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INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE

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Dear Comrades:

The attached resolutions complete the documents that will come before the convention. Their lateness of their appearance is due to their late presentation. Although presented to the convention, these documents will be sent out to branches in connection with post convention reports.

Fraternally yours,

Albert Gates,
Sec'y

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THE UNIONS IN A PERIOD OF MOBILIZATION

The war economy will tend to depress the living standards of the working class and to impose further government controls over the unions. These tendencies are closely interdependent: to the extent that the war costs are shifted onto the working class, it becomes essential from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie that the unions be restricted from taking up the class struggle, that strikes, in particular, be eliminated.

These trends are only beginning to make themselves felt. Although the war economy already swallows a huge proportion of the national income, it is still in a comparatively early stage of development. As it is expanded, it must have a powerful impact upon the relations between the unions and the state, between the bourgeoisie and the labor leadership, and between the labor leaders and the rank and file.

Viewed only from its long range and fundamental aspects, the internal evolution of the union movement in this period can be summed up by the following schematic balance of social forces: the bourgeoisie squeezes labor in the interests of the war; the labor leaders, as loyal supporters of the war and its requirements, subordinate the interests of the working class and force the unions into class collaboration and away from class struggle; attacked by their employers and deserted by their leaders, the rank and file becomes restless and dissatisfied, begins to carry on an irregular, unorganized class struggle, and begins to come into conflict with its own leadership.

Such was the pattern of the class struggle during the last war, and this interplay of class forces: bourgeoisie, labor leaders, rank and file, cut off only when the termination of the war established a new equilibrium of relations between labor leaders and their rank and file, is likely to be repeated.

But there was no straight line development in the last war and there is hardly likely to be one this time. The above bare outline alone cannot give us the key to the intricacies of the class struggle and to the development of the unions in a pre-war period, or should the war come, in the period of war. It is imperative that militants in the labor movement follow and understand not only the basic determining line of development and the fundamental union problems that are raised by the war economy, but also the development of the day to day, concrete class struggle which sees all the social forces subjected to conflicting and contradictory pulls.

"LOYALTY" PURGES

Socialist unionists find themselves in an especially complex position. The purge and witchhunt atmosphere in the country takes its effect in the factories where militants and socialists, bitter enemies of Stalinism, have been victimized by the "loyalty" program. In highly bureaucratized unions, like the National Maritime Union, the leadership encourages and participates in expelling socialists and driving them from their jobs. Other, more progressive unions, like the UAW and the IUE have at times spoken out in defense of anti-Stalinist victims of government loyalty purges. But in the atmosphere of hysteria, even they handle such questions with gingerly hesitation.

Although many unions criticize the "excesses" of the government purge program and request an alteration of its most arbitrary star-chamber features, none of them takes its stand on the basis of a thoroughgoing and consistent position in defense of democracy. It is significant that not one union has formally and categorically taken a stand for the democratic rights of anti-Stalinist radicals, socialists.

in the plants, let alone Stalinists and Stalinist sympathizers. While some unions, particularly the UAW, will undoubtedly offer certain assistance to socialists against government boards, there is little to indicate that workers who are victimized because of their socialist ideas will receive the firm and vigorous backing to which they, like all unionists, are entitled.

The victimization of radicals and socialists by the government by no means signifies that a wide governmental campaign against all union militants is immediately on the order of the day. It is true that a witchhunt against political non-conformers sets the precedent and establishes the mood for repression of all union fighters; and that if the union does not defend the former it jeopardizes the rights of all unionists. But a campaign against union militants is no easy matter for the bourgeoisie even in time of war preparations. Socialists, unlike other militants, face a specific difficulty. The campaign in the shops by the government is carried on in the name of anti-Stalinism, anti-Russian-spyism. To this extent it finds a more or less responsive audience among workers. Insofar as the bourgeoisie succeeds in tarnishing the name of socialism with Stalinism and in identifying opposition to imperialist war with support of Russian imperialism, it succeeds in placing socialists in a precarious position. Even where unionists are not hostile to socialists, they are hesitant to rise to their defense as socialists.

