Throughout the ten-year period, from the establishment of the CIO to the end of the second world war -- with the exception of the

short interval of the Stalin-Hitler Pact -- these two bureaucracies were in alliance and jointly led the CIO. The basis for this alliance was essential programmatic agreement. The native bureaucracy favored a policy of class collaboration and opportunism in the economic field and an alliance with the Roosevelt administration in the political sphere. The Kremlin, for its part, throughout this 10-year period (except for the Stalin-Hitler Pact interval) was wedded to its People's Front line. Translated into American, it spelled out an almost identical policy to that of the native bureaucracy.

In this decade of joint leadership, the two bureaucracies succeeded in firmly tying the CIO to the capitalist state, snuffed out the tendencies to form an independent workingman's party and inoculated the CIO workers -- newly arisen to political life -- with the poison of capitalist "pressure politics." The Stalinist and native bureaucrats put a damper on the original militancy, frowned on all independent initiative from the ranks and worked to foist their joint bureaucracies upon the unions. This treacherous collaboration saw its high point during the war when the Stalinists not only went arm-in-arm with, but even leaped beyond the Murray bureaucrats in selling the no-strike pledge, outlawing strikes, victimizing militant workers and boosting the speedup.

Nevertheless, the two bureaucracies could never fuse. Despite the virtual identity of their policies on a day-to-day basis, they were each keenly aware that these were designed to serve different masters, whose aims might at any time diverge. Thus this 10-year marriage was constantly marred by quarrels, bickerings, hostile maneuvers against each other, and sometimes even violent clashes. But these conflicts never reached the plane of fundamentally opposed principles or policies. They took on, rather, the form of clique fights for positions and posts, originating always in the basic suspicion and distrust of the one bureaucracy toward the other.

Revolutionists and class conscious workers were unable throughout this decade, generally speaking, to support or choose between either of these bureaucracies on a programmatic basis. Lacking sufficient forces and influence, however, to organize on a broad scale an alternative force standing on a class struggle line, they were often compelled to follow the tactical course of blocking up, now with the one side and now with the other, based on the specific situation and circumstances in a given international union or locality -- always with the aim of gaining greatest elbow room for the genuine left wingers and providing the most favorable arena for the propagation of a class struggle program.

Almost invariably, in the first years of the CIO, the Stalinist bureaucracy loomed as the most dangerous to the class conscious workers and their aims in the trade union movement, and the most aggressive force for derailing the unions to class collaboration, Peoples Frontism, bureaucratism and general reaction. In union after union, the Stalinists were able to utilize their reputations as radicals and left-wing fighters to trick countless militants into their ranks, and win broad support by their expert demagogy. Once a union fell into their grip, they proceeded in ruthless fashion to slander, hound and expel all dissident elements; they would thoroughly totalitarianize the union; and under a smokescreen of radical phrases, practice in the

most cynical manner, the treacherous opportunism previously employed with less hypocrisy by the old AFL hierarchy.

In contrast, the native CIO bureaucrats, while pursuing the same general policies, were not, in the formative years of the CIO, as well trained to impose their bureaucracy on the ranks, did not as consciously seek to drive the left-wing workers out of the unions, they still had, to one extent or another, some respect for the democratic tradition upon which the CIO was founded and of which it was justly proud.

That is why time after time the revolutionary and class conscious workers joined forces with the native bureaucrats against the Stalinists, who represented on a national scale throughout this period the greatest menace to the future of the CIO unions and particularly to the formation of a left wing.

When American imperialism broke its wartime alliance with Russia and began preparing for a new war against its erstwhile ally, the alliance of the two bureaucracies was shattered. Each responded automatically to the signal of its master -- Murray and Co. to the voice of the State Department; the Stalinists to the Kremlin. And suddenly leaders who found it possible to collaborate for ten years, in peace and in war, could no longer agree or work together.

Not surprisingly, the divergent programs now put forth by the two bureaucracies have nothing to do with the workers' needs or aspirations. Murray and Co. want not only to continue but deepen their ten-year course of subservience to American imperialism. Hence their two-point doctrine of: (1) No third party and adherence to the two-party political system; (2) all-out support for the Marshall Plan and the "cold war" against the USSR.

The new Stalinist pseudo-left line is likewise reactionary and intended solely to serve its Kremlin masters in pressuring American imperialism for a new deal with Russia. Hence their new program revolves almost exclusively around Wallace, his party and his "peace" crusade.

The workers' needs are left out of the calculations and schemings of both bureaucracies.

As American imperialism pressed its "cold war" against the Kremlin, Murray and Co. launched their full-scale assault against the Stalinist-dominated section of the CIO bureaucracy.

The Stalinist forces in the CIO have been on the decline for a number of years, even before the launching of the present red-baiting offensive. A number of different factors, including the backwardness of the workers and their prejudices against radical parties, were partially responsible for this decline. It was accounted for, in larger part, however, by the successful exposure of Stalinism through the efforts of the class conscious forces in the unions, and the revulsion of sections of progressive workers to Stalinist treachery, double-dealing, coarse and cynical opportunism and brutal totalitarian methods. This revolt of the best and most advanced sections of the American labor movement against Stalinism -- and not strictly speaking against communism -- which began in the auto union in 1937 and is sweeping the maritime union today, had already, even before the current red-baiting

campaign, taken a heavy toll of Stalinist influence.

Now the native bureaucracy, under the goadings of the government and the capitalist press, has opened wide the doors of the unions to the very red-baiting which reaction had set loose not only against radicals but against the labor movement as a whole. By this act of blind treachery, the unions were wracked by the witch-hunting delirium. The Black Legion elements, the Catholic leaders, the company men -- all the elements who in the days of militancy and struggle skulked in the background and could gain no hearing, suddenly surged to the front, took the offensive and drowned out the voices of militants and progressives. The latter found themselves temporarily more isolated than they had ever been in the CIO.

In this atmosphere of hysteria, with the reactionary elements riding high, the Murray bureaucracy began to employ red-baiting on a wide scale against its factional opponents. The Stalinists, whose influence and forces had already sharply declined over the years, and who had previously been abandoned by some of the most militant and advanced sections, found themselves beset and hard-pressed from the right. The governmental forces, the press and its allies of yesterday in the bureaucracy, were all savagely snapping at its flanks, ready to move in for the kill at the first propitious moment.

When the Trotskyist leaders -- genuine revolutionary militants -- of the Minneapolis Teamsters movement were pounced on, at the beginning of the war, by the joint forces of the government, the capitalists and the Tobin bureaucracy, they could count on the loyal and firm support of the overwhelming numbers of the rank and file, who honored their leadership and were willing to sacrifice to keep such a leadership. In contrast, the Stalinists, hard beset today by the red-baiters and the reactionaries, can find no appreciable support in the ranks, who are indifferent to their fate. The Stalinists are reaping all the fruits of their ten years of treachery, corruption, bureaucratism, miseducation of former militants and red-baiting and slander of left-wing opponents and dissidents. They are without friends either on the genuine left or the right.

Dealt heavy blows on all sides, the Stalinists have already suffered important defections from their ranks. They are an increasingly isolated and declining force. As their major influence consists in control of the bureaucratic apparatus in a number of unions, the prospect is that the red-baiting assault will still further dislodge them from positions of power and reduce the Stalinist effectives to a small minority in the CIO movement.

Just as the red-baiting of the capitalists, while directed ostensibly only at the Stalinists, is really an attack upon the whole labor movement, so the red-baiting of the CIO bureaucracy, while ostensibly aimed solely at its Stalinist opponents, is an attack upon every militant and independent manifestation in the ranks. The previous ten-year joint efforts of the Stalinists and Murrayites to bureaucratize the CIO unions appears now merely as the preliminary groundwork for the truly monstrous campaign which Murray and Co. have recently unleashed to hound into silence all opponents, to outlaw opposition groupings, to prohibit free expression, to destroy the existing democratic safeguards, to efface the democratic tradition upon which the CIO was founded, to

free the bureaucracy from all rank and file control and thus foist unhindered its dictatorial rule upon the union membership.

