

I N F O R M A T I O N B U L L E T I N

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December, 1944

The Meeting of the National Committee of the Workers Party

TO ALL BRANCHES AND MEMBERS:

The recently concluded meeting of the full National Committee of the Party occupied itself primarily with the question of Party organization. In this connection we wish to outline the subjects dealt with by the Committee meeting and to indicate the decisions that were adopted. This is only the preliminary outline and will be supplemented by additional documents that are being prepared for the information and discussion of the membership.

I. PARTY ORGANIZATION AND RECRUITMENT

The state of the Party organizationally, the extent to which it has performed and failed to perform its tasks and the next steps that must be taken in the work of building the Party were discussed more thoroughly and in greater detail than at any previous meeting of the National Committee.

We have an extremely difficult task and we are far from having accomplished it. To become a really effective force in the labor movement we must number at least in the thousands and have direct influence over at least tens of thousands. Such a situation will not, of course, develop by itself. We must continue to work for it with the forces we now have at our disposal and on the basis of the most efficient organization of the work of these forces.

At present, as you know, we are few in number. As a result of the war and the consequent drain upon our membership, we have been deprived of the services of a very large number of our members, especially of our trained, educated and qualified members. In spite of this, we have been able to accomplish what no other organization of our size has ever been able to accomplish. If we take into consideration not only the objective circumstances, but also the size and composition of our membership (many, if not most of whom, are comparatively recent and therefore inexperienced recruits) we have every reason to be proud of what we have done and to be confident of what we can do. In proportion to its organized backing, the circulation of our paper exceeds that of any in the history of this country. Its ideological influence over workers is, again comparatively, tremendous. Our standards of membership, of the demands made upon comrades, for activity and sacrifice, and the response of the members to these demands, are all of the highest order. Our recent recruitment campaign did not reach the quotas originally set, but the number of new members we did recruit, to say nothing of the quality of the members (they came for the most part, from the factories and the unions) was very high as compared with the membership we had when the campaign began. Our influence in the trades unions, on the thinking and action of trades unionists is unparalleled for an organization of even twice or four times our size. If this is the record we can point to on the basis of our small membership, and of the defects in our work, then it should be obvious that we can and will make far greater headway if we remedy these defects, improve our methods of work and intensify our recruitment.

Toward this end, the National Committee decided on a series of measures aimed at improving the organizational and political functioning of the party. In view of the decisive significance of the center in all our activities, these measures related in large part to a reorganization of the leading staff. The defects in the functioning of the party in the past period have been due primarily to defects in the organization of the work in the center. As first steps toward eliminating these defects, the National Committee decided to reorganize the center in such a way as more clearly to departmentalize the functioning of the center and to define more specifically the responsibilities of each comrade. Beginning with the new year, comrade Lund is to come to the center to take up the full time post of Organization Secretary, in charge of all the administrative work of the center and the carrying out of the party campaigns. Comrade Gates is to be relieved of his dual responsibility of organizational work and editorial work on the paper and devote himself primarily to the latter in his capacity of Editor. Comrade Bell will act as Assistant Editor and will continue as Financial Secretary. Further in the field of organization is the decision to convert the management of LA and the NI, which is in the charge of comrade Rayo into one of our most important organizing centers, instead of its being, as in the past, a purely administrative affair. Inasmuch as most of our contact with workers is through the paper, the management of the latter will henceforward concern itself primarily with utilizing these contacts directly and planfully for organizational work and recruitment. This is the reason why it was decided to place the business management under the supervision of the Organization Secretary. The Trade Union department will be headed, as up to now, by comrade Coolidge. To implement the decisions referred to above, a number of other measures were adopted. It was decided to send two members of the NC to work in Chicago, with one of them as full time organizer. (Two other comrades, not members of the NC, are being sent to Philadelphia in order to strengthen the organization there, especially in view of the impending departure from Philadelphia of comrade Lund.) Under consideration, also, is a tentative plan to establish a half formal-half informal Midwest region covering the area bounded by Akron, Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago. We will have two full time functionaries in this area (one in Detroit and the other in Chicago, for instance) and in all likelihood periodical meetings of representatives of the branches included in the area, discussion of common problems, exchange of speakers, lecturers and teachers among the branches will prove very profitable for integrating our work in this field and extending our influence.

For the purpose of strengthening the work in this key industrial territory, the National Committee approved of two other measures. One applies not only to this area but to the party nationally. With the growth of the problem of unemployment due to "reconversion", the tendency may well arise among some comrades outside of New York either to leave the key industries in which they are now functioning or, in the case of others, to return to their "original home town." Our concentration points were not chosen by chance. The most conscious and organized effort must be made to maintain them. The Committee therefore decided to inform every branch and every member that the party will set itself formally against any such tendency and will refuse to approve or condone any attempt of comrades to leave

what are their positions of duty for purely individual or personal considerations. The second decision was made not only to prevent "deconcentration" but rather to strengthen the concentrations that we now have. Upon the return of many of the comrades who are now away and who will rejoin the party upon being discharged, they will all be sent to take up work in the Midwest industrial centers, especially Detroit. Exceptions to this rule are possible but will be made only in rare and especially unusual circumstances. Our work in these industrial centers must be maintained and extended. Without strong and influential units in these centers we cannot consider ourselves a real party and we shall never become one.

Since the last national convention our members have accumulated invaluable experiences and numerous problems, new ones and old ones in new forms. In order to exchange these experiences and to discuss these problems on a national scale, as well as to outline the coming activities of the party, the NC also decided to call an Active Workers Conference on the largest possible scale some time early next year. In all likelihood the conference will take place in some midwestern city. We shall seek to precede it by discussions in the branches and in the internal party bulletins, in order to make it at least as successful as was our first active workers conference in Cleveland.