But the bourgeoisie seeks the support of its own working class against Stalinism. Any attempt to institute a sweeping purge against union militants in the name of anti-Stalinism, anti-Russian-spyism, could only discredit the whole "loyalty" purge program among the workers and therefore make it impossible to carry out. At the same time, it would quickly be understood by the unions for what it is, a direct attack on the union, and could only lead to active resistance.

It is quite possible, even likely, that a reactionary bourgeoisie will seek at a later stage to institute such a purge under cover of the war with Russia, but it is not now imminent. In such an eventuality the government would be pitted not against Stalinists or against a small group of socialists, but against the labor movement, against either the unions as organizations or against broad groups of labor militants, or both. In the maritime industry, the same union leaders who expel socialists protest vigorously when "loyalty" purges began to hit at union members in general.

UNION DEMOCRACY

The union movement in 1951 on the eve of World War III is less democratic in internal structure than in 1941 on the eve of World War II. In virtually every union, a solidly entrenched officialdom holds the reins of organization tightly. Compared to the AFL, the CIO remains far more democratic and far more "rank and file" in character. But compared to what it was ten years ago, the CIO displays the advance of bureaucratism and the rise of a conservative permanent officialdom. Socialist unionists are confronted not only with the intervention of government agencies against democracy in the shops, but with the diminution of inner union democracy itself. This situation makes it imperative that socialist unionists orient themselves correctly in the inner life of the union.

Problems of democracy in the union are very seldom posed in an abstract manner, or if so posed, generally fail to involve the broad ranks of the union. By and large, the active unionists are most jealous of their democratic rights and are most ready to fight against bureaucratic encroachments when they begin to feel that some serious change must be effected in union policy and meet resistance from their own leaders. But when the ranks are more or less satisfied with the course of their leadership they tend to become indifferent to its internal methods and regime. A subtle evolution toward bureaucratism, behind the backs of the membership, becomes

possible. Socialists will continue to explain the necessity of preserving and extending every element of union democracy and of eradicating the evils of bureaucracy. But the revitalizing of union democracy in practice depends not simply upon socialist education but upon the actual intervention and insistence of the thousands of union militants.

* * *

The key to socialist tactics in the union lies in an understanding of the relationship between the rank and file and their leadership in this period of war mobilization. The same leadership that compromises with the bourgeoisie also struggles against it. It is essential to distinguish those moments or periods when the labor leaders, in their own compromising fashion, fight together with the rank and file against the bourgeoisie in the interests of the union movement from those periods when they do no more than concede and capitulate. The fate of various oppositional remnants in the UAW is a clear warning to all militants. At a time when the UAW leadership has been leading struggles, however inconsistently and incompletely, the scattered anti-administration groupings see no more than sell-out and betrayal of the interests of the workers. They succeed not in convincing UAW members but only in speeding up their own disintegration.

CLASS STRUGGLE OR CLASS PEACE?

The unions are supporting the war mobilization and the present officialdom will minimize strike to avoid interfering with war production. This will inevitably give their policy a vacillating, compromising and conciliatory character. But this support will not and cannot lead to a dead calm in social relations or passivity on the part of the working class. Union struggles will be restricted, distorted, inconsistent, wavering; but even given the leadership of the conservative officials, they will continue. The labor leadership supports the war and yields to the demands of the war economy along with the bourgeoisie, but not for identical reasons or in the same way. In their own interests they require a certain stability for their unions, a protection of the basic rights of the labor movement. And this puts definite limits on the degree to which they can passively permit inroads into the standard of living and rights of the masses.

Discontent in the rank and file undermines the stability of the labor leadership; the latter must demand from the bourgeoisie, before and during the war, such concessions, however limited, which will permit more or less "normal" union functioning. And it is this which remains the uncertain factor in all their calculations. For such considerations are foreign to the bourgeoisie; such concessions must be wrung from it by struggle or the ever-present threat of resistance. It follows from our analysis of the war economy that it will be far more difficult for the labor leadership to achieve and defend these basic demands than it was during World-War II.

UNIONS AND THE STATE

In modern times, the unions tend toward merger with the agencies of the bourgeois state. In the period of war mobilization these trends are speeded up. During wartime they are even further intensified. To a certain extent, therefore, the unions become instruments for tying the working class to the imperialist war machine and participating in the social mobilization for war.