These bureaucratic encroachments, observed in the auto and textile conventions, a number of state conventions, as well as in the dictatorial powers assumed by the national CIO office, reached a high point in the recently held steel convention. This gathering, presided over by Murray himself, was turned into a saturnalia of red-baiting, bureaucratic effrontery and even organization of physical violence against opponents. Under cover of this reactionary revel, Murray tightened his bureaucratic grip upon the steel union and pushed through his program of beating the drums for American imperialism, of bending the knee before its political parties, of full retreat before the offensive of the industrialists.

These same general tendencies are observable in a number of AFL unions.

The CIO, representing the industrial workers, is the more politically alert, dynamic and decisive section of the American working class. But the AFL, mopping up in the wake of the CIO victories, has also grown tremendously since 1935 and enrolled numerous industrial workers in its ranks. Progressive developments have also taken place here although in a far less stormy manner and chiefly localized in scope. The AFL leaders have, like those of the CIO, tied up with the State Department, given free rein to red baiting and further clamped down on the rank and file in unions already heavily bureaucratized, craft-ridden and drained of militancy.

There is nothing accidental or temporary about the bureaucracy's premeditated and planned aggression against democracy in the unions and the democratic rights of the workers. On the contrary, the tendency to bureaucratize the unions expresses the profoundest needs of Murray, Green and Co. if they are to save themselves from being swept aside by an aroused membership.

As the bureaucracy further integrates itself into the imperialist governmental structure and strives to convert the unions into appendages of the state, how else can it protect itself from the rising wrath of its membership except by bureaucratic suppression and terror? Subservience to Wall Street imperialism, retreat before the industrialists' onslaughts, red-baiting, and bureaucratization of the unions -- these all go hand in hand, each forming an indispensable part of the program and needs of the top ruling union bureaucracy.

4. The Struggle for a Left Wing

Throughout the history of the CIO, groups of the most advanced workers attempted time and again to break through the bureaucratic wall of opportunism and class subservience and convert the unions to a class struggle line so that the CIO could recapture the crusading spirit that animated it in the heroic days of its formation, and again lead the forward march of labor. These numerous efforts, while testimony to the inherent striving of the most progressive unionists to find a way out of the blind alley of pro-capitalist unionism, all failed in winning any significant support. There were good and sufficient reasons for this.

First, the Stalinists, banking upon their undeserved reputations as revolutionists plus their unscrupulous demagogic appeal, were able to drain off the cream of worker-militants. Once in their clutch, the Stalinists were able either to corrupt these militants or disillusion them. For a decade, successfully posing as the left wing of the unions, the Stalinists perverted the strivings of militant workers for a genuinely class struggle program into degenerate clique fights for positions and caucus power.

The class conscious elements in the CIO unions, by pursuing the previously described tactical course of balancing themselves now on the one side and now on the other, were able, commensurate with their small numbers, to get across specific points of their class struggle program, sometimes win leadership on a local scale, often influence events decisively during strike struggles, and surely and steadily enhance their own influence. But the faction fight between the two big bureaucracies -- at times muffled, at times violently breaking out into the open -- continued to dominate the stage in the CIO, poisoned the atmosphere, demoralized and disoriented the most active non-party elements -- and effectively blocked the emergence of a genuine left-wing grouping on a national scale.

More important even than this factor, the vast majority of the CIO members still did not see any necessity for a new type of leadership. The lag in their thinking had a solid material cause. Up until the war, the main bodies of the CIO were registering uninterrupted gains: higher wages, organization of the unorganized, introduction of shop steward systems and significant improvement of working conditions. The war years -- what with Roosevelt's organizational concessions to the trade union leaders and the rise in weekly paychecks in the war industries -- served to obscure the fact that the original program of the CIO was played out.

Nevertheless, even in the later stages of the war, as the wage freeze and no-strike disarmament of the unions grew increasingly intolerable, left-wing formations arose in many unions, taking on truly massive proportions in the auto union. The appearance of this left wing was a great milestone in the political development of the CIO -- because its chief fight was for program and not for posts; because it sought, even though in partial manner to disentangle and free the unions from the death embrace of the capitalist state by means of its programmatic plank, "Abolish the No-Strike Pledge;" because it was independent of both the Murray and Stalinist bureaucracies and advanced its program in opposition to both. The appearance and development of this left wing -- which disintegrated and disappeared with the conclusion of the war and the eruption of the strike wave -- provides us with a real clue to the coming developments in the CIO.

What are the perspectives? Conditions at home during the last war will, in retrospect, appear idyllic compared to the worsening situation now facing the American working class. Moreover, in the last war, due to the accident of America's alliance with Russia, there was scarcely any red-baiting hysteria. Living standards were maintained and even slightly improved. And the labor bureaucracy's policing and disciplining of the workers took on only rudimentary forms.

Conditions today, even before the "shooting war," add up to

constantly lowered living standards, reintroduction of the speedup, screaming witch hunt, anti-labor delirium, strike-breaking and union-busting campaigns, blotting out of democratic rights, and the steady imposition of a creeping military dictatorship.

The hopeless bankruptcy of the official union bureaucracy, its inability to maintain the workers' standards and protect him from the hostile incursions of capital will become clear to large numbers. It is sure to produce widespread discontent, and then resistance, and after that -- large-scale revolts against the official leadership and its worthless program.

The American industrial workers have passed through an unparalleled twelve-year experience of variegated struggle, strike actions, street battles, government interference and strikebreaking, complicated negotiations and intense factional fights inside the unions. Previously attaining only union consciousness, they have made great advances in their education and stand today on the threshold of class consciousness. Despite the recent setbacks and a number of incidental and partial defeats, the CIO ranks remain intact and their fighting potential continues high. The bureaucrats have still a long, hard road to travel before they can thoroughly bureaucratize the unions they head and reign as undisputed masters over their membership.

As conditions and living standards deteriorate, the workers' resistance to the bureaucracy is sure to intensify and at one stage or another break out in full blown revolts. These revolts will probably even breach the bureaucracy itself and find allies among individual trade union officials. The past history of the CIO has illustrated this many times. It is further guaranteed because the Wall Street Bourbons in their stiff-necked arrogance, time and again move to demolish the positions of the bureaucracy itself, thus constantly sow panic amongst the latter, prevent its stabilization and hurl a few of the officials back into the arms of their rank and file.

Will this resistance and revolt give birth to an organized national left wing? That depends on the degree of participation of our SWP militants in the rank and file movement, its influence over the leading cadres in the ranks, its ability to programmatically and tactically shape the course of the struggle. The SWP has in the past eight years made giant strides in the unions. The ranks of its union militants have grown. They have won strategically important positions, and command the respect and support of some of the finest progressive groupings and layers of America's industrial working class. This progress has, in a number of instances, been nothing short of phenomenal. The recent years have demonstrated that the SWP trade unionists and their friends constitute the only core of leadership for a new left wing in the unions. And the trend of events demonstrate that the objective conditions are ripening for the formation of such a movement.

Will the Stalinists be able to rehabilitate themselves and seize the leadership of this nascent movement in order to derail it again towards Peoples Frontism and wreck its revolutionary potentialities?

Here again our SWP cadre in the unions, if it works energetically and correctly, is in a position to block any such Stalinist

endeavor and prevent their rejuvenation as an effective force. Even though the Stalinist cadre is still considerably larger and more extensively and strategically placed than our own, our cadre is growing while theirs is declining. The reputation, standing and morale of our cadre is of the highest. The Stalinists are badly discredited and very demoralized.

