

## POLITICAL RESOLUTION

The second world war is about to enter its third year. It has already lasted half as long as the first world war, yet, in spite of the lightning speed at which it was launched and, within brief periods, carried on (Blitzkrieg), no decisive victory is in sight for either of the belligerent camps, not even for the thus far successful Axis. Reviewing the past two years of the war, the following conclusions are clearly evident:

a) The Blitzkrieg technique introduced into the war by Germany as a fundamental change from the method of warfare pursued between 1914-1918, calculated to avert a long drawn-out conflict and to achieve an early and conclusive victory, has thus far at least failed of its principal objective. The tempo of Blitzkrieg cannot be sustained for long periods of time. After each hectic offensive drive, an interval must be allowed for the re-accumulation and re-grouping of human and material forces for the intensive campaign that must follow. These forces are not inexhaustible; rather, the reservoirs of them tend to diminish in availability and in effectiveness. Moreover, the intervals between drives have tended to become longer, in the degree that Germany is compelled to face enemies of greater military-material resources than those she had to fight at the beginning of the war and in the degree that these enemies organize their resources and institutions after the Hitlerite pattern, including an intenser totalitarian control over economic and political life of the country.

b) The very depth of the crisis of German capitalism which brought Fascism to power is what dictates to the leadership of the Axis the tremendous scope of its aims and ambitions in the present war and the desperateness of its determination to realize them lest it perish altogether. That is why small morsels could not appease it; that is why a peace now, even were that possible, could only mark a brief truce before the war was resumed on an even more violent scale. However, it is precisely the vastness and insatiability of German imperialist pretensions and the intransigence with which it must fight to satisfy them, that engenders no less desperate a determination on the part of its imperialist rivals in the war (as well as, up to a certain point, the fear of its allies and quasi-allies) to resist its expansion to the bitter end and to crush it to earth even more brutally than at the end of the first world war. Although it does not appear likely at present, it is nevertheless not excluded that, as was the case in France, the fortunes of war may bring the ruling class of England to capitulate to Hitler and to establish a British Vichy. But, as in France, this would only hasten the inevitable decomposition of the Empire, without bringing about real peace. The British Petains and Darlans would then most probably become Hitler's auxiliaries in the war against American imperialism and the remnants of the British Empire allied with it. In a word, it is not so much that world imperialism does not want peace as that it cannot have it! That is why Hitler now appears in vain to be allowed to play the role for which his present adversaries in the war groomed him before and after he came to power in 1933, i.e., the role of subjugator of the Soviet Union and dispenser of the acquired booty among the big imperialist powers of

the globe. That is why his offer to stop the war with Anglo-American imperialism and confine himself to carving up the Soviet Union among all the big powers of the earth, have fallen upon deaf ears, so far as the decisive sections of the Anglo-American bourgeoisie are concerned.

c) The prospects of the development of the war are thus indicated. As pointed out in the political resolution of the last Plenum of the Workers Party, there is no important sign of the war being brought to an early conclusion with a strong victory for either imperialist side and the consolidation of reaction that would likely ensue. On the contrary, all signs point to the prolongation of the war, and even to its further degeneration into a terribly exhausting war of attrition. The fronts of the war do not decrease in number, but they do increase. Already, four-fifths of the population of the world is at war. The "islands of peace" of yesterday are the arenas of war of today or of tomorrow. One after another, every country of the globe is being sucked into the bloody maelstrom. Yesterday Yugoslavia and Greece, today Russia, tomorrow the United States and all the other remaining "non-belligerents". Even subdued France will not be able to escape renewed belligerency, any more than Japan will be able to confine her military activities to the "private war" in China. All over the world the people will have to pay with rivers of blood, with misery and devastation, for the crimes of the traditional leadership of the labor movement, the Second and Third Internationals, which had it in their power years ago to destroy the poisonous monster of world imperialism, along with its offspring, war.