One final point under this heading deserves your special attention. Some time ago we fused our youth organization with the party. But it was never our intention to continue without a separate youth organization. The NC deliberately refrained from discussing or deciding just what type of youth organization we wish to build or rebuild. It is a little too early for that yet. It did, however, decide to recommence work among youth, young workers and students. For a beginning our activities in this field will have to be somewhat experimental, different in different localities. But in a few cities, we already have some modest contacts with young people and in one city, Philadelphia, we have even organized a substantial group of youth into a Labor Youth Club which generally supports our program and aids in our activities. Every branch should immediately investigate the possibilities of work along the same lines in its city -- be it in the form of youth forums, youth classes, Labor Action youth clubs, labor youth clubs sympathetic with our party, etc., etc. The NC has decided that as soon as we have succeeded in organizing such clubs in at least three cities a special committee shall be formed to coordinate their work and to establish concretely the perspectives, and the steps necessary for the formation of a national youth organization. The importance of this work cannot be stressed too greatly. There is undoubtedly a rich field open to us. We cannot under any circumstances ignore it and the time to start doing something about it is now. A youth movement can be, as it has been in the past, a powerful auxiliary for us and an endless source of recruitment.

## II. PARTY LITERATURE AND PARTY EDUCATION

Between our agitational organ, LA and our theoretical magazine, the FI, there exists a tremendous gap which we have failed to bridge. This failure has undoubtedly contributed greatly to the lag in our recruitment. We have at present no material, or very little of it, to give to the worker who is already in agreement with

the general views set forward in LA but who is not yet ready to join the party. The NC meeting devoted a considerable part of its discussions to remedy this situation.

It was decided to make no fundamental change in the character of LA, which must remain the excellent agitational organ that it is. This does not, of course, mean that no changes are to be made, inasmuch as everyone recognizes that there is considerable room for improvement. One of the steps decided on has already been referred to. Namely, deciding the functions of the editor in such a way as to make it possible for him to concentrate his time on the planning of the paper. Another decision related to increasing and systematizing the publication of material in the paper which deals with the fundamental program and outlook of socialism and with the need of a revolutionary proletarian party. Much greater emphasis will be laid on these points in LA than we have laid in the past.

However, this does not yet solve the main problem. Our scandalous lack of popular literature and propaganda works, relieved only by the publication of the successful PLENTY FOR ALL was subjected to the criticism that it deserves. The meeting thereupon outlined a publications program which, though ambitious, we may reasonably expect to be realized in the next period.

The most immediate important publication contemplated is a booklet on the program of the WP, intended especially for those workers who are already familiar with the views of LA and who have already favorably received PLENTY FOR ALL. It will be a popular presentation of the fundamental program of the party and of reasons why militant workers should join it. Other publications decided upon include the following; an agitational pamphlet on the party's program for the reconversion and the post war period; a pamphlet on the need for an independent labor party; a pamphlet on the revolutionary situation in Europe and the tasks of the American workers; a popular pamphlet giving our views on Stalinist Russia; a pamphlet on the party and the Negroes; a pamphlet on the problems of the trade union militants; a pamphlet on the third American revolution, in light of the first American revolution and the Civil War. Also contemplated for later publication is a polemical booklet against the Cannonites, reviewing our five years of struggle against them. By means of such literature our party comrades will be infinitely better equipped than they have been to carry on their agitational and propaganda work and above all the work of recruitment.

In carrying out this publication program as speedily as possible it was decided to relieve comrade Shachtman of all administrative responsibilities so that he may devote the major portion of his time to writing or assigning, and editing the works contemplated. He will also be in charge of the special fund to be raised for this purpose. In addition he will continue as National Secretary with his political activity and remain in charge of the NI.

Another field in which the NC meeting decided to make improvements is in the field of education. Undoubtedly this has been the weakest point in the internal development of the party, especially in the light of the more than ordinary need for

education of the young, new and untrained members we have recruited. Our educational activities have been confined in the past largely to the discussion of such theoretical and political problems as the Russian question, the so-called national question, and the labor party. These controversial discussions should not be minimized, for they have been, as similar discussions always will be, invaluable for the theoretical education of the party. However, they have not and they can not substitute for the planned and systematic education of the party membership in the fundamental principles of Marxism, which has either been lacking entirely in the party or else has been haphazard and planless. To a certain extent this most ungratifying failure has been due to our inability to place in charge of this work a comrade sufficiently qualified to direct it, a comrade trained in Marxian theory, well informed on the party program and policy and capable of presenting them to the party. At the National Committee meeting it was decided to establish a special committee on education under the direction of the Organization Secretary. It was instructed to plan and organize the party educational work. In the first place it should be noted that some of the pamphlets we plan to publish will be serviceable as textbooks for study classes. In the second place the Committee officially confirmed an assignment to comrade Temple who is already working on a revised and up-to-date edition of his original outline, the ABC OF MARXISM, which we intend to publish not only for use inside the party but for sale to the public. In the third place, it was decided to publish periodically educational bulletins on topical subjects to be used in branch discussions, classes, and forums. Finally attention was called to the possibility and the need of using articles in the NI on important theoretical and political subjects more frequently and more systematically as the basis for educational discussions in the branches; this has been done far from sufficiently by the party although the material in the NI can very profitably be used for systematic internal education.

In connection with the NI, we wish to inform you also of the National Committee decision to conduct in the early future a subscription campaign for our theoretical organ, the circulation of which has been inadmissibly neglected by many branches and comrades. Details of this campaign will be sent to you as soon as they have been drafted.

Two other decisions on improvements were taken in the much neglected field of education. One provides for the organization of local weekend schools, the main burden of conducting which will be borne by circuit teachers from the National Office. In other words, for example, a concentrated one or two day school will be organized in a city like Detroit for members and contacts at which a series of two, three or more classes will be given by the visiting National Committee member and qualified local comrades; all concentrated within one or two days. The second decision referred to the Political Committee the matter of organizing in the next period another national school which like the first, will last two full-time weeks. As soon as the details have been worked out the branches will be notified in ample time for prospective students to arrange their personal affairs (especially with regard to their work) to attend the school.

### III. A TURN IN OUR TRADE UNION WORK

The NC meeting discussed at length the trade union work of the party. In this field we have recently suffered some setbacks, even if not fatal ones. But on the whole, we are able to record extremely gratifying progress. The trade union department is preparing a detailed and thoroughgoing document on the trade union work of the party and the tasks ahead of us, which the membership should study and discuss with the closest attention. Here we wish only to mention the subject briefly.