Our experiences in the auto and rubber unions demonstrate that even today our superior cadre is able to wield more decisive leadership in an opposition movement than the Stalinists with their larger forces. We, in the United States, are in a position to help produce this unique development: That the emerging left wing -- from the very first -- will be primarily influenced by the Trotskyist militants.

The program of the new left wing is determined by the very conditions that give it birth. Just as the circumstances of the last war created an opposition around the no-strike pledge, so the present conditions determine that the opposition will be gathered around two fundamental points:

1. Independence of the Unions from the Capitalist State.

(This may take many forms and be broken down into numerous positive demands, such as a campaign to nullify the Taft-Hartley Law, Boycott of Government boards; Against all compulsory arbitration; Against Government interference, court injunctions, etc.; A break with capitalist politics, for an independent labor party, etc.)

2. Democracy in the Unions. Similarly sub-divided and concretized: For annual union conventions and election of officers; for broad democratically-elected strike and negotiating committees; for the democratic rights of opposition groups and caucuses, etc.)

* * *

Objective circumstances have now forced the struggle to assume intensely political forms and have placed it on a far higher plane than anything seen before in the CIO. It is this that will guarantee the success of our militants, make it possible for them to come to the fore in the future battles, and assure them of a wide hearing for their ideas and proposals. Most of the planks of our Transitional Program are now directly applicable as the program that the trade unions ought to be pushing. It is sufficient to mention them to see how timely and cogent they are for the unfolding struggle: Sliding Scale of Wages; Factory Committees, or as we call it, Shop Steward system; "Open the Books" and Workers' Control of Industry; Expropriation of given branches of industry, such as railroads, meat trust, etc.; Workers Defense Guards, or as the unions call them, Flying Squadrons; Labor Party; Workers and Farmers Government.

The politicalization of the struggle is demonstrated from a different direction by developments in the camp of the labor bureaucracy. We observe in the CIO unions the emergence of new, highly politicalized right-wing bureaucrats, as Reuther, Baldanzi, John Green, Emil Rieve, and groupings as the Vatican-directed Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, who employ social demagogy on a wide scale, try to ensnare the working class with glib promises and grandiose

"plans" -- and thus prevent their genuine radicalization. The pure-and-simple trade union leaders of the old AFL type can no longer cope with the complexities of the modern industrial union movement and the volcanic nature of the erupting class struggles.

These new leaders will shoot their bolt and expose themselves because of the disparity between their promises and performance.

Our militants, therefore, must understand that a broad left wing is in the making at the next stage of development in the trade unions and that our strategic aim is to build this left wing. It is not, at this stage certainly, an administrative or organization job. The forging of a left wing must be seen as a struggle -- and a process.

Understanding that this process will necessarily pass through different stages, our militants will employ due care in their union work today, so as not to unnecessarily endanger their positions, or fall victims to the red baiting; or attempt to prematurely give organizational forms to the workers' resentments, before the latter are prepared to support a decisive struggle against the existing union leadership.

Furthermore, our militants, while seeking at all times to mobilize the forces of the future left wing and gain support for its class struggle program, will not disdain to execute maneuvers, where necessary to work now with one part of the bureaucracy or the other, to support different groupings of a limitedly progressive character -- always with the single aim of gaining greater elbow room for the class conscious elements, winning a greater modicum of democracy and a superior opportunity for the dissemination of class struggle ideas and the solidification of the left-wing forces.

Trotsky wrote: "The trade unions in the present epoch cannot simply be the organs of democracy as they were in the epoch of free capitalism and they cannot any longer remain politically neutral, that is, limit themselves to winning the daily needs of the working class. They cannot any longer be anarchistic, i.e., ignore the decisive influence of the state on the life of peoples and classes. They can no longer be reformist, because the objective conditions leave no room for any serious and lasting reforms. The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

The perspective in the CIO is the development of a new left wing and the unfolding of a bitter struggle between this left wing and the bureaucracy. If we recall developments of the recent past in the industrial union movement and the general mechanics of trade union faction fighting, we will find it possible to predict that numbers of local unions and possibly even whole regions will adhere to the leadership of the left wingers -- and the latter will demonstrate in practice the difference between the programs of class struggle and class subservience. What occurred in Minneapolis in 1934 -- the fusion of a Marxist cadre with the militant proletariat, and the struggle under this leadership against the capitalists, the state power and the top labor bureaucracy -- will be repeated on a far more extensive scale and a far higher political plane in the coming days.

What is important now is that our militants remain in the unions; remain imbedded in the progressive ranks; and view all temporary maneuvers and makeshift blocs as merely aids towards molding the forces of the coming left wing. This will provide them, later on, with the opportunity of emerging as leaders of masses in action, and in the struggle, of building the mass party of the American revolution.

FOR A RETURN TO REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM: THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS
IN THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

By Ray O'Neall and George Tobin

The Second World War has culminated in an insoluble economic, financial, political and diplomatic crisis of bourgeois society. Rising struggles of the colonial masses and a growing militancy and consciousness of the industrial masses circle the globe. Yet the indispensable means for the solution of this crisis, the Fourth International, remains in most parts of the world a small isolated sect.

This, the greatest crisis humanity has ever known, has increasingly stripped away all the fetishisms of commodities, property and legal forms, has raised all fundamental questions for the proletariat in the most concrete manner and united them into a whole. Events, e.g. in England, France and elsewhere, have shown that nationalization of industry does not contribute in the slightest toward overcoming the crisis; it is becoming clear to the workers that the all-important relation is at the point of production, between the proletariat as a social force, living labor, and the bourgeoisie, representing capital, dead accumulated labor which dominates and exploits living labor. Neither the bourgeoisie nor the labor bureaucracy has the answer to the crisis. Material and intellectual chaos reigns everywhere.

This tremendous confusion in society is reflected in the vanguard, the Fourth International. Events seem to contradict our theoretical ideas: the victory and expansion of Stalinist Russia, playing so reactionary a role; the non-appearance, after World War II, of the exact pattern of 1917; the tiny size, lack of influence, and lack of rapid growth of the Movement despite the most favorable objective situation; all this has brought to the surface the crisis in the Fourth International, showing itself in part in an immense theoretical confusion, existing to a greater or lesser extent in every section and group. There are countless groups, sub-groups, tendencies, sub-tendencies, splits and splinters, clashing on the most fundamental questions. This condition alone shows that the Fourth International is still in its embryo stage.

To overcome this crisis and remove the obstacles to growth, discussion and clarification are necessary, not only before the Congress, but also after it (naturally, within the limits of practical party work). It cannot be said that any of the tendencies has the absolutely correct finished program for the Movement; all are groping toward such a program, with varying degrees of success.

Through all the views existing in the Movement today, three distinct ideological tendencies can be discerned, each clashing sharply with the other two on the most basic questions of the nature of capitalism and of socialism, the character of the epoch, the nature of the proletariat and of the socialist revolution. These tendencies are represented, completely or partially, by various groups in the Movement.

I. Consistent Revolutionary Marxism

The signers of this statement contend that events have confirmed and concretized every one of Marx's basic positions, and at the same time have brought to the surface and exposed fundamental deviations from Marxism in the theory and practice of the Majority of the Movement and of some Minority groups.

The Death-Agony of Capitalism and the Revolutionary Upsurge

Capitalist society today is in its final death-agony. This is the epoch of the proletarian, socialist world revolution. Modern technology, enormously expanded in the war and culminating in the atomic age, has outmoded old social relations and ideas. Against atomic weapons there is no defense, military or political, under bourgeois rule. The only defense against them is global control by the working class of all aspects of society, including atomic energy; i.e. the world proletarian revolution. The masses are more and more becoming aware of this. They are deeply perturbed by the arms race, by the continued manufacture of atomic bombs, rockets, missiles, germ-sprays and radioactive poison gases, and by the diplomatic skirmishing which brings nearer the day when these horrors will be let loose upon the peoples. The masses are crying out for a new social order, which they themselves will control, to once and for all end the capitalist nightmare.