But this too must be understood correctly, that is, in all its contradictory aspects. The labor leadership participates in the state machinery not simply to serve the needs of the bourgeoisie, but also to wrest concessions from it. In its feeble, inconclusive fashion it seeks to utilize government machinery in its own

interests. It understands in a distorted fashion, that the key problems of society and of labor can be grappled with only through control over government. It is not seeking to wrest the government from the bourgeoisie or to take power for itself. But as a substitute it seeks to penetrate the existing state and bend it to its own interests.

The labor leadership hopes to influence the course and policy of the government in the interests of labor by joining together with the capitalist state; in so doing, however, it makes the struggle in labor's interests much more difficult. In fact, it makes far greater concessions to secure its place in the governmental structure than it can ever hope to achieve through such a policy. Its motivations are of tremendous significance however, because they remain the root of future difficulties and indicate that the labor movement will be forced into conflict with and struggle against the very bourgeois state with which it collaborates.

The bourgeoisie seeks the collaboration of the labor leadership and to line up the union movement with the government for quite different reasons. It requires the greatest possible government control and direction of the labor movement. In this respect there has been a marked change in the last ten years.

In the period of the New Deal and the Wagner Act, the bourgeoisie sought to achieve the pacification of the union movement and to turn it in conservative channels essentially by relying upon the conservative labor officialdom to keep it in control. Its emphasis was not upon foisting direct government restrictions on the unions but upon establishing a milieu of class collaboration that would entrench a loyal labor leadership, give the latter stability, and enable it to keep the ranks in line.

Now, however, the bourgeoisie, including its most liberal political sections, leans toward direct state control over the unions and over the labor leadership itself. The Taft Hartley law was the most dramatic symbol of this change in policy and its significance as a turn in bourgeois policy was blurred by the fact that the liberal sections of the Democratic Party opposed its adoption. The change is clearest in the universal acceptance by all political representatives of the bourgeoisie of the use of injunctions against mass strikes and by the real policy of the Truman Administration in major strikes in key industries: mining, steel and railroads, where injunctions and fines were threatened or actually employed.

Even while collaborating with the government and yielding to it, the labor leadership seeks and must seek a certain independence from it. In its own way, it has fought the Taft Hartley law and resisted compulsory labor controls. If it were possible to institute strict state controls over the unions, enforce compulsory arbitration, outlaw mass strikes and at the same time preserve the basic standards of the working class, protect it from a slashing attack from the big corporations and allow a peaceable maintenance of the union movement in all its power and stability, then the labor leadership might easily reconcile itself to such trends. But the imposition of controls over the labor movement flows from and is tied to a drive to subject the workers to more intense exploitation. Otherwise such controls would be unnecessary. The labor leadership therefore finds itself in a precarious position and senses the need for self-defense. It was precisely this danger, which emanates not only from the Republican-Dixiecrat coalition, but from the Truman Administration and the wing of the Democratic Party supported by labor, that led to the formation of the United Labor Policy Committee. The ULPC represents the first mobilization of labor in defense against the very war mobilization which it supports.

UNIONS AND THE FAIR DEAL

The American labor movement is the last working class movement in any important

bourgeois nation which still professes loyalty to the capitalists system and to simple bourgeois politics. This loyalty upon which the labor-Democrat coalition rests is neither uncritical nor unconditional. It has been maintained and can be maintained only because a decisive political wing of the bourgeoisie granted a sweeping program of reforms during the days of the New Deal, promised their further extension under Truman's Fair Deal, and when these were not forthcoming, appeared, at least, to stand with labor against any invasion of the standards it had already won.

Nor does the labor movement support the war mobilization program uncritically and unconditionally. It is willing to sacrifice for what it considers a "war for democracy" but at the same time insists upon "equality of sacrifice" and protests against shifting the main weight of the mobilization effort on to the working class. Above all, precisely because it prefers to continue uninterrupted war production and seeks to avoid strikes even under extreme provocation, it demands governmental machinery and procedures which would permit peaceable satisfaction of its most pressing grievances. Labor's collaboration with the Democratic Party is, therefore, part of a two-sided bargain. True, labor gives far more than it gets; the concessions it wins are secondary and meager; in all fundamental aspects the conditions of the working class are undermined; a real defense of labor remains possible only by a program of class independence. Nevertheless, the coalition stands as a program of mutual bargaining, unequal and weighted on one side though it is.