It was absolutely inevitable and quite proper for our party to have plunged deeply into the trade union movement. Without firm roots in the organized labor movement, we are nothing. The emphasis laid in the past on turning our face to the unions and to union activity proved to be not only correct but extremely fruitful. The experience and influence acquired by us as a result are irreplaceable. However, in some cases -- in many cases -- the impetu of our "movement" into the unions tended to carry comrades too far away from their party base. In such cases they have tended to become, so to speak, good trade union militants in the party instead of good party militants in the trade unions. In other cases they have tended to become so overwhelmingly absorbed by their daily work in the unions that they found it impossible to pay sufficient attention to the fundamental party work in the unions. In some cases especially where the entire task of organizing the progressive and left wing movement fell upon our shoulders, comrades tended to make the party function as the progressive movement. In some cases, comrades tended to forget or else did not learn that work in the unions can be fruitful and durable only to the extent that party recruitment keeps pace with it and constitutes its underlying foundation, a foundation that continues to remain, that continues to provide a basis for recovery and new progress, regardless of the vicissitudes of the trade union movement and of the progressive and intermediate groupings in it.

The NC therefore decided that it is necessary to make a turn in our trade union work. It is extremely important for all our comrades to understand the meaning of this turn with the greatest clarity, if favorable results are to be gained and unfavorable ones averted. In the first place, this turn is not to be, and cannot be, mechanical or uniformly applied. That is, in some of our trade union groups there is no need whatsoever for a "turn", inasmuch as our comrades are functioning there in the proper way. In other trade union groups, however, where the functioning is not proper or well planned the turn may need to be carried out drastically. And so on and so forth, according to circumstances and need. Taking the party as a whole, however, it is precisely a turn in our trade union work that we need. This does not, let us emphasize, mean a turn away from trade union activity -- far from it. It does however mean that all of our work in the unions must be impregnated much more consciously, deliberately, planfully, systematically, with the basic idea of party recruitment, of building the party, of converting the progressive and left wing contacts into party members, and hammering away at these contacts on the need for a revolutionary party precisely in the interests of the aims they are already pursuir

The turn means an awakening of the consciousness in all our trade union militants that their successes in the unions (their popularity with other workers, their successes and departmental or factory or union elections, their success in the adoption by their union of progressive resolutions, even their success in assembling progressive groups) can and will be swept away, sometimes overnight, unless they are constantly accompanied by (not "followed" by but accompanied by) recruitment to the party. This idea is fairly well established theoretically, as it were, in the minds of all comrades. But it does not always manifest itself in their actual trade union work. Unless it is made to manifest itself there, our successes would prove in the end to be transient and deceptive.

The turn must be clearly understood, must be carried out with the greatest care, to be sure, but with firmness. The trade union department, as indicated above, will deal with this whole question much more specifically and in greater detail. The branches are advised to hold their discussions on this subject only after the receipt of the document from our Trade Union Department.

#### IV. OUR PROGRAM FOR THE RECONVERSION AND POST-WAR PERIOD

The most important question dealt with by the National Committee meeting in the field of concretizing our program for the coming period was that of the "reconversion" and the post-war period. Millions of workers are already thinking in terms of the problems that will be created - and are in part already created - by this period. Both the labor leaders and the bourgeoisie are aware of this. Hence the constantly increasing extent to which they speak of what they intend to do to solve these problems. The interests of the workers in these problems, and their concern with them, are incontestable.

It is up to our party, in all its agitation and propaganda, both written and oral, to counterpose our fundamental program to the programs - in so far as they can be dignified by this term - of the bourgeoisie and the labor officialdom. This cannot be done effectively merely by presenting the general alternative of socialism versus capitalism. It must and can be done by counterposing to the vague and generalized verbiage of the bourgeoisie the specific and concrete points in our transitional program which, first, correspond to the level of consciousness and the aspirations of the masses, and second, are calculated to set them in motion as a class against the bourgeoisie and its government and toward the establishment of their own government.

Our program is divided, so to speak, into two parts, the one which deals with the problem of the "reconversion" period proper, and the one which deals with the problems of the period after the reconversion and the end of the war. The central ideas, upon which the greatest stress must be laid in our popular agitation, is that every worker is entitled to a guaranteed job with a guaranteed standard of living, and that the power of the government must be used to assure this, regardless of how deeply it encroaches upon the interests of capitalist property and profit. The program and the



agitation based upon it; must hammer repeatedly on this theme: If the government showed itself ready and able to take every step in its power in order to mobilize economy for the purpose of destruction, there is no reason why we cannot have a government that will hesitate at nothing to mobilize economy for the purpose of assuring the people abundance and security in peace-time. The present government is not doing it, will not do it. That only proves that we need a government of our own, a workers' government, that is able to do and that will do it. And a party of our own that will see to it that we get such a government. Our agitation should be carried on in just such a simple manner; our propaganda and educational work will take care of filling out the blanks in this "simple" presentation and of drawing out all the profounder implications and conclusions.

The desirable aim of simplicity in our agitation cannot, however, be attained at the expense of clarity and preciseness. Our program was drawn up with this in mind. Scores of demagogues may ... and do repeat that the government should guarantee every one a job after the war. But in every case they are careful not to say "how". They leave this unmentioned altogether, or confine themselves to vague generalities. We must, and can profitably, distinguish ourselves from them, in this case as in so many others, by dwelling on the "how". Our program says about these demagogues, in effect, that we agree not only that this aim must be but can be attained. But, we add, this is how it can be attained; this is what the workers can do to attain it (i.e., attacks upon the powers and privileges of the monopolists by the class political action of the workers). The importance of this cannot be overemphasized. Without it, we do not contribute to separating the workers from the bourgeois demagogues who are ready, especially now, to promise the workers pretty near anything in the form of jobs and wages "after the war" even promise them as much as we call for, without a word as to how it is to be done or what the workers themselves are to do to get it (except to continue supporting these same demagogues). Hence the importance of the rounded character of our "reconversion and post-war" program. In summary: The main stress in our agitation upon the central, most popular ideas; the systematic explanation that follows on "how to get it."