The wartime national resistance movements, which were in the main mass movements dominated by the proletariat, and which wanted not a return to the old bourgeois republic, but socialism; the formation of workers' militias, factory committees, and peasant committees, and the seizure of factories and land over wide parts of Europe and Asia at the end of the war; the overnight formation of mass parties and unions in lands where such were hitherto a rarity, as in Japan; the electoral demonstrations that the workers want socialism, in England, France, Italy and other countries; the disaffection and splits in many Stalinist parties; the struggles of the masses of India, Indonesia and other colonial areas which are beginning to break the imperialist shackles and overturn old empires; the mass strikes in the United States, half-paralyzing the economy every few months; the world-wide soldiers' demonstrations and the creation of soldiers' committees in the American army, which shook American capitalism to its foundations; the tendency for "wild-cat" strikes, independent of the labor bureaucracy; -- all this demonstrates that the proletariat has challenged capitalism for world rule, and that the issue is: capitalism or socialism.

After World War I, still-prosperous American capitalism was able to pump golden blood into the veins of European capitalism to temporarily stabilize bourgeois rule, and maintain the labor aristocracy and hence the Social Democracy as a barrier to revolution; thus beginning the counter-revolution which brought fascism over Europe and destroyed the first workers state. Today, American capitalism is impotent. Unlike the Dawes and Young plans, the Marshall plan is a failure before it begins. Whatever the temporary setbacks in the struggle, the absolute inability of world capitalism to solve its present crisis and achieve stability guarantees that the proletariat

will soon overcome these setbacks and carry the struggle to a higher plane. Social explosions will burst unexpectedly and with great speed. We agree completely with the conclusion of the April 1946 Conference of the Fourth International that:

"What confronts us now is a world-wide crisis transcending anything known in the past and a world-wide revolutionary upsurge developing, to be sure, at unequal tempos in different parts of the world, but unceasingly exercising reciprocal influences from one center to another, and thus determining a long revolutionary perspective."

If the proletariat has not yet taken power in large parts of the earth, this is due not to the strength of the bourgeoisie but to the hold which the bureaucracy of the labor movement and the Second and Third Internationals still has on the masses. This bureaucracy is today the chief brake on the revolutionary movement of the masses.

Because the present revolutionary wave does not follow the exact form of 1917, some comrades, such as the WP, do not see it. So formal is their thinking that they cannot recognize a revolution unless it has the same organizational forms and details as Russia in 1917, soviets and a mass Bolshevik party, taking power six months after the revolution begins. They fail to see the essence of the revolution today, the movement of the masses, the rising self-activity of the proletariat acting in its own interest. Due to the peculiar development of Russia, a mass revolutionary party was there before the revolution broke out; and it was therefore able to win the leadership in six months. Where no such mass party exists at the beginning of the revolution, organizational forms are not so advanced and a longer time is therefore required for the growth of the revolutionary leadership in the course of the revolution itself. But although the present revolutionary wave has not yet reached the heights of the dictatorship of the proletariat in any country, it represents a far wider and more powerful upsurge than 1917-21, and it is only beginning.

Living Labor and Accumulated Labor

The basic production relation of capitalism is the labor-capital relation: the relation in production between the proletariat, i.e., living labor; and capital, i.e., means of production, accumulated, dead, congealed labor which expands itself by feeding on living labor. This relation, which was once progressive when it enormously expanded the productive forces and the well-being of society, is in the present epoch a brake on society.

Even while allowing the productive forces to grow in a limited way, the production relations of capitalism in this epoch distort them into an anti-social force, serving the direct opposite of their basic purpose, the advancement of man. Thus atomic energy is being developed by the bourgeoisie 99% for war, and only 1% for beneficial uses. Though bourgeois society still expands the productive forces (Germany, Japan, the U.S. before and during the war), it is reactionary since this expansion, because of the capital-labor relation, serves the end of the destruction of mankind. (The same is true of Russian expansion of the productive forces before and during the war.)

The proletariat today struggles to overthrow the capital-labor relation not only because it impedes the growth of the productive forces, but also because it transforms the existing productive forces into a weapon against humanity.

Capitalism has imposed its crippling discipline on the bodies and minds of the workers, converting them into cogs in the capitalist machine. But the growing level of technology, the centralization, and the resulting socialization of labor has at the same time developed the self-activity of the proletariat, its self-discipline in acting in its own behalf. Living labor, the unwilling tool of dead, accumulated labor in the capital-labor relation, struggles to free itself from this domination by capital; this is the meaning of the self-activity of the proletariat, now rising to ever higher levels on a world scale.

In a revolutionary period this self-activity takes the form of the most democratic workers', peasants' and soldiers' committees, overturning capitalist rule and beginning to deal directly with the problems of production and society generally in the interests of the working class. It is this actual rule by the workers, this domination of living labor over dead, accumulated labor, which constitutes a workers state, and not organizational and property forms.

Centralization, Stratification and Property Forms

For Marx the basis of a social order is the relation between the classes in production. Property forms are merely the legal or juridical superstructure on these production relations, and often lag behind them. Marxists must always look at the production relations to judge a social order. For seven months after the October revolution individual private property in the means of production remained the legal form in Russia. Yet the workers controlled production and Russia was a workers state. If England today under Atlee were to nationalize all industry, it would still be a capitalist state since the workers do not control production.

When Marx spoke of bourgeois private property, as the foundation of capitalism, he meant not the fact that individual capitalists had separate title to different parts of the means of production, but that the capitalist class as a whole monopolized these means, and the working class had nothing but its labor power; irrespective of how this monopoly was divided among the capitalists or through what forms it was organized. He meant the basic relation between the classes, not the relations within the ruling class.

The complete ownership of the means of production by the capitalist state, to Marx and Engels, is merely the ultimate result of the centralization of capital. Today we see before our eyes the process of stratification, centralization by the state, speeded up enormously by the new productive force, atomic energy. Atomic energy, destined to become the main motive power of industry, is at once put under the most complete government control and ownership.

Capitalist centralization prepares society for socialism, in the same sense ~~that~~ capitalism as a whole creates the forces for socialism. But to realize the positive benefits from capitalism the proletariat must struggle for its overthrow. And to realize the potentially socialist benefits of capitalist nationalization the proletariat must struggle against the whole capitalist system, including its nationalization. Nationalization carried out by the bourgeoisie or its labor agents is essentially the last defense of the bourgeois order against the rising tide of socialism, and secondarily, a means of preparing for war against rival imperialists; even though at the same time and despite the will of the rulers, it increases the socialization of labor and has the ultimate effect of revolutionizing the working class.

Bourgeois nationalization is reactionary, strengthening the capitalist state against the working class, and laying the basis for totalitarianism. It is an organizational change within capitalism, the centralization of control in the hands of the state as the collective instrument of the bourgeoisie; this organizational change cannot overcome the contradictions of capitalist production; it cannot abolish any of the laws of capitalism: the capital-labor relation, the resulting increase in organic composition of capital and the tendency for the rate of profit to fall, and the accumulation of misery at one pole and of wealth at the other. Capitalist stratification can only aggravate all these relations.

As long as the capital-labor relation exists in production, all reproduction reproduces it. It can only be overturned by the class action of the proletariat in production, not by any organizational manipulation of property forms.

It is false to conclude, because a workers state nationalizes industry, that nationalization by the bourgeoisie removes obstacles on the road of the proletarian revolution, and that all that would be needed on the day of the revolution is to replace the directors of nationalized industry by Bolsheviks. It is equally false to say this of today's Russia. The revolution is not primarily the replacement of directing personnel at the top; it is a profound social overturn in every workshop, in every department, in every mine and railroad, in every office, at every level of the industrial structure. All directors and managers are ousted from their posts by the workers, and replaced not by other individuals giving orders to the workers, but by the proletariat itself becoming the controlling force, from below, and giving its orders to its own representatives who constitute the managing personnel.