These conclusions are of great importance in appraising the international perspectives of the social revolution. The notion that wherever Hitler sets foot the very possibility of popular movements, much less revolutions, is automatically wiped out, has nothing in common with our thinking, but is typical of the political mythology of the democratic intelligentsia and the turncoats from radicalism who turn to stone at the mere picture of a Panzer division. The fact is that nowhere has Hitlerism been able to establish a regime in the countries it has conquered which has even the outward solidity of the regime in Germany. None of the Quisling or semi-Quisling governments set up by Germany enjoys the slightest mass popularity, and even such "old" and "established" regimes as Mussolini's have had to be given military and police support at home by Hitler. In other words, all the indications available to us show that Germany has been and will continue to be unable to consolidate its victories in the conquered territories on even a remotely peaceful and "normal" basis, but rather that it will have to keep maintaining a rigid, intolerably burdensome and exhaustive police regime wherever it raises its flag.

The growing restlessness and even guerrilla warfare in the occupied countries, particularly in Poland, Serbia, Norway and France, contain the promise of mass popular and even revolutionary movements in the visible future, and no matter how bloodily Hitlerism may seek to suppress them in their initial stages or in their first open attempts it is out of these irrepressible movements that will arise the forces that will sound the death-knell of all the imperialist war-mongers and

oppressors. Considering the circumstances in which these movements are arising and developing, it would be a fatal mistake on the part of the revolutionary internationalists to ignore them or fail to influence them. These movements are deeply rooted in the conditions and thoughts of the masses, almost all of whom detest their foreign oppressor and some of whom are even shedding or have already shed the prevailing illusions about their pretended "liberators" in the camp of Anglo-American imperialism, that is, the "liberators" who continue to exploit and oppress the colonial peoples of the world as they have done for decades. It is inevitable, particularly in light of the state of the labor movement today, that these elementary popular movements of discontentment and rebellion should take petty-bourgeois and patriotic forms in the first stages of their development. It is not surprising that the imperious exigencies of war should even impel Anglo-American imperialism to encourage and even initiate such movements (as by the "V" campaign); or that these movements should tend at the outset to come largely under the influence of imperialism. But because of the very nature and the inherent possibilities of these heroic and popular movements, this is only added reason why the Marxists in every country must not only pay the most detailed attention to their progress but seek, if possible in the very midst of them, to influence them and direct them along proletarian and internationalist lines, to free them from the reactionary grip of the imperialists who seek to dominate them, and to link them with the labor and revolutionary movements in the countries where the latter are still able to operate more freely. This task, which is inseparably connected with the victory of the Third Camp in the war - the victory of the workers, peasants and colonial peoples - cannot be accomplished by a disdainful or doctrinaire ignoring of these movements because of the primitive political state in which they are now to be found. Neither can it be accomplished by abandoning the independent class line of the revolutionary proletariat and uniting with the impotent and perfidious bourgeois democrats in exile who pretend to be the chosen representatives of the suffering peoples and who aim to keep the conspiratorial movements within imperialist, pro-war channels. Quite the contrary. It is only by keeping intact our independent class program and organization, the Workers Party and the Fourth International, it is only by relentlessly exposing and combatting the Beneses, de Gaulles, Sikorskys and their ilk that we can hope to influence these movements and help guide them to a struggle for true freedom and peace.

At the same time, and especially with an eye towards the future, we must intensify our propaganda against the war aims of the democratic imperialists. They have already announced (Roosevelt and Churchill in the "Charter of the Atlantic") that they intend to establish their "peace" by means of a European and world police regime, aimed not only at keeping their imperialist rivals under heel, but at suppressing the inevitable popular democratic and revolutionary movements that are sure to arise with arms in hand at the end of the war, if not before it ends. The masses must thus prepare to resist, under their own flag, not only the super-Brest-Litovsk "peace" of Axis imperialism but the super-Versailles "peace of Allied imperialism.