EXPERIENCE OF LAST WAR

During the last war, labor was hobbled by a no-strike pledge and restrained by the Little Steel Formula wage-freeze, Its officials participated in the War Labor Board and gave up the class struggle. Nevertheless, within the limits of this policy, they enjoyed a certain room for maneuvering and jockeying. They were allowed hidden wage increases in many forms; bonuses, area and skill differentials. Through the War Labor Board and the NLRB recalcitrant employers were frequently compelled to grant wage increases, to recognize the union, or to satisfy a multitude of plant by plant grievances. This elbow room for peaceable bargaining was possible because the war economy permitted retaining of controls and flexibility, just as it permitted a general rise in the standard of living. Consequently, unions could function more or less normally and the discontent of the ranks was kept within limits.

But as the strains of war accumulated, even this free space became too limited. In key unions, discontent with the conciliatory policy of the union leadership led first to a wave of unorganized wild-cat strikes, a form of guerilla class struggle, and then to the formation of organized rank and file opposition movements directed against the no-strike pledge. In the UAW, this wave reached its highest point. It was the reverberations of this movement which undermined the old leadership the UAW, led to the downfall of the Thomas leadership and the rise of Reuther to power. In the Rubber Workers Union, the attempt of Dalrymple to impose a strict, unconditional no-strike pledge led the union and his administration from one internal crises to another, culminating in his own resignation to pacify the opposition, and shortly after the war to the near defeat of the administration which he headed. Similarly, it was the movement of the rank and file against the no-strike pledge which broke the back of the Stalinists among the militants in every union where the workers experienced the strike-breaking war-time line of the CP, carried out with a rigidity and contempt for the ranks that isolated it from experienced militants.

In Michigan, the same mood led to the formation of the Michigan Commonwealth Federation by a group of secondary UAW officials.

These oppositional movements directed at one and the same time against the bourgeoisie and against the official union leaders were dissolved only at the end of the war when the latter once again resumed leadership of the struggle of the workers. In the extensive post-war strike wave the leadership re-constituted its hold over the ranks. And to this day, and into the period of mobilization for World War III, the labor officialdom, in its own conservative fashion, still leads the struggles of the workers where they do take place. The initiative in the unions remains firmly in the hands of the official leadership. To the basic social factors that solidify their position, the officials make their own contribution. They make clear that criticism or initiative from below is not welcome.

The Union officialdom is not now dragged reluctantly along or forced into action by a rank and file upsurge. Its actions are based upon its own calculations of its own needs and the needs of the labor movement which it heads and which provides the very source of its position. Far from indicating any lessening of the class antagonisms, the fact that the top leadership is compelled to fight, on its own, so to speak, underscores the depths of the forces which drive labor against capital. That this is the case today, by no means signifies that a repetition of the rank and file movements of the last war is excluded. But it will take time, experience, and the piling up of the contradictions of the war economy before it becomes a reality.

The labor leadership, in this "peace" or little-war period, finds it difficult to get what was granted it during the last all-out world war. Already the arena of bargaining is constricting. The continuing strains of war mobilization, certainly the onset of a full war economy, will constrict it even further. It is quite possible, even likely, that the leadership of the labor movement, against its will, against its desire for compromise, counter to its policy, will be compelled before and even during the war to take up labor's fight.

The war economy puts a great strain on the relations between the Democratic party and the union officialdom. Far from stalling the political evolution of the labor movement, mobilization will create, as it has already done, vexing political difficulties, and the labor officialdom will undoubtedly be forced to intensify its political action program, to dabble in new political experiments, and even to look toward the formation of a new political party.

The ranks of labor are not demanding the formation of a labor party; but the dissatisfaction of the working class can take many forms, including wildcat strikes, disillusionment with the unions, refusal to go to the polls to vote for so-called liberal Democrats. In grappling with such moods or even in anticipating them, the union leadership may seek to open up a new political road.