Such a profound social overturn, requiring the mass action of the working class, will be necessary regardless of whether "private property" or "nationalized property" exists in the old society; these property forms will not make the slightest difference in the basic actions of the proletariat in the revolution.

The enemy is not the forms of "private property" or "nationalized property"; it is the capital-labor relation in production.

We must oppose the conception that capitalism is distinguished by anarchy through the medium of market competition, and that socialism is state ownership and planning. This false conception sees the anarchy of capitalist production as derived from competition within the bourgeoisie; in reality the anarchy of capitalist production comes from the contradiction between use-value and value, between living and dead labor, between the socialization of labor and the production of surplus value. It is the capitalist law of value, flowing from the capital-labor relation, which produces the anarchy of production, not competition which is but one of the forms through which this law operates.

The conflicts between "free competition" and monopoly, between "private" monopoly and capitalist state monopoly, between bourgeois-democracy and fascism, are not between opposing economies or social orders, but simply represent the actual development of the centralization of capital. The proletariat cannot defend itself or advance toward socialism by trying to turn back the wheel of history, taking sides in the intra-capitalist conflict, supporting either the bourgeois "democrats" or the nationalizers of industry.

Capitalist state monopoly does not abolish competition and planlessness, but merely shifts them from the free market into the state bureaucracy; which is subject to all the pressures of the class struggle, actions of rival states, and internal bureaucratic conflicts, which prevent smooth harmonious planning. (The same applies to Russia today.) The bourgeoisie's attempt at planning, which can only serve to extract more surplus value and prepare the atomic war, means greater barbarism. Only planning by the proletariat, not by a minority in the alleged interests of the proletariat, could be planning for the people, for life, and is the way out for mankind.

Centralization today increasingly breaks out of national boundaries, and becomes the tendency toward world-statification. The constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, shown by Marx, now is extended into the constantly diminishing number of imperialist powers and the subjugation of formerly independent nations. The world is now increasingly dominated by the Big Two. The native bourgeoisie in every other nation completely loses its independence and becomes the quisling for either American or Russian imperialism, maintaining its power against its own proletariat only by the financial and military support of one of the Big Two.

Capitalist statification, the highest form of the dominion of dead over living labor, prepares its own negation by the proletarian revolution, which establishes the dominion of living over dead labor. It is this change in the relations of labor, and not in property forms, which constitutes the revolution. The reverse change in the relations of labor, not the "reprivatization of property", constitutes the counter-revolution.

The Russian Counter-Revolution

The world counter-revolution which followed the first world revolutionary wave, and culminated in World War II, resulted in the decline of the self-activity of the Russian masses and the gradual loss

of their control over production and hence over society. From this resulted the growth of the Russian bureaucracy, formerly the direct agent of living labor for the control over dead labor, but which more and more yielded to the pressure of the dead labor. With the complete elimination of the proletariat from control in the period 1933-37 the bureaucracy lost its dual character and became unambiguously the instrument by which dead labor, for its own expansion, dominated and exploited living labor. The Russian bureaucracy thus became a bourgeoisie, maintaining and enforcing the capital-labor relation in production, while retaining the nationalized property forms in order to more effectively fight the proletariat, and its capitalist rivals abroad.

The disintegration of the imperialist structure following the war, and the rising upsurge of the masses, due to the inexorable workings of the contradictions of capitalism, cannot overlook Russia and the territories it occupies. News of economic crisis, strikes, demonstrations, mass resistance movements, purges and soldier desertions has leaked through the iron curtain. For Russia, as for the other capitalist nations, the Fourth International must apply the strategy of revolutionary defeatism and the perspective of socialist revolution.

The Tasks of the Fourth International

The revolutionary party, the Fourth International, is the most advanced, conscious expression of the movement of the proletariat; it will become the actual leader to the extent that it acquires a voluntarily-accepted influence over wide sections of the masses. To break out of its isolation and attract the vanguard of the leftward moving workers, it is necessary for the International to make clear to the working class that we are indeed living in the revolutionary epoch, and that only the most drastic mass revolutionary action can bring a solution. No illusory chasing after minor reforms, after bourgeois-democratic rights (these should be defended, but cannot be the main point of the struggle today); no nationalizations, no government manipulations; -- only the creation of the broadest workers democracy through the most democratic rank and file committees, factory committees, peasant committees, defense committees (militias); and the increasing intervention of these committees into every phase of society; the linking up of these committees on a national and world scale to establish a real workers government-- only these measures can begin the solution of the world crisis.

The Self-Activity of the Masses and the Propaganda for Socialism

The International must concretize the conception of the revolutionary epoch, as Trotsky did in the transitional program, with the idea of the self-activity of the masses through ~~rank~~ rank and file committees as the only road in the struggle today and in building the new society. The propaganda and agitation of the International, the thinking of its members, its teachings to new members and contacts, must be thoroughly imbued with these conceptions of the independent activity of the rank and file workers, mainly outside the parliamentary sphere and not limited by the trade union bureaucracy, aiming toward the taking over of power in the factories and the state by the workers themselves.

The Fourth International must propagandize for the establishment of such committees in the factories, railways, mines, government offices, in the armed forces, in rural areas; and for building and strengthening them, tying them together, locally, nationally, and internationally, and for their increasing intervention in all levels of society.

As a vital part of this propaganda the International must fight to break the hold of the labor bureaucracy on the workers, must expose its ideas and actions as treason to the proletariat. The International must work for the democratization of the trade unions, to increase the power of the rank and file and weaken that of the bureaucracy. To this end it must aim to build left-wing, rank and file groups in the unions, fighting for the most complete democratic control by the ranks and for a militant transitional program, and directed against all the top union bureaucrats. Lenin wrote in "Left Wing Communism" that the struggle against the labor bureaucracy "must be waged ruthlessly to the very end. . . until all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social chauvinism have been completely discredited and expelled from the trade unions." This includes the Murrays, Lewises, Reuthers, Addezes and Thomases. Where the party's influence is not strong enough to bring about the formation of left-wing groups, it is still its task to advocate them; and while critical support to one faction of labor bureaucrats against another may be justified (if it is genuinely a lesser evil), such support must never entail political support to any of them, as would result from describing them to the workers as militants and from soft-pedaling on exposure of their treachery. Such political support could only tend to identify the party with them and give them a left cover, enhancing their prestige with militant workers.

The self-activity of the masses, through the most democratic rank and file organizational forms, is the essence of workers power, of socialism and of the transition thereto. It is this conception which must distinguish us, basically, from all varieties of reformists.

At a time when all classes look to the state to solve the crisis, when liberals, reformists and fascists all foster class collaborationist illusions and present state control and ownership as the panacea, the Movement most clearly warn the workers against capitalist statification as a step to barbarism. As against this statification, the Movement must emphasize and concretize workers control of production, through democratic workers committees, as the only solution to the immediate problems as well as the direct road to workers power and socialist relations of production. Especially now in the atomic age, the International must propagandize for international workers control of atomic energy, as part of a planned economy under workers control on a world scale, as the only alternative to a radioactive rain of death. The International must teach the workers the tremendous potentialities for advancement of themselves and society once the creative energies of the proletariat are released under their own rule, and applied to the technical wealth possessed by man in the atomic age. To this, the concretization of the propaganda for world socialism, the Movement should expect an increasingly favorable response.

The Meaning of Workers Power

When the proletariat struggles for democracy it wants not bourgeois democracy, which it knows to be a fraud, but essentially proletarian democracy. And proletarian democracy is not primarily an organizational or political category; it is a social and economic relation. The Fourth International must teach the advanced workers the meaning of workers democracy and workers power, and contrast this to the fake "workers power" represented, e.g., by the Labor Government in England. It must describe the inner workings of genuine workers rule, and show how this is far more inclusive than mere control of wages and working conditions.