## II

The war, meanwhile, is taking increasingly the form of a life and death struggle between the titans of German and American imperialism, in which the allies of each, no matter how strong, no matter how much they strive for an independent position in the alliance, are more and more compelled to play the role of auxiliary or satellite of their respective leader. Italy is already less than a second rate element in the configuration of the Axis. The fortunes of Japanese imperialism are increasingly dependent upon the fortunes and military strategy of Berlin. As the war grows literally and truly into a world war, even China is threatened by submergence beneath the conflict of the big powers, and by becoming an integral part of the Anglo-American camp, having her democratic war of independence converted into a subordinate sector of the imperialist war.

What holds for the overwhelmingly dominant position of Berlin among the Axis powers, holds for the dictatorial position of Washington in the rival camp. Among the latter, the continuation of resistance to Axis expansion for even a single day is now entirely dependent upon the decisions of American imperialism. This is substantially true even for Russia. Immediately upon being drawn into the war with Germany, the Stalinist bureaucracy, having lost any allies among the international working class, concluded a full-fledged military and political alliance with British imperialism, and in effect also with American imperialism. Although desirous of keeping as much independence as possible in the alliance (like Italy, in the other camp, but to a much greater degree and on a larger scale), the Stalinist regime is obliged in the course of the war to come under the dominance of Washington-London, not only in the form of dependence upon great volumes of war material, and even of direct military intervention and collaboration (in the Far East, in the Near East - Iran - and in the North) but politically and in the elaboration of a joint military strategy calculated to eliminate all distinctions between the Stalinist army and the armies of democratic imperialism. It is more evident every day of the war that where the shibboleth of "defense of the Soviet Union" is not equivalent to direct and conscious support of Anglo-American imperialism, it has the same objective effect.

The British Empire too is gradually passing under the tutelage of American imperialism, and the desperate position of England confronted by her immediate enemy, prevents her from doing more than slow down somewhat the inexorable process of disintegration at the hands of her overwhelming ally. The agitation of the American "isolationists" against the United States "fighting England's battle" is at once demagogical and preposterous. American imperialism is doing no such thing and has no desire or intention of doing so. It is entering the war primarily in order to prevent German-Japanese imperialism from becoming its successful world rival, but at the same time it aims to reduce England to a very much subordinated power in world economic and political life. Weaning Canada from London and to New York and Washington is reaching the culmination of a process that has been going on for years. When the American press reports that Sydney, Hong Kong and even Bombay "are looking more to Washington than to London for their defense", it is only describing the systematic replacement

of Britain's imperial power by America's. The North and Central Atlantic footholds of British imperialism have been turned over to the United States, not without some muted opposition from the former. Even in Latin America, domination of which is one of the richest prizes of the war, the increasingly successful joint campaign of Anglo-American imperialism to drive out German, Japanese and Italian imperialism, is being accompanied by a drive to substitute North American control wherever Britain, too, has established its economic and political influence. Indeed, London is reduced to appealing to the mercies of the merciless American bourgeoisie which is working to replace England altogether in Latin America, with the really baseless argument that "the American government understands that it is not in the interests of the war effort to deprive England of her economic power." However, the remorseless crowding out of England by the United States is going on steadily, and in spite of mutual efforts to conceal it, breaks out from time to time in public "scandals". The fraudulence of all claims that this is a war for democracy, the reality of the thoroughly imperialist character of the war, could hardly be given more cynical emphasis than this sordid conflict between the noble "allies."

If the United States has thus been able to establish its decisive and dominant position in the war without directly entering it, it is not difficult to imagine the position it will occupy or seek to occupy when it is able to throw the full weight of its industrial, financial and human resources into direct war participation. However, before this point can be reached, American imperialism has a multitude of complicated problems to solve which are of tremendous importance also to the working-class movement. These problems belong to the order, first, of effective mobilization of the American industrial machine for war, and secondly, what is related to but not identical with it, the mobilization of popular morales, both inside and outside the army. In neither field, especially not in the second, has the Roosevelt regime recorded any sensational successes.