The National Committee decided to make this program the main agitational work of the party in the next period, linking the Labor party campaign with it. This conception is important. A Labor Party campaign can become an abstraction that means little to the workers unless it is linked indissolubly with their actual class needs at every given moment. We cannot merely repeat that labor needs a party of its own because...labor needs a party of its own. We must rather argue that labor needs a party of its own because it needs a political instrument to gain this, that or the other demand, to protect this, that or the other interest. Concretely, then, in connection with our reconversion and post-war program, the campaign for the labor party must be carried on in this sense: Labor must protect its interests in the coming period, etc., etc., and to do so properly it needs a party of its own. Labor must have a guaranteed job and wage, therefore we need a Labor party that will fight for it.

To make sure that the formulation of our program is most suitable to the situation, as well as to our basic principles, the National Committee meeting decided not to make it public in the press until after the membership had had an opportunity to study it and to express its views on its suitability in the light of every comrade's experience with his fellow workers, their state of mind and their aspirations on this particular question. A month following the sending out of this communication, to which the program for the reconversion and post-war period is attached, was set aside for this purpose. All comments, criticisms and suggestions are invited from the members of the party on this point. At the end of the month, we shall review all communications received on this subject from members and branches, and make the final decision on the program, whereupon we shall make it public with all the agitational skill at our command and on the basis of a plan for maintaining interest in it through the pages of our press and through popular pamphlets.

In addition to the program sent to you by the Committee, we are also sending out a document on the subject by comrade Lund in which he emphasizes his own point of view. The membership is requested to give both of them their attention and to submit comments of their own.

#### V. PARTY POLICY IN THE FIELD OF POLITICAL ACTION

The National Committee meeting approved the policy adopted and pursued since the convention by the Political Committee in the important questions arising in the field of political action. The most serious of these were the fight for control of the New York American Labor Party, the organization of the Michigan Commonwealth Federation, the formation and activity of the Political Action Committee of the CIO, and the national presidential elections. Although there was a difference of opinion on the policy to be adopted in some of these questions, the National Committee endorsed the line of the Political Committee on all of them.

a) The A.L.P. The position of the party on the fight for control of the A.L.P. was set forth in some detail at the time in the editorial pages of the New International. The Opposing viewpoint of comrade Temple was presented recently in an article by him printed in an Internal Bulletin. In addition comrade Carter opposed the policy adopted by the Political Committee. His view, in brief, was that inasmuch as the A.L.P. was not our party - i.e., was not a genuine labor party -- it was not our business to advocate that the registered voters support one faction in the A.L.P. primaries as against the other, both being opponents of the formation of a Labor party. Further, he contended, advocacy of support of one of the factions (Dubinsky - Counts) implied support of the candidates subsequently presented or endorsed in the elections by this faction. Both opposing viewpoints were rejected by the Committee meeting.

The fight in the primaries was a fight for control of the A.L.P. The "fight" in the elections that followed was an entirely different matter. We intervened in the primaries fight by first proposing that the progressives and left-wingers in the unions present a slate of their own committed to the formation of a real

labor party. For obvious reasons, this proposal did not materialize. We were then faced by choosing between the two factions, or abstaining from further intervention, at least so far as the primaries were concerned.

We decided to intervene with critical support of the Dubinsky-Counts group and opposition to the Hillman-Stalinist group. The reasons have been argued in detail in the New International. The policy followed is even more important for the line we shall undoubtedly have to pursue in more significant similar cases than in the case of the A.L.P. fight itself.

A Labor Party such as corresponds to our "minimum requirements" will not be established overnight. Between its establishment and the present situation, we will undoubtedly see many "transitional" formations. Precisely because they are transitional, they will have contradictory forces in them, some directed, generally, toward going back to complete bourgeois politics of old, others toward maintaining the "transitional" formations, others toward an advance to independent labor politics. In each situation, we must, so far as possible, give our support -- not unqualified but critical -- to those tendencies whose victory creates or assures the best or the better basis for a further advance. In the A.L.P. fight, for example, the Hillman-Stalinist victory would not only have meant a much greater bureaucratization of the A.L.P. and much less room for rank-and-file or progressive pressure, but also a move further back to the Democratic Party. A victory for the Dubinsky-Counts faction would have meant more elbow-room for the progressives and left-wingers and a more favorable situation for converting the A.L.P. into a real Labor Party. The Stalinists represented a liquidationist tendency; the Dubinskyites represented, at worst, the status quo. Given the absence of a concrete third choice (a pro-labor party faction), it was necessary to support the Dubinskyites in the fight for control of the A.L.P. machinery.

As mentioned, this policy will have more important application in other situations. For example, in the P.A.C. movement, if the Stalinists should seek to liquidate it into the Democratic Party, and conservative labor officials should oppose such liquidation; and if a fight for organizational control should ensue between them, then, even though the P.A.C. itself is not a Labor Party (at least not yet) we would support the labor officialdom (critically, of course, and with the simultaneous presentation of our own program) as against the Stalinists, provided there were no third group which stood clearly for a labor party.

b) The M.C.F. The Membership is familiar with the policy we followed in the Michigan Commonwealth Federation from articles in Labor Action and the New International, and from oral reports made to the branches by representatives of the National Committee. We decided to enter its ranks and to fight for a militant policy in spite of the radical shortcomings of the MCF and its dubious future. This decision was made in line with our policy of supporting even the most modest and restrained movements of labor in the direction of independent political action, and seeking to help the direction of

independent political action, and seeking to help them develop in the right direction. It is not yet clear what the future holds in store for the M.C.F. As in the case of similar local movements in the past, this one too may disintegrate. Or, it may be swallowed up or superseded by one of two other movements - a backward-moving one, or a forward-moving one. Under favorable circumstances, its place may be taken by a movement like the P.A.C. if the latter moves in the direction of genuine political independence (party, program and candidates of its own). Meanwhile, however, it is our duty to remain inside the M.C.F., presenting our standpoint constantly and seeking to build around ourselves the widest possible movement of left-wingers who favor our minimum program in the field of political action. It should be added that our Detroit comrades did an excellent job in the MCF, not only maintaining the honor of our party but doing all that was possible to assure the M.C.F. a healthy and progressive future. The Cannonites, on the contrary, as our press has pointed out, conducted themselves in a shameful, tail-endist manner which brought them neither credit nor profit.