It must show in detail how the workers themselves would manage production; how they would learn the workings not only of their individual departments but of the entire plant and the entire economy, and all the inter-relations involved; how they would acquire the knowledge and skill to deal with all technical and social problems of industry, with new methods to increase productivity and ease the burden of work, and with the records and books of each plant and industry; how each worker would understand his role in production as contributing to the general well-being, and how to manage his plant and industry toward this end. In short, the International must show how every worker, today the appendage to the machine, will become a whole man, the master of the machine and of the industrial know-how.

The Movement must also describe for the workers the organizational side, the application of democratic centralism to all of society; how the workers themselves would decide plans and policies of all problems of production and distribution, as well as those of a higher political nature; how such mass management would take place by means of regular meetings and discussions, and the election of representatives to department committees, factory committees, industrial committees, and congresses on a local, industrial, national and world scale. It must show how these representatives will report regularly to the workers, and be subject to instant recall; how adequate representation will be assured by limiting the income of these representatives to that of workers, and how all workers will have the opportunity to serve on these leading bodies at different times.

The Fourth International will explain the role of the party in all this -- not as the ruler giving orders, but as the leader, seeking to convince the workers to adopt its proposed policies and plans. The working class in power will establish the most democratic structure and the widest civil liberties for the producers, freedom of press, discussion and organization, not primarily as safeguards against bureaucratism but as the means for the maximum expression of the self-activity of the masses; affording the workers the freest opportunity to choose between various platforms, plans and policies on all industrial and social problems offered by competing working class parties, groups and tendencies. This is one of the important ways in which the proletariat exercises its rule, and increases its self-reliance and mastery of the problems of society.

The Movement must show how, as a result of this procedure, the workers themselves would decide the economic plan, and how they

would then in each plant carry out their local part of the plan. By carrying on this kind of education among the workers the Fourth International would be doing what the Bolsheviks did in the summer and fall of 1917, as exemplified in Lenin's "State and Revolution."

In brief, then, the consistent Marxist tendency holds that this is the epoch of the death-agonny of capitalism and of the socialist revolution; that the essence of this revolution is the rising self-activity of the proletarian masses, culminating in the overthrow of the capital-labor relation in production, and releasing the creative energies of the proletariat; that stratification by the capitalists is the continuation of capitalist centralization, strengthens the bourgeois state against the proletariat, and is in no way progressive; that not nationalized property forms, but only actual control by the proletariat characterizes a workers state, and that with the loss of all workers control in Russia that country has reverted to capitalism. It holds that the task of the International is to encourage the self-activity of the masses, and to propagandize for the formation of workers', peasants' and soldiers' committees; to struggle against the labor bureaucracy and to expose its class collaborationist policy, and all reformist illusions about nationalization and the state; to concretely propagandize for workers' power and world socialism through the action of the masses themselves as the only solution to the world crisis.

The above conceptions represent the genuine left-wing tendency in the Movement today. A rounded presentation of these views is contained in the 1946 Resolutions of the Johnson-Forest group in the United States. We welcome the open letter of June 1947 to the PCI by Comrades Natalia, Munis and Peret, despite differences we have with it on some points, as being in accord with these basic conceptions.

2. The Majority Position

Except for a somewhat abstract adherence to the revolutionary perspective, and a somewhat abstract recognition that the revolutionary upsurge is under way, the conceptions outlined above have been largely forgotten by the Majority of the SWP and the Movement as a whole. The recent SWP thesis on the "Coming American Revolution" is a step forward and is to be welcomed, but this strategic revolutionary perspective is not concretized, and even its abstract form is always in danger of being lost. In many respects, in its propaganda and agitation, the Movement gives the appearance of being merely a left edition of the Second and Third Internationals. The self-activity of the proletariat, factory committees, workers defense committees, etc., which were the heart of Trotsky's transitional program, are largely absent. The press of the Movement concerns itself chiefly with the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie, the Stalinists and the labor leaders, and very little with the independent activity of the working class.

By agitating for a CP-SP-CGT government in France, and for a Labor Party in the U.S., in parliamentary terms, without constantly emphasizing the need for the workers to create a network of workers' committees to control these leaderships, the Movement in general, and the SWP in the United States, are unwittingly helping the labor

bureaucrats to spread reformist constitutional illusions among the proletariat, which is led to think of all these things, the Labor Party, etc., in terms of organization by union bureaucrats, elections, and parliamentarism. Such slogans are revolutionary only when used as part of the systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution, by the application of the transitional program in a revolutionary manner. This is not being done today.

By often overemphasizing support for various sections of labor bureaucrats, without properly exposing them and emphasizing the need for left-wing groups to fight the entire bureaucracy, the Movement is unwittingly giving them political support, and providing them with a left cover behind which they continue their reactionary policies.

Socialism and the Role of the Proletariat

It is the lack of a concrete comprehension of the role of the proletariat in the socialist revolution and in the building of socialism, the lack of understanding of the nature of the self-activity of the proletariat, and of this self-activity as the essence of workers' power and socialism, which is the theoretical root of this false and opportunist practice by the Movement.

This inadequate understanding of the self-activity of the proletariat is intimately associated with the Majority's conception that nationalization and state planning as such are progressive, are the essence of socialism or of the transition to socialism, and should be defended by the proletariat. This view is totally false, and is in fact a deep-going revision of Marxism, on the question of the essence of socialism, as well as constituting a gross misconception of the centralization process of capital. For Marx the essential element of socialism, and of the transition to socialism, is the dominance of living labor, the self-activity of the working class. Planning under the control of the working class is progressive and leads to socialism; planning over which the proletariat has no control is reactionary and is part of or leads to fascism. The all-important question is, which class controls production?

The Movement is hypnotized by the fetishism of nationalized property, and determines its attitude toward various actions of the ruling class and the labor bureaucracy, not so much by the activity of the proletariat, as by whether the bourgeoisie and its labor agents are compelled in this or that instance to satisfy production. With its eyes fixed on all these nationalizations, the Movement doesn't see the real social content, the movement of the masses; it confuses these nationalizations with the movement of the masses.

These misconceptions also involve the Majority in a deviation from the Marxist theory of the state. For Marxism, the state is the instrument of the ruling class, primarily against the oppressed class. For the Majority, the state is also something else; when it takes over industry, it is the agent of a planning which is socialist or a step toward socialism, irrespective of which class controls this state.

The results of these deviations are evident in all spheres.

The Majority teaches the working class a bureaucratic conception of workers' rule and socialism. The idea is fostered that in addition to the road of the proletarian revolution by the action of the proletariat, there is another possible road: the bureaucratic "Socialist revolution", from above, by the Russian army. This army today is in a position where it could occupy all of Europe, e.g., in case of war, it is the main military antagonist of American imperialism, and even its world victory is a theoretical possibility. Thus the Majority position opens up the possible perspective of capitalism in Europe and even on a world scale being overthrown, not by the revolutionary action of the proletariat, but by the Russian army; and of capitalism being replaced not by democratic workers' rule, but by the Stalinist tyranny. To call such Stalinist expansion proletarian and socialist in any sense, does not negate the fact that (besides causing a monstrous confusion between socialism and the most extreme modern barbarism) the Fourth International here presents a theoretically possible alternative to the genuine proletarian revolution. This is not far removed from the idea of a third alternative to capitalism and socialism, bureaucratic collectivism, spread by the WP.

This bureaucratic conception that socialism and the workers state are essentially state ownership and planning, this idea of a road to socialism or a new order "from above," must lead to a weakening of confidence in the ability of and the need for the working class itself to carry out the socialist revolution. That is why the self-activity of the proletariat is largely absent from the Movement's press; the revolutionary perspective remains largely an abstraction; and right-wing theories like those of the WP develop from the International's position.