Victory in this most totalitarian of all wars is possible, all other factors being more or less equal (natural resources, industrial plant, man power, etc.), only for the camp that is able to establish "total" economic and political controls on the widest scale. At bottom, our confidence in the ability of the working class to triumph over Fascism not only at home but even in any inter-national war, is based upon the ability of this class to establish complete, democratic, efficient and planned control and management of the economic machinery of the country once it acquires political power. In any war it is then obliged to conduct, it could generate tremendous enthusiasm and morale, for it would not be fighting for imperialist aims, a fact so easy to demonstrate that it could not fail to undermine the armed forces of the reactionary enemy. What centralization of energies and powers such a regime would find it necessary to establish would be based upon and interlinked with the widest democracy for the toiling people, and would in no war be tainted by the autocratic and reactionary characteristics of Fascism. On the other hand, Fascism mobilizes its war machinery by means of chains, daggers, concentration camps, by superpressing murderously the working class and all democratic institutions. At the same time, however, it subordinates the selfish interests of capitalist individuals or groups to the general interests of capitalist expansion, thus overcoming with bureaucratic brutality the diffi-

culties presented by conflicting capitalist interests and ambitions. By a bureaucratic, super-concentration of power, it submits all wills to the will of the political representatives of monopoly capitalism which is, after all, the only effective way modern war can be carried on by a degenerated capitalist world.

Basically, the comparative slowness of the American war mobilization thus far, and therefore the delay in America's direct entry into the war, is traceable to the inability of the American bourgeoisie to establish totalitarian, Fascist controls. This inability is in turn due to other factors which have contributed up to now to the slowing down of the tempo of totalitarianizing the United States: the unwillingness of sections of the bourgeoisie to submit to such controls; the absence of the same economic and political compulsions to which German imperialism was subject, or their absence in the same degree; the conflict in the ranks of the bourgeoisie over imperialist policy ("appeasement", that is, leaving Europe for the time being to Germany and concentrating American expansion in Latin America and the Orient, versus the predominant policy of integral world expansion); the need of maintaining to some degree the ideological fiction of a "war for democracy"; and above all, the existence of a powerful, vigorous, growing, ungeneralized and unbeaten labor movement. But, against all these factors operates the insistent need of carrying the war to a successful conclusion for American imperialism, and this can be accomplished only by molding the "American war" so that it takes on more and more of the characteristics of the "Hitler way" - that is, of Fascism. As pointed out in our previous resolution, the slowing down of the pace at which totalitarian controls are being instituted in the country has not done away with the basic tendency which is at work; it is precisely because the pace has thus far been slow that it may have to give way suddenly to a more frenzied pace.

To a certain extent, this is already happening. The increasing magnitude of the task of defeating German imperialism (The U.S. has already become the "arsenal and larder" not only of England but of more than half the world!) dictates a speeding up of the tempo of totalitarianism. After years of contemptuously ridiculing the Goering war-cry, American capitalism is compelling the people here, too, to substitute guns for butter. Germany's collecting of pots and pans has already been imitated; tomorrow, the iron fences will go the same way. The cost of living mounts steadily. The control of prices "except for wages" is being shifted over, under the pressure of the bourgeoisie and its war needs, to the control of prices including the "control of wages". During all this time profits not only remain intact but reach new highs; moreover, the war profits, like the war-production contracts, tend to become the monopolized benefits of a handful of super-trusts, with the small capitalists and middle classes more and more excluded from the trough of the war economy. The production of consumers' goods is systematically reduced for the benefit of the production of means of destruction. Even where the war boom has increased the nominal purchasing power of the masses, or section of them, the government intervenes, as in Germany, to cut down or prohibit the purchase of consumers' goods (restrictions on installment buying, etc.) and to enforce compulsory "savings", that is, to reduce effectively the standard of living of the masses by turning over part of their earnings to meet the astronomical war budgets of the government. The frantic attempts by this and other means to prevent infla-