c) The Presidential Elections. None of our branches was in a position to present even a local candidate in the 1944 elections. A number of physical difficulties presented themselves to make a campaign impossible (unavailability of "candidates", unavailability of campaign workers due to war conditions, etc.). From among the candidates that were presented on the ballot, the party could make no choice nor could it recommend one to the workers. Here it is necessary to recognize that the party leadership did not react very opportunely to the elections. We decided on our policy very late in the election campaign, did not give adequate notification or explanation to the branches, and thus were deprived to a large extent of the possibility of developing our point of view in the press so that it would be understood by our readers and accepted by the greatest possible number. This delinquency shows that the party, and its leadership primarily, is hardly attuned to the importance of parliamentary campaigns! The Political Committee was subjected to justifiable criticism on this score at the meeting of the National Committee.

The position taken by the P.C. and supported by the National Committee meeting, was, as you know, not to endorse any of the candidates, including those of the Socialist and Socialist Labor Parties. This decision was not unanimously taken, either. In the Political Committee, comrade Carter advocated critical support of the Socialist Party candidate, and the same view was argued by comrade Lund before the National Committee. The views of comrade Lund will be communicated to the membership under separate cover, along with a more detailed presentation of the view of the National Committee.

Comrade Carter and Lund held that in the absence of a Labor Party, a vote for Norman Thomas, the Socialist Party candidate, would be a progressive step and that our Party should therefore have recommended it. Regardless of the actual position of the S.P. and its candidate, they contended, that party represented, in the mind of many workers, the idea of socialism, at least in a general way, the idea of an anti-capitalist party and policy; and therefore, under the circumstances, support of the S.P. candidate was a concrete way of expressing opposition to capitalist political action and for working-class political action. Such support by our Party, finally,

would make it possible, in the difficult circumstances of the campaign, for us to take a positive position, to recommend a positive means of participating in the elections on a class basis instead of calling for abstention from such participation.

The Committee held otherwise. In rejecting support for the S.P. -- or the S.L.P. -- it pointed out that the S.P. had neither of the two elementary qualifications for such support: it was neither a mass party representative of the American working class, nor was it a party with an acceptable program. Instead, it is a reformist-pacifist-semi-patriotic sect. We could not call for support to the S.P. on the grounds that, whatever it is not, it is at least an anti-war party (more or less, for that is precisely what it is not. We could not call for support to the S.P. on the same grounds that we would in the case of a Labor Party, namely, it is labor's party, and although it has a reformist program, the workers will learn all there is to learn about this through the very experience of supporting it and helping it "to power". There were no signs whatsoever in the country that any group of workers, no matter how small, were concerned in the slightest with the fortunes of the S.P. campaign, or were inclined to support it as against the bourgeois parties. If there had been, we might have considered favorably the idea of supporting the S.P., on the grounds that this group of workers would have to learn for themselves and we, with our independent program and criticism, would help them learn. The Committee argued that this was not the case, however, and the election results bore it out. The S.P. not only received a ludicrously insignificant national vote (some 40,000 votes in all, scarcely more than the totally unimportant S.L.P.), The lowest vote in its history, but its impact on the workers was so completely trivial that, following the returns, its candidate publicly stated that the S.P. had no future in the country as the workers' party. Under these circumstances, it would have been absurd for our party to call upon the workers to cast their vote for the Socialist Party as a measure of socialist or class consciousness in the country, as a measure of the break-away from bourgeois politics. If anything, such a call by our party would have served to perpetuate the obstacle in the path of independent political action which the S.P. constitutes, to prolong the life of a party that does not deserve it, and to distract attention from our main emphasis on the need for a labor party.

Obviously, such a decision by our Party is not a "fortunate" one, in that it did not permit us to recommend to workers that they use the ballot in an election. As a general rule, it is certainly correct to say that wherever and whenever it is possible for the party to recommend that the workers cast their ballot in a positive manner, we should do so. But this general rule cannot, unfortunately, always be applied, as the 1944 elections showed. We cannot wipe out the conditions that prevail at a given moment by means of a false, even if "attractive" policy. In such a situation as we had in the last campaign, the party is compelled to confine itself primarily to the agitational and propaganda work of advancing its central political slogan of independent political action by the working class through the formation of a Labor Party.

One criticism of party policy was, however, valid. It related to the failure of the party leadership to call the attention of the workers to the need of voting in the election, at least in some states, on legislation submitted to the electorate in which class interests were directly involved (for example, open shop law in California). It goes without saying that this mistake must be guarded against in the future.

d) The P.A.C. The importance of the formation of the P.A.C. cannot be overestimated. It marks a significant stage in the political development of the American labor movement. With the decision by the C.I.O. convention to maintain the P.A.C., our attitude toward it becomes even more important.

Our press has already explained the important difference between P.A.C. politics and the traditional Gompersian policy of the labor movement. In the elections, we were of course unable to support the P.A.C. inasmuch as it supported the campaign and candidates of a reactionary bourgeois party. In fighting against this policy of the P.A.C., we counterposed, as we must continue to do, the policy of genuine independent political action, the policy of a Labor Party with a radical and militant program and leadership, i.e., a program aimed at organizing the economic life of the country in the interests of the working class and the "little people" and a leadership able and willing to fight for such a program. This policy was endorsed by the National Committee meeting. At the same time, it was pointed out in the discussion that in pursuing this line, our press had on occasion exaggerated it to the point of out-and-out hostility to the P.A.C. and mockery of it, which did not jibe well with the policy of a sympathetic, even if severe, attitude toward what thousands of workers think the P.A.C. can and should become in the days ahead.