The Russian Question and Reformist Illusions

This profound deviation from Marxism is not accidental. It is the effect, on the revolutionary vanguard itself, of the world counter-revolution which led up to World War II, and of the state-fetishism of our time. Under the impact of the degeneration of the first workers' state, basically due to the decline in the self-activity of the masses, the Movement began to overestimate the importance of state power, administration, nationalization and planning, and to underestimate the importance of the self-activity of the masses. Thus minimizing the degeneration, and continuing to see a degenerated workers' state after the proletariat had lost all control and a qualitative change had occurred, the Movement slipped into the position of considering nationalized property as sufficient condition for a workers' state, and lost sight of the self-activity of the working class as the essential element.

As a result the Movement confuses the most advanced form of capitalist barbarism with socialism and a workers' state, counter-revolution with revolution, and urges the workers to give military support to one of the imperialist states, and to expect progress from its victory.

It teaches that although the workers have not the slightest shred of control, and are under the most brutal tyranny, yet as long as the government owns the industries there is a workers' state in Russia. This position amalgamates the proletarian camp with one of

the imperialist camps, and associates Marxism with defense of totalitarianism. It misleads the working class as to the motives and results of Russian expansion, and in effect calls on the workers in countries in its path to welcome the imperialist invader, as it did in the recent war. It disorients the working class and confuses the Movement with the Stalinists in the eyes of many workers. This position is especially harmful today because, after the world class struggle, the relations between America and Russia are the axis about which all questions revolve everywhere. By its position on the Russian question the Fourth International unwittingly aids Stalinism.

The entire planet is increasingly taking on the appearance of "collectivism"; all kinds of demagogues, liberals, reformists, Stalinists and fascists talk of "authority" and of ending all this national and world chaos; they talk of planning and world government; statification is proceeding. The International, by its support of "nationalization", fosters the reformist illusion that this government is or can become interested in the welfare of the people, and can plan for it; it leads the workers to look favorably on these reactionary steps, and aids the demagogues who present these actions as steps toward socialism.

In short, the Majority shares many of the fetishisms of petty-bourgeois ideology; it gives lip-service to dialectical materialism in the abstract but largely fails to understand it and apply it concretely. It has deviated from consistent Marxism in many fields, from abstract theory to concrete practice. It has deep-going misconceptions on the nature of capitalism, of the proletariat, of the state, of the socialist revolution and of the proletariat's role in it. Its revolutionary perspective is largely abstract, and it fails to understand the self-activity of the masses or to apply this conception in concretizing the revolutionary perspective. It does not teach the concrete meaning of workers' power. It poses the conquest of power by the Russian army as an alternative to the genuine proletarian revolution. Its position leads to, and it has directly urged, proletarian support to some sections of the bourgeoisie (the nationalizers of property, and imperialist Russia). These positions are a tremendous burden impeding the progress of the Fourth International at every step, and the chief cause of its crisis today.

3. The Right-Wing Tendency

As a result of the initial victories of Hitler, the later victories of Stalin, and the non-appearance of the 1917 pattern following World War II, there has emerged in the WP, the IKD and elsewhere a tendency which is losing sight of the revolutionary perspective, which places a question mark over the ability of the proletariat to make the socialist revolution, and which poses the possibility of "bureaucratic collectivism" as a third alternative to capitalism and socialism. (Whatever may be said about the WP at the time of its formation in 1940, its majority has subsequently developed in a right-wing direction. With the action of the Johnson-Forest Minority in leaving that party in July 1947, the WP remains merely a faction advancing Shachtman's particular theoretical revisions of Marxism. A few individual comrades who oppose this line and yet remain in the WP are too few to be an effective opposition, and are therefore unwitting appendages to the Shachtman faction.) This tendency, like the majority of the movement,

loses sight of the activity and movement of the masses. It, too, is preoccupied with the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie and labor bureaucrats.

This tendency, like the Majority, and developing its position from the Majority position, sees nationalization as often progressive, and always as qualitatively different from capitalism; assigns the same exaggerated role to the state; sees in Russia a new social order, neither workers state nor capitalist (not all adherents of this tendency agree to this). Although defeatist for Russia during the war, their conception of the hurling back of society (retrogression); their inability to decide whether capitalism can restore some kind of prosperity or is in its death-agony; and, if the latter, their inability to decide whether socialism or "bureaucratic collectivism" will inherit the earth; their view of the proletariat today as filled with democratic illusions and that the vanguard must concentrate on democratic rights, with the struggle for socialism removed from the top of the agenda; their whole empirical method of thought; all these are right-wing deviations from Marxism.

This tendency offers no solution to the crisis in the Movement. It shares every one of the Majority's deviations from Marxism which have produced the crisis, and its proposed solution is to drive further along the road of these deviations.

Both the Majority and the right-wing Minority see the masses chiefly as objects to be manipulated, in a bad way by the capitalists, labor bureaucrats or Stalinists, or in a good way by the Trotskyists; but they hardly see the masses as the self-active builders of the new society. In their practical propaganda and agitation, and in their work in the union movement, there is little difference between the Majority and the right wing, between the SWP and the WP.

Unprincipled Blocs and Political Clarification

Only a return to the rounded position of consistent Marxism can solve the crisis in the Movement. This requires that the comrades who accept the basic left-wing conceptions constitute a politically independent international tendency, and through education and discussion help clarify the Movement as a whole. This clarification cannot be served by political support to either the Majority or the right-wing Minority.

We believe it to be a serious error for a group which possesses these left-wing views to subordinate and push into the background some of its basic beliefs in order to facilitate intra-Movement combinations and alliances with the Majority, as the leaders of the Johnson-Forest group are doing. These comrades, who formerly stated that they represent a third distinct tendency in the Movement, are now artificially isolating one question from the whole complex of basic questions with which it is intimately linked; are saying that they are a tendency distinct from the Majority "on the Russian question only"; are exaggerating the importance of the perspective on the American question in isolation from the concrete practice on the American question and from other world questions; are stating that the basic cleavage in the Movement is on the question of the revolutionary perspective (and on this basis including themselves in one political camp with the Majority), thus overlooking the largely abstract character of the Majority's revolutionary perspective and its negation by the Majority's lack of understanding of the self-activity of the proletariat.

It would likewise be a serious error for comrades of the left-wing tendency to make alliances with right-wing groups like the WP, because of agreement on Russian defeatism. The WP leadership seeks to justify such alliances by claiming that the basic cleavage in the Movement is on the question of Russian defeatism, thus ignoring the vital question of the revolutionary perspective and all the tactics which flow from it.

In both cases we have an unprincipled bloc, which subordinates the basic principled differences, and over-emphasizes points of agreement, thus causing not clarity, but more confusion. The basic division in the Movement is not a two-way division, but a three-way division, as we have shown. The left-wing tendency must remain politically independent and oppose the political lines of both other tendencies. This does not, of course, rule out a united front with another tendency with whom we find ourselves in agreement on a particular issue or issues. However, expediency must never be an excuse for sacrificing political ideas.

Resolution on Unity

The most important task in the United States today is the building of the Party of the Socialist Revolution. To further this end, unity of all revolutionary groups is vitally necessary. The SWP, therefore, declares that it will welcome into its ranks every socialist tendency which opposes capitalism and Stalinism, and which is willing to abide by the rules of democratic centralism.

With reference to the WP in particular, the SWP declares that it remains faithful to the terms and the spirit of the February 1947 Joint Statement. It declares that the differences between the WP and the world Movement are compatible with their living together in one party in the U.S., on the basis of democratic centralism. The SWP declares its readiness to proceed with practical collaboration and steps toward unification, in accordance with the Joint Statement. We appeal to the WP to reconsider their position and accept this offer.