tion may, at most, postpone inflation, but in the end will lead to an inflation of monstrously onerous proportions. If such an inflation is to be prevented at all by the bourgeoisie, it can be done only if a permanent war economy is established or if a Fascist regime in this country imposes its "regulated economy". In either case the masses would suffer unspendably under a violent reduction of living standards equal in its effects to those of a "classic" inflation. New taxes go lightly on the big big bourgeoisie and bear down more heavily on the working people, and on small business and the middle classes, which are being systematically ruined, furthermore, by the centralization of the war economy in the hands of the big monopolists. To top it all, in the spheres of government there is an acceleration of the tendency to shift the legislative powers from the traditional representative institutions (houses of Congress) to government by decree and by accomplished fact. The process of "submitting the wills of all to the will of one" in the war, is being carried through in the United States in the worst bourgeois tradition, that is, in a reactionary bureaucratic manner, to the advantage of the big-monopolist handful and at the expense of the economic and political position of the masses.

However, the mighty labor movement, its remaining democratic rights, and the almost universal opposition among the people to entering the war, all these are a bone in the throat which cannot be plucked out by decrees alone. Neither the eloquence of Roosevelt nor the sinister activities of his labor lieutenants has succeeded in crushing the popular resistance to the war or in making labor the docile captive of the war machine. It cannot be denied, to be sure, that the imperialist war propaganda and the spirit of class collaborationism is seeping wider and deeper into the ranks of the labor movement, particularly since there exists no strong center of conscious proletarian opposition to the war. Yet, it has failed to curb the organizing power of the labor movement or even its militancy. The pressure of the government, the servility of the labor bureaucracy, and now the frenzied chauvinistic turn of the Stalinists who are collaborating with the pro-war anti-labor machine - all these notwithstanding, the economic conditions engendered by the war preparations continue to produce militant strikes (no longer "communist instigated"!) and to swell the ranks, and therefore the power, of the unions, especially of the C.I.O. unions. It is these organizations and their struggles that today constitute the only possible basis of resistance to the drive towards war and totalitarianism. The defense of the organized labor movement and its rights is therefore the key to the struggle against the imperialist war and social and political reaction. The establishment of this fundamental truth underscores, in passing, the criminal stupidity of the Norman Thomas alliance with the Fascist, semi-Fascist and reactionary "isolationist" forces whose "opposition" to war is connected with a thousand threads to a real opposition to the organized labor movement and to any form of democracy.

While the Fascist and "isolationist" demagogues have made no appreciable progress among the workers, especially the organized workers, despite the latter's opposition to the war, they are acquiring an increasing following among the armed forces, where opposition to conscription, to the lengthening of the service term and to entry into the war, is widespread and deepseated. It is in reality this opposi-

tion to which the democratic publicists refer when they speak deplorably about the "poor morale" of the army. It is an alarming fact, but one which cannot be disputed, that in the race between the militantly proletarian forces and the fascist or potentially fascist forces in the ranks of the army, the latter are now far in the lead. The reactionary elements in the officers corps, that is, 99% of its personnel, are not behindhand in stimulating, promoting and encouraging the fascist or pro-fascist currents, either in the form of training exercises for the soldiers in dispersing "strike mobs" and of agitation against the "exorbitant wage demands of the unions", or of not too subtle agitation in favor of the totalitarian "ideal". The failure of the labor movement to demand its elementary rights with regard to the armed forces - rights which at the same time imply the defense of the rights of the armed forces, can only have tragic consequences both for the rank and file soldier and the labor movement itself, and that in the not distant future. The elementary rights of the labor movement include the right to defend itself and its principles from misrepresentation and defamation among these the professional democrats like to call "our citizen soldiers"; the right to be fraternally associated with the young workers in uniform, so that the military forces are not kept separate and in isolation from the people, and therefore in antagonism to them. This implies, as said, defense of the rights of the soldiers - their right to free speech, free press, free assembly, the right to organize, the right to collective presentation of grievances and demands, the right to petition the government and intervene in questions of national politics (a right now reserved aristocratically only for the officers' corp or its upper stratum), and the right to a decent standard of living. The war-mongers call for "every citizen a soldier!" The labor movement must demand in turn: "Every soldier a citizen!" Unless the labor movement is aroused to demand and fight intransigently for the soldiers' rights, that is, for "Citizen's rights for every soldier", that is, for full democratic rights for the soldiers, the bulk of the army is sure to fall victim to fascist demagogues and to become one of the principal weapons in the destruction of the labor movement itself. Given even the present policy of the labor movement, (that is, general support of the government) it can and must launch this elementary struggle on behalf of the soldiers. However, such a struggle could reach its maximum effectiveness only if the labor movement declared its complete independence of the capitalist government and its policies, including its war policy.