In any case, now that the election campaign is over, the tone and emphasis in our agitation with regard to the P.A.C. must be modified. Our press and our comrades must lay the greatest stress on this key idea: The P.A.C. showed that labor can be mobilized for political action; it showed how great a power in politics is labor and the labor movement. The past is the past. What now? Now, without waiting another minute, we must form a Labor party, a political instrument of our own. The P.A.C. is the labor movement in politics. The Labor Party is only the labor Movement in politics for itself. We already have the machinery for such a party, or at least the skeleton of such a machinery. That is the P.A.C. It should be broadened to include all labor and progressive organizations. It should be changed so that it does not support in any way the candidates or parties of the big monopolists. It should follow a policy of putting up its own candidates everywhere, beginning in 1945 on a local scale and working up deliberately to a national scale. It should adopt a program of its own that will meet with response from all the workers and lower middle classes. That means, it should be converted into a Labor Party. A Labor Party is labor engaged in

political action for itself, independently, with its own program and its own candidates. Etc., etc.

In other words the concretized way of putting forth our Labor Party agitation for the next period will revolve around the main slogan: "Transform the P.A.C. into a Labor Party." What follows from that is clear and should of course be constantly emphasized in our agitation: Break with the two old anti-labor parties; adopt a militant labor program; put up our own candidates everywhere, etc., etc. But it should be repeated, our agitation for a labor party should not only not ignore the big fact of the P.A.C. but should revolve around it, around the experiences that the workers have already had with it, around the expectations that they can logically be expected to entertain about it.

## VI. OUR PRESS

The discussion of our press, Labor Action and the New International, was an important part of the National Committee Meeting. It will be dealt with in detail in another circular devoted especially to it. The circular will also deal with a contribution to the discussion of our press which is contained, in part, in a document submitted to the National Committee by comrade Johnson, which is also to be sent to the branches for discussion by the membership.

In the present communication, it is necessary to mention only one point. The National Committee decided to instruct the press department to organize a campaign throughout the party for subscriptions to the New International, our theoretical organ. The circulation of our magazine has climbed upward steadily, although slowly, in the past months. It has been shown that subscriptions can be gotten for the New International, especially if there is a determined and concerted effort to do so. It should not be necessary to stress the importance of our theoretical organ, and therefore the importance of the coming subscription drive. All branches should be prepared to make it successful as soon as the details have been worked out by the management and sent to the branches.

## VII. THE NEGRO QUESTION

Our party has suffered in the past from the lack of a basic resolution on the Negro question. Many comrades have pressed for such a document, but one circumstance or another has intervened to make its drafting and adoption impossible. In view of a divergence of opinion, comrades Coolidge and Johnson were instructed some time ago to present their respective drafts for such a resolution. At the meeting of the National Committee, the final drafts of these resolutions were submitted and discussed and finally voted upon. The draft of comrade Coolidge was adopted by the Committee as the position of the Workers Party.

However, in view both of the importance of and interest in the question, the National Committee decided to organize the widest possible discussion on the two documents. Both of them

will be made available to the party membership as soon as physically possible and arrangements made to discuss them in the branches. The National Committee is desirous of having the most educational discussion possible on this vital problem. The Internal Bulletin will of course be available to all comrades wishing to participate in this discussion. In addition, the Committee decided to open the pages of the New International to a discussion of the question, and the initial articles on it will appear shortly. A discussion in the columns of Labor Action is also under advisement.

As pointed out above, the Committee decided to publish one pamphlet on the Negro question immediately, and to follow it as soon as possible with others - all for popular agitational purposes.

### VIII. THE INTERNATIONAL

The Committee had a discussion, finally, on the question of the Fourth International. It was the common view that the International as any kind of organized body worthy of recognition by us or by any serious revolutionist, no longer exists. What lays claim to that name is merely a sub-committee of the Cannonite party and its factional tool.

Our own connections with revolutionary Trotskyist groups and comrades in other countries have improved considerably in the past period - in Latin America, in Europe and in Canada. The National Committee was unanimous in its opinion that we cannot even contemplate at the present time the re-formation of such an international body as was formed in Europe in 1938 under the name of the Fourth International. Indeed, the Committee left open the question of the forms which the resurrected revolutionary International will take in the days to come.

However, it did decide to take the first concrete steps that are indicated by the situation. These relate, for the time being, to the reconstitution of the world-wide Trotskyist grouping. In this work, of course, we shall seek at all times to reconstitute it on the basis of the fundamental views which we have developed and which characterize our party, without trying to foist them upon brother groups mechanically. Of the steps to be taken, the most important and immediate is the formation of a bloc with the International Communists of Germany (IKD) with whom we have developed increasingly fraternal political and organizational relations. On the political problems presented by the so called "national question", our party and the I.K.D. see eye to eye. In the Russian question, there is an increasing approach of the I.K.D. to the viewpoint defended by our party, particularly on the political field, i.e., in the question of the "unconditional defense" of Stalinist Russia, a viewpoint which the German comrades have not only abandoned but are actively combatting. In the question of the S.W.P. and its pernicious regime, the position taken by the German comrades is substantially the same as the one we have always held. With this block, we shall endeavor to group the other groups which generally belong to the Trotskyist movement.



The recent meeting of our National Committee was one of the most successful, most fruitful, in our history. Candid and thorough discussions, and practical decisions in the field of party organization and activity, were its outstanding achievement. Now the task is to put into effect, both within the party and in its external work, the decisions adopted.

Let us proceed ardently to perform our duties!

Let us build our Workers Party into a revolutionary force!!

With best party greetings,

M. Shachtman,

National Secretary.