Nothing is further from our minds than the idea of wanting to build a monolithic movement. Full internal democratic rights are guaranteed to all minority tendencies in our Party. Our discipline is discipline in action -- action leading to the successful socialist revolution. We sincerely urge the comrades of the WP to join with us in this great task.

Motivation for the Foregoing Resolution

Unity can only be considered politically, and not on the basis of sentiment and emotion. Mankind faces the choice of world revolution or atomic annihilation. The political-organizational key to the world revolution is the Fourth International. The International must rally millions of proletarians in the most important countries, in a relatively short time, or mankind is doomed.

The International is therefore duty-bound to open its doors, on the basis of democratic centralism, to every proletarian tendency which opposes capitalism and Stalinism, and is willing to abide by the discipline of the Movement. Every serious tendency must help to build

the Fourth International, and must be in it, to build and influence it. In addition to these general considerations, the key importance of the United States in the world today makes unity of SWP and WP a political necessity, as it would eliminate one of the major obstacles to the building of a mass party in the United States; the wasteful, confusing and self-defeating competition between two revolutionary parties of the same order of magnitude.

Hence all obstacles to unity, from whatever source; all light-minded attitudes to unity, all condoning of splits, or of a split atmosphere, or violations of discipline, in any section of the Movement; all refusals to unify on any pretext, are to be condemned. We denounce the idea that the regime in the Movement and in the SWP is so bad as to prevent unity. Whatever its faults the regime is not so terrible as to nullify the compelling political need for every serious tendency to be inside the Movement; it is not so terrible as to make impossible the existence and functioning in the Movement of disciplined minorities.

We must likewise condemn all threats by any group to disregard the decisions of the EPC or of any other regular body of the Movement. The same is true of a refusal to unify out of fear of possible breaches of discipline by a minority; such fears show a lack of confidence in the party ranks and in their ability to resist damage from such breaches. The advantages of unity far outweigh any such hypothetical damage.

We must also disapprove of reckless and exaggerated characterizations of various groups as petty-bourgeois tendencies, Menshevik, semi-Stalinist, bureaucratic jungle, etc. None of these applies to either SWP or WP; these are both proletarian tendencies, with petty-bourgeois deviations to one or another degree. Such irresponsible language, besides being politically inaccurate, harms the climate for unity.

Recent History of the Unity Question

Soon after the unity agreement was signed by the SWP and the WP, the leaderships of both parties began jockeying for factional advantage, and put their factional interests above the vital need for unity. Each leadership seized on and exaggerated various petty errors of the other, and cast doubt on the other's sincerity and on the prospects for successful unity. The WP leadership built up fears of bureaucratic strangulation, and the SWP leadership encouraged fear of disruptive factionalism, in a united party. These actions have steadily worsened the atmosphere for unity.

Into this confused situation came the CIC's letter of June 21, 1947 to the WP, providing a basis for unity if carried out in good faith by both parties. These are its key sentences:

". . . either you are convinced that our Movement is a healthy revolutionary Movement in whose ranks a tendency like yours ought to take its place in order to influence in the long run, according to its own ideas, or our Movement seems to you of such secondary importance and so corrupt that you prefer to act independently and with full liberty,

"The recommendation that we can make, both to your organization and to the SWP, is to pursue henceforth political discussions, to

expand practical action jointly on all questions and matters where an accord is possible, to restrict to a minimum the discussion around personal incidents in assisting the regular functioning of the Committee of Coordination of the two organizations.

"If you have decided sincerely to build with us the revolutionary party in the U.S., your rights are fully guaranteed. . ."

Both leaderships ignored these recommendations of the CIC; neither made any public proposal to the other to resume collaboration and progress toward unity.

The WP leadership issued a statement (which has since been approved by its November 1947 Plenum) in which it declared, on the basis of grossly exaggerated interpretations of statements and actions of the SWP, that there will be no unity and all the blame falls on the SWP; it has torn up the unity pact; and now implies that unity is politically impossible and undesirable, thus openly reversing a position for unity which it held for the past several years.

In reply to this statement, Comrade Germain wrote the following in his Open Letter to the WP of October 10, 1947:

"We profoundly regret the proposal made by your PC to disassociate yourselves from the unity statement. We think, so far as the leadership of the movement is concerned, these proposals take as their point of departure, absolutely false premises, veritable mystification, which do not stand up under the slightest objective examination. As for the arguments on the national plane, cited in justification of this retreat, we consider them petty preoccupations, worthy of small town politicians rather than of revolutionary leaders convinced of the justice of their cause and of the historic responsibility of our movement. . .

"Until yesterday you claimed that unification was a profound historic necessity. And incidents of such limited importance suddenly cause you to change your position! . . .

"I am sure that I speak in the name of the vast majority of the movement when I tell you: WE REMAIN MORE THAN EVER FAITHFUL TO THE TERMS AND THE SPIRIT OF THE UNITY STATEMENT. We invite you not to disassociate yourselves from it. We will do everything in our power so that the leadership of the SWP may not disassociate themselves either. . .

"Nothing is further from our minds than the idea of wanting to build a monolithic movement. Our movement has hardly emerged from its period of incubation. As it is today, it will pass through many transformations before reaching its greatest power. We will have to assimilate mighty mass currents, infinitely more numerous than all the present parties of the movement before we have organizations at the head of the masses. We have full confidence in our ability to preserve for our movement its true physiognomy, only by the means of political persuasion and the maintenance of discipline in action because we have unlimited confidence in the justice of our ideas and our methods of work.

"Two years ago, you posed an academic question to us, to which, at that time, we refused to give an answer in the same academic fashion. 'Yes or No, are the differences between the WP and the

world movement compatible with their living together?' Today, comrades of the National Committee, my answer is clear: YES, THEY ARE COMPATIBLE IF THEY MAKE POSSIBLE YOUR PRESENCE IN THE MOVEMENT AS A RESPONSIBLE AND DISCIPLINED MINORITY TENDENCY WHICH, EVEN WHILE PRESERVING ALL THE RIGHTS OF INTERNAL DISCUSSION, REALLY CAN ABANDON ANY ORGANIZATIONAL AND FACTIONAL PREOCCUPATION AND ANY IDEA OF 'ENTRY' AS A MANEUVER, IN ORDER SINCERELY AND DEFINITELY TO JOIN IN THE GREAT WORK WHICH WE ARE UNDERTAKING - THE BUILDING OF THE PARTY OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!" (Emphasis in original)

These paragraphs, it seems to us, summarize the correct Bolshevik attitude on the unity question. Unfortunately, the February 1948 Plenum Resolution of the SWP does not share this attitude. It puts all the blame for the breakdown of unity on the WP, declares unity to be unrealizable, and also implies it to be undesirable.

Neither party now states clearly that unity is politically necessary; that the political positions of both groups are compatible with membership in one party on the basis of democratic centralism; that it is ready to unite on this basis (the February 1947 Joint Statement). Neither party now appeals to the other to reconsider its negative position on unity. Instead, each takes the fatalistic attitude that unity is impossible, puts the blame on the other, and the whole question is thereby dismissed.

All these actions show that both leaderships place factional interests above the needs of the movement, and have no real understanding of the political need for unity. The entire movement has the duty to use its influence on both parties for the carrying out of the CIC's recommendations referred to above.

The SWP must have the standing position that it will welcome the WP and every other group opposed to capitalism and Stalinism, and willing to abide by party discipline. A group refusing this offer thereby declares itself outside the political framework of the Fourth International. By accepting the offer of unity, such a group would automatically establish that its differences with the Party are not so great as to put them beyond the political bounds of the Movement.

The Movement will grow to maturity and enter the road to the masses when it learns to have confidence in the proletariat, not only to make the revolution, but, as part of the latter, to decide correctly among competing tendencies and factions on the basis of political ideas and acts.

April 19, 1948