### III

The Roosevelt administration and its labor lieutenants, Hillman, Tobin, Green, Reuther and Company are engaged in a concerted drive to harness the labor movement and the working class as a whole to the imperialist war machine. The official leadership of the AFL and the CIO are re-enacting the crime of Gompers and the social patriots in the last war and of their similars in Europe in this war. With the enforced shift of the Kremlin from the Axis camp to the camp of democratic imperialism, the American Stalinists, ever faithful lackeys of the reactionary Russian bureaucracy, have come to the aid of American imperialism by dropping their pseudo-opposition to the war in favor of a thoroughly chauvinistic pro-war activity. Over night, they have become the most active, best-organized agency for dragooning



the labor movement into the service of American imperialism in the interests of their real masters, the Kremlin autocrats. Now, more than ever before, the struggle against Stalinism in the labor movement becomes for every class-conscious worker, an urgent, a foremost and an elementary duty, inseparable from the struggle against the war and against capitalism itself. The Party rejects completely any alliance with reactionary and red-baiting elements directed at bureaucratic disqualification of the Stalinists in the unions, or in parliamentary elections, solely for their political views. But the Party urges the unity of all honest, militant and progressive workers in the task of eliminating the influence and control of the Stalinists in the unions and in all other labor organizations. This task is not less important than that of breaking the stranglehold of the old-line union bureaucracy.

The future of the Stalinists in the labor movement is linked completely with the fate of the bureaucracy which rules the Soviet Union. Should the Soviet Union be defeated by Hitler, the disintegration of the C.P. in this country would be precipitated. Part of its ranks and leadership would retire completely from political activity. A small part would probably try to maintain the old organization in expectation of a restoration to power of Stalin and his gang. Another section would undoubtedly seek purely social-reformist bases for continued existence in the labor movement, abjuring even formal acknowledgement of communism - many if not most of the Stalinist trade-union officialdom would make this choice, i.e., reconciliation with bourgeois society. Still another section, composed of sincere militants, after a period of re-evaluation of Stalinism, will move to the position of revolutionary Marxism. It is towards this section that our Party must look for many of its comrades of tomorrow - and this regardless of the military situation in Russia or of the tempo of disintegration of the C.P.. It is precisely in order to facilitate the development to Marxism of the best elements in the ranks of the C.P., however, that it is now necessary to intensify the revolutionary attack on Stalinism in the labor movement.

If American Labor allows itself to be seduced or browbeaten or coerced into captivity to the war machine, to abandon its interests for the sake of prosecuting the imperialist war, to give up its rights so that the war may have the right of way, it is doomed to paralysis for the whole next period. It will be powerless to defend itself from the multitude of attacks upon it which are in preparation; it will be powerless to draw to the support of itself and its principles the tremendous reservoir of strength represented by the armed forces, who will be left at the mercy of reaction; it will be forced to bear the dreadful and backbreaking burden of the war in all its social and economic consequences.

The struggle against the war is therefore the struggle to preserve the independence and the rights of the working class and its organization is therefore the struggle against the war. Neither aspect of what is basically the struggle against the bankrupt capitalist social order itself, can be effectively conducted from outside the labor movement, by observers who are not matter how benevolent. The first task of the vanguard revolutionists, therefore - into the unions, into the struggles of the workers! - which our Party has already moved so far

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in accomplishing, must be accomplished at top speed to the last man and woman. It cannot be accomplished otherwise than by every member of the Party who is in a position to do so, removing every obstacle in the way of finding his or her place immediately in industry, particularly in the basic, mass-production industries of the country. Further delay in this matter is absolutely impermissible.