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THE TEN-POINT PLAN OF THE WORKERS PARTY  
FOR THE RECONVERSION AND POST-WAR PERIOD

"Every Worker Has the Right to a Job and a Guaranteed Annual Wage  
"Every Unemployed Worker has the Right to Full Jobless Insurance"

1. Full unemployment insurance to all workers for whom government and industry do not find jobs, beginning with \$30 a week for single men and women.
2. Absorb all workers thrown into unemployment in the "reconversion period" by a reduction of the work-week with no reduction in weekly take-home pay.
3. A two-years' base pay grant to all demobilized veterans, with option of trade school and higher educational facilities at government expense, guarantee of adequate family maintenance, and guarantee of decent jobs.
4. A guaranteed year-round job, a minimum \$2500 annual wage to each worker, and a rising standard of living, by means of government planning to insure the highest national production and income.
5. A guaranteed \$5,000 annual income to all workers' families by means of a planned rise in the national income and a 30-hour maximum work-week.
6. For a two hundred and fifty billion dollar 5-year program to provide decent housing for all, extensive public works, rural electrification and modernization.
7. Conscript all war industries. Nationalize the banks, big industrial monopolies and transportation systems. No handing over of government-built and -owned plants and facilities to private ownership.
8. One hundred percent tax on all war profits above a 5% maximum on invested capital, a \$25,000 ceiling on total individual income, and a graduated capital levy on all accumulated wealth over \$50,000 to cover war costs and provide post-war security for labor.
9. Workers' control of production.
10. For an Independent Labor Party and a Workers' Government to carry out this program.

(Adopted by the Meeting of the National Committee)

PLAN FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT AT A LIVING WAGE

(Draft submitted to the National Committee Meeting by Comrade Ernest Lund)

1. It is the inalienable right of every worker to have regular employment at a living wage.
2. The realization of this right is both possible and practical in view of the enormous productive capacity of American industry, as revealed during the course of the war.
3. The worker shall, therefore, be entitled to a guaranteed annual wage, payable in 52 weekly installments. No employer shall pay less than the minimum wage of \$2000. per year.
4. Every worker, including all demobilized veterans, shall be guaranteed a job. This shall be provided for by an equitable division of all available work. A central planning board shall provide for the reduction of the work week to a point where there is full employment for all.
5. All workers shall receive full wages as provided for by their guaranteed annual wage even if, through no fault of their own, they are employed for less hours than the agreed upon work week.
6. Workers who are required to work longer than the agreed upon working time shall be paid for such excess hours at the customary overtime rates.
7. The responsibility of providing full employment at a living wage rests upon those who, for the purpose private profits, have undertaken to own and manage industry.
8. The operation of industry to provide full employment at a living wage is a public concern. The unwillingness or inability of private industries to provide such full employment shall be considered a declaration of their own bankruptcy. The well-being and health of the people will require that the government take over such industries, without compensation, and operate them through democratically-elected committees of workers and technicians.

November 10, 1944

Dear Friends;

Since the committee is at work revising the proposed draft for a "re-conversion program", I wish once more to place my ideas before it in the hope that they might influence the new proposals. Let me make the following specific points:

1. Reconversion or Post War? The worker today is thinking of one thing in reference to post war conditions, "Will I have a job?" This does not mean will he have a job in the two or three month period required to re-tool. Let us not get tangled up with this latter period, at least not as the central aim in our program. This will not be a sudden, nation-wide dramatic event. Some places are already re-converting. Others will re-convert long after the war has ended. The only practical proposals for meeting the "reconversion" problems are such things as dismissal pay, the Kilgore bill with more adequate provisions, etc. We have, and we will, deal with this more narrow aspect of the problem on the basis of our "Workers Party Platform" and such other immediate demands that emerge.

However, the thing to make the central issue is: full employment at a living wage in the post-war period.

2. A Plan versus Slogans: I sometimes think, upon occasions like our discussion of this question, that many of our people underestimate the intelligence of the worker in these matters. There is a prevalent view that if we but coin the slogans that will catch his eye and appeal to him he will be pleased with us and ask no further questions as to their practicality and workability. Quite the contrary. It may appear so when it is a matter of a one way dialogue from a platform during a public meeting. However, when one argues with workers in the shop, one discovers that they can ask a thousand and one detailed questions about this and that. They like to have the "whole thing" in their eye. This is why "plans" have been the vogue in America. The "Townsend Plan", "Ham and Eggs", 16 to 1, "Share the Wealth", "Social Credit" (in Canada) etc. If one reads the literature of "Technocracy", this becomes apparent immediately. "Technocracy" presents a "plan" in all its minutest ramifications. That this is not a specifically American trait is seen from the great agitation around the "de Man Plan" in Belgium and its counterparts in France and Holland. (Add to the above the great success of Upton Sinclair, beginning without an organization, as the exponent of the "Epic Plan").

This does not mean that we don't need slogans. We most certainly do. But the point is that it is necessary to first sell an idea. The slogan then becomes a means of summarizing it and the agitational call to battle for the idea. What did "Ham and Eggs" mean? Or 16 to 1? Nothing, unless the idea they represented had already been explained and driven home. We have a more familiar example with "30-30".

I go into this to impress the committee with the need to first decide on the "plan" and devise the slogans later. Sometimes spontaneous slogans arise to sum up what we want much better than any we could think of.

3. The Plan must be Integrated: It is necessary that we present a solution that has a central point, something upon which to focus attention. Let us not try to answer every social and political and economic problem involved in the post war scene. For this we have our "Workers Party Platform". It is already a little too long. Let us not repeat the error and do the same with our plan.

What do I mean by "too long". Not that it contains 800 words instead of 400. But because it contains too many different proposals. Since this is as it is, let us be all the more to the point in our "Full Employment". Taxes, profits, workers government, veterans, Labor Party, nationalization of industry, etc. are all the problems we will agitate about loud and long. But we already have our Platform which covers these points. Let us narrow everything down to the most decisive and concentrated demand that touches the very marrow of capitalism on the job question.

However, it must be an integrated plan. It must stand on its own feet, in the sense that it is self-explanatory. I, therefore, wish to repeat my basic proposals for the "plan".

#### 4. Plan for Full Employment

I. Everyone is entitled to a job at a living wage.

II. Therefore, everyone should be guaranteed an annual minimum wage, (proposed minimum of \$20000)

III. Hours are to be reduced until there is employment for everyone.

The plan is summed up in the slogan: "A guaranteed annual wage and equal division of the work!"