Taking our place in industry and in the labor movement is not, however, an end in itself. The principal task of the Marxist in the shops and in the unions is to enhance the political class consciousness of the masses for the purpose of developing, as speedily as possible the political organization of the masses that will put them in a position to claim their rightful place in society. The present situation in the United States is of such an unusual nature as to demand more than ever, on our part, an intensification of political activity.

The unusual nature of the situation consists in the following anomaly: The American labor movement is today more numerous and more strongly organized than ever before in this country. Yet, it is almost totally unorganized politically. This in a period when not only do all important questions of class conflict almost instantly become political questions that cannot be dealt with otherwise by political action, but also when the working class cannot look forward to a long and gradual and comparatively peaceful period in which to develop its political strength, but must develop it immediately or, in the crucial days ahead, succumb completely for a long time to follow.

In the past few years, the American working class has displayed marvelous capacities for militant struggle in the economic field. Its strikes, both spontaneous and organized, have terrified the bourgeoisie, because, above all, they evoked the image of a working class capable of disposing with comparative ease of any difficulty in the way of establishing its complete social power in the country once it determined to do so. However, the determination to do so involves as an indispensable preliminary the political organization of the working class, not as a mere supplement to its economic organization but as its primary instrument especially in the present period. The wave of economic struggle which, roughly, inaugurated the C.I.O. movement, is not yet at ebb, by any means. But at the present time, particularly given the war and the tendency towards super-centralization of all economic and political power in the hands of the bourgeois state machine, the self-imposed limitation of the struggle of the American workers to the economic field can have only the most exhausting and even paralyzing effects upon the immediate future of the labor movement. More or less purely economic struggles (strikes, etc.) can yield only so much to the workers, and no more. As the war economy becomes more dominant in the country, confinement to economic struggles may, and in all likelihood will, produce a reaction among the workers, similar to the reaction that set in among the French workers after the defeat of their purely economic struggles of 1935-1936. Since such struggles by themselves cannot really improve the economic (much less the political) position of the workers, they will tend to pass over more and more to purely defensive actions, and even to passivity. The union movement will lose both its numbers and its vigor, and this will in turn only aggravate the situation of the working class. Given

no working class way out politically, the masses will fall victim to the conservative and even reactionary moods and movements, and that in direct proportion to the sharpening of the economic difficulties and the social crisis which is absolutely inevitable in the course of the war. How fast such a development would take place cannot, of course, be foretold with any accuracy. However, it is clear that a few dramatic events, such as a crushing defeat suffered in a number of important strikes, would greatly accelerate this inexorable trend. Marxists, who cannot substitute their desires for an objective analysis of the situation and the perspectives, must not ignore the possibility of such a development, and orient itself accordingly.

In a word, unless the American working class speedily develops an independent political party of its own, all its recent gains will be lost and it will itself be threatened with disintegration and impotence.

The principal task of the class-conscious elements in the labor movement is thus clearly indicated. Foremost in their activities among their fellow-workers, in their trade unions and other working-class organizations, must come the propaganda and agitation for the formation and upbuilding of an independent Labor party. Wherever the conditions are ripe, the initiative must be taken for the formation of such a party even on a local scale, and even if at its inception it can take no more solid shape than the formation of a united labor ticket. Because it is too late to develop such a movement for the coming elections, the propaganda work must be launched now under the slogan of "Labor with its own ticket in the 1942 elections!" Every occasion, every strike, every struggle, every event, must be utilized to draw the key lesson: the workers must have a party of their own, based on the mass organizations of labor, or else the labor movement is crippled. The vanguard elements must understand this in a double sense, and not at all in the sense that this is merely a "good agitational argument": unless it develops a strong independent political movement of its own the labor movement as a whole will be paralyzed; and unless the revolutionary Marxist movement finds such a broad political milieu in which to function, it too is threatened with doom, or at best to a strictly sectarian existence for the whole next period.

To be sure, the conscious vanguard elements are not mere "Labor party partisans". An inseparable, an integral part of their work for the formation of a Labor party is their work against reformist politics, class-collaborationist leadership, bureaucratism; for a democratically-controlled party, organized on a federated basis; and for a revolutionary transitional program for that party. That is, a program of demands requiring resolute encroachments upon the economic and political power of the capitalist class, leading directly to a workers' government, as the only means of preserving and extending the gains and interests of the working class. For it is also an elementary truth that unless the working class adopts such a revolutionary program, the mere formation of a Labor Party will only prolong the agony of capitalist society and leave the working class without a progressive way out of the chronic social crisis.

Conceiving the inter-relationship between the struggle for a Labor party and for the socialist revolution in this sense - the only possible

sense in which we can conceive it - the vital importance of the organizational integrity and principled firmness of the Marxist movement acquires renewed emphasis. Without the eventual victory of revolutionary principles and program in the working class, its Labor party would only end in a new and terrible disillusionment; just as, by the same token, the vanguard Marxist movement would end in complete sterility. Hence the need, more than ever before, to strengthen the revolutionary vanguard party, to preserve its principles intact, and to solidify and raise the quality of its ranks for the severe tests and tasks lying ahead of it.

The progress that our party has made in the past period is far from fully satisfactory. It is imperative that we speed up in every field, for there is not too much time at our disposal before the show-down. All looseness must be eliminated from the party; it must be knit together more tightly, both from the standpoint of its theoretical foundations and of its individual composition.

The danger of lagging cannot possibly be overstated. We have not yet emerged from the long period of world social reaction that has lasted for almost two decades. On the contrary, the indications are that before a revolutionary upswing begins with real vigor behind it, we shall still have to pass through the period of reaction. Such periods are also periods of reaction in the realm of revolutionary theory, in which the elements of despair and confusion, reflecting alien class pressures, seek to vitiate the clarity of the Marxian doctrine; such periods are also periods of organizational looseness and even decomposition. The tendencies represented hereby assail the small revolutionary groups no less than the large, reformist organizations, and in some respects even more. It should suffice to point to the voluntary dissolution, in the past year alone, of the Lovestone group, the Stamm group and the Socialist Union Party, all victims of the reaction and of their own political irresoluteness and instability. Left alone, or "tolerated", these tendencies successfully accomplish their disintegrating objectives. They can be resisted and defeated only by conscious and deliberate struggle against them. This struggle requires such an organization, or re-organization of the revolutionary party as best enables it not merely to resist reactionary tendencies but to rise out of sectarian isolation and grow into a party of the masses.

The means the organization of our Party on such a basis that it is composed in overwhelming predominance of factory workers, including the most exploited section of the American workers, the Negroes. That its qualifications for party membership and leadership are of the highest and strictest order, with regard to requirements for Party activity, Party loyalty, readiness to make sacrifices for the Party and the socialist struggle. That its educational training of the membership in Marxian principles and revolutionary politics is not relaxed, as has been the case among us in the past period, but extended and intensified, so that no dozens but hundreds of party members are in a position to act as qualified representatives of the Party and its program. That, in general, it prefers to have its sympathizers around the party, helping it, than to have members in the Party who are no more than sympathizers. That it concentrate its main efforts upon

recruiting to the Party ranks the best militants in industry and the labor movement. Concrete steps to accomplish such a development in the party must be taken immediately and vigorously.

On the basis of what has been achieved up to now, and of the determination of the membership to continue and intensify the work, the convention expresses its fullest confidence that the Party will, in the coming period, discharge its revolutionary obligations to the limit of its capacities, facing every test ahead with the unaltered conviction that only the working class, led by the revolutionary Party and International that stand firmly on the principles of Marxism can and will take the broad road away from the horrors of capitalist reaction and towards the world victory of socialism.

Adopted by the Political Committee  
Workers Party, Sept. 5th, 1941  
For submission to the Second National  
Convention.