E. Lund

SUPPLEMENT BY NATIONAL LABOR COMMITTEE

This supplement to the general report on the plenum should be discussed along with the general report to the end that the decisions and plans are assimilated by every member, particularly by those members engaged in trade union activity. Before the discussion takes place this communication should be read by each member.

I. It is necessary first of all to recapitulate the course of our activity so that each member will thoroughly understand the next step to be proposed.

1. First we secured jobs and went to work in line with the proletarian orientation of the Party.

2. When we became eligible we joined the proper organization, became active and out of this activity we assumed a measure of responsibility and leadership. At this stage we were still at the level of trade union activity.

3. Through this activity we laid the foundations for the next stage of our work; the beginning of political activity. This was concretized through the distribution of our paper and getting subscriptions. We classified those closest to us as "Contacts," "Prospects" and "New Members." Small classes were organized for "Prospects" and organized and planned recruiting was instituted.

4. When favorable conditions developed either we initiated the formation of progressive groups or we participated in such groups initiated by others.

While there was much overlapping in the four steps outlined above, and while it is true that our work in every place did not follow this course, this was our plan which was more or less adhered to.

These were conscious and planned steps worked out in the leading committee, the NLC and in Party conventions. Wherever this orientation was consciously and aggressively attempted, the result was an increase in the membership of the Party.

II. In order to take the fullest advantage of what is favorable for us in the objective situation, the plenum decided that it is imperative that the Party institute a New Turn in connection with our activity in the trade unions. This is to be an intensification of POLITICAL ACTIVITY. This does not mean any lowering of the quality of our trade union activity.

It may mean and probably will mean a reduction in the number of hours spent in trade union activity. This will not apply to every last member but will apply specifically to certain members. In each case the situation will be appraised and examined concretely.

Effecting the New Turn will certainly mean the complete elimination of certain practices which some leading people have fallen prey to. Certain outstanding delinquencies will have to be corrected. For example an alternate to the leading committee who occupies probably the most prominent role

in his local has been so busy with the affairs of the local, official and semi-official, that he has not found the time to attend meetings of the committee. Quite often the work of the fraction and of the branch has been impeded because this key person, either was not in attendance or came very late. This results in not only political but also organizational stultification.

With many of the trade union activists the initiating of the New Turn will molest their semi-official activity. For instance the hours whiled away in the union talking, conferring and schmoozing.

The number of meetings will have to be reduced; meetings on the formation of "slates," discussions about forming progressive groups, the beer hall round tables and many other time-wasting practices we have fallen heir to.

These are given only as an indication of certain mechanical steps that must be taken. There are other things, however, more basic. It will be necessary to examine the activity of each fraction and of the leading people in the fractions. It will probably be necessary for many people to effect a drastic reorganization of their time and the trade union activity in which they are engaged. This will make it possible for them to give more time to internal political education in the fractions, to an expansion of political work with "prospects" and to the organization of classes for prospects.

In some cases it will be found necessary to examine the type of relation which exists between the fraction or some leading member of the fraction, with trade union officials, and with the representatives of other political groups.

III. We have already laid the foundations for the turn to more intensive political work. Our planned activity of the past three years and the experience we have acquired are a valuable basis for the New Turn. All the problems with which we have had to deal are a relevant part of this experience. We acquired much valuable experience in dealing with the practical as well as the theoretical problems of the trade union movement. We had to learn not only to analyze concrete situations, but how to apply the Party line to these concrete situations.

The all-important base for effecting the New Turn is the political education of the fractions. It is necessary to emphasize that the political education of every member must begin with his or her training in the fundamental theoretical principles upon which the Party is founded. Equally important are the political resolutions of the Party. These resolutions are not merely for the edification of the membership but serve as the guiding line of every department of activity and the guiding line of every member in his or her daily activity.

It is imperative therefore that every club, fraction and member acquaint himself through thorough a study with the main political resolutions of the organization. It will not be possible for a member or a fraction to do effective political work, in the mass organizations or elsewhere, until and unless such fraction or member is fortified with the arguments, analyses and conclusions of the political resolutions. In a word, this means that the fractions and its members must be competent to elucidate and defend the Party line.

This is extremely important in connection with the education of new

members. It is the main function of the clubs to take care of the political education of new members. A large amount of this education however can and must take place in the fractions, involving around the concrete questions that arise in fraction work.

IV. Every fraction and every member must also be thoroughly acquainted with the trade union resolutions. The trade union resolutions are supplementary to the political resolutions. They are analyses of the state of the labor movement, its tasks, problems and the perspectives of the Party in this specific field of activity. Each fraction should establish the practice of holding planned and organized discussions around the trade union resolutions. Here again it is necessary to mention new members from the factories and unions. Their usefulness to the Party will be near zero if they are permitted to go on month after month without this basic political education. They will not be prepared to do effective work in their unions, they will not be in position as members of the fraction to contribute to the work of the fraction. They will be only passive and mute sojourners in the fraction and the Party.

V. It will be necessary for the fractions to study the history, principles and tactics of the labor movement. Not only from the standpoint of what may be called the orthodox labor movement but from the standpoint of the perspectives of the Party as a revolutionary organization.

VI. All of these procedures will be necessary in order to effect the Turn. It may be needless to say that our goal is acceleration in recruitment and improvement in the education and training of new members.

VII. The plenum adopted the following program of action supplementary to the general Program of Action.

1. In all subscription drives, quotas must be assigned to each fraction and the fraction in turn must assign a quota to each member.
2. In recruitment campaigns a quota must be assigned to each fraction and the fraction in turn must assign a quota to each member.
3. It is proposed that each fraction have the perspective of each member assuming the responsibility for organizing a class for "contacts" or "prospects." In each case where the member has been prepared, such member is to be the leader of the class.
4. Each fraction is to begin the necessary and possible steps for the organization of a periphery around the fraction. The emphasis is to be placed on the formation of "Labor Action Groups."

VIII. Each of the above four points will be elaborated and organizational details given in future and regular communications from the National Labor Com.

A manual on fraction organization and trade union strategy and tactics will be prepared by the NLC.

Two pamphlets will be written for public distribution.

Fraternally,  
DAVID COOLIDGE