To avoid the embarrassment of "hampering" war production, it can pose such policies as a substitute for industrial action, as a means of avoiding strikes, as a means of putting pressure on the government and the employers while avoiding strikes. Regardless of how the union officials may justify or explain such a course, socialists would of course hail any and all steps away from the Democratic Party and call for their continuation until labor is politically organized independently of the bourgeois parties. At the same time, socialists would advocate such a course not as an alternative to the industrial struggles of the working class, but as a complement to them.

The formation of the United Labor Policy Committee must become the starting point for the unification of the labor movement in preparation for united struggles, economic and political, of the working class in self-defense against the burdens

imposed upon it by the mobilization program. Labor needs its own party to rally the people to its program, to back up its own struggles. But it would be utopian to believe that its political program and its demands could be enforced without mass action of the union, including strikes where necessary.

The difficulties of the mobilization period can lead to a virtual crisis of labor's whole political policy.

The recent wage crisis which revealed the explosive social forces rumbling beneath the war mobilization economy was a portent of what is to come. The Truman Administration acted abruptly and in an extreme fashion to impose a rigid wage freeze; and the labor movement was compelled to react swiftly. This crisis was, in a sense, "avoidable" in that the bourgeoisie was demanding too much and too soon from the working class; it took the form of a probing action by the bourgeoisie to discover how far it could push the labor movement and was not necessitated by unpostponable needs of the war economy.

So quiescent and tractable had the labor leadership seemed in the previous months when it adopted a non-critical policy of full support to Truman that it appeared for a moment that its own desires and interests could be ignored. It had overlooked Truman's failure to deliver the promised Fair Deal; it had permitted his attacks on the miners and railroad workers without vigorous protest; it permitted Truman to cast the question of Taft-Hartley repeal into the background. But it was forced to resist the wage program of the Truman administration. It denounced the whole domestic policy of the administration and resigned from all boards and began, for the first time in years, a violent criticism of his party and hinted once again that it might form a new party if pressed to the wall.

Although the crisis was overcome and labor won a certain modification of the freeze, the labor leaders returned to the government boards without satisfaction of their most basic complaints on national policy. An uneasy equilibrium continues. The strains of the war economy which were at the bottom of the wage crisis will not disappear but will become more intense with time.

The labor leadership which was compelled to make a political demonstration, to fight, or to threaten to fight, will probably have to do so again. At each turn where the labor leadership comes into conflict with the bourgeoisie and the state, on the economic or political front, militants will have the opportunity to put forward a militant, class struggle policy for the labor movement by taking the actions of the leadership as a point of departure. They will insist that every action in defense of the working class and every move toward independence from the capitalist class be carried through without retreat and they can pose the correct and necessary line of action as the only logical, consistent and effective method of continuing those struggles which have begun.

ESCALATOR CLAUSE

This is especially true of such disputes as those which are already taking place over the escalator clause and annual improvement factor in union contracts. These provision offset to a certain degree the impact of inflation upon the real wages of the highly unionized sections of the working class. Such clauses alone cannot stop the chiseling away of real wages but they can soften the impact. The organized workers now consider such gains as one of their union rights along with other traditional rights and they will undoubtedly resist any effort to withdraw them. For the next immediate period, sections of the working class which are not covered by such clauses will be striving to achieve them. In the quest for some

measure of stability is likely to create friction and conflict between the classes; for the bourgeoisie will inevitably attempt to out away these safeguards in order to compel the organized workers along with the rest of the poorer sections of the population to pay for the war. Militants of course will support every struggle to defend and extend these provisions. They will oppose any compromise which whittles away their effectiveness, and will propose that the union movement in defending itself against inflation take up the fight of all the people.

SOCIALISTS AND MILITANTS

While in the first period of the war mobilization, the unions under their present conservative officials will engage in many struggles, the existing labor leadership cannot be relied upon to conduct a thorough-going defense of the working class. Their dependence on bourgeois politics stands in the way. Moreover, their fundamental support of the bourgeois mobilization program and of its war economy will force them to put a damper on the class struggle. These basic truths are of paramount importance and the main task of education by socialists consists in making them clear to every militant.

Just as militants during the last war took up the class struggle when the union leaders abandoned it, they can be expected to do so again, at first on elementary economic issues, and then on broader political questions. It is to these militants first of all that the ISL directs itself; it upon them that it places all hopes for the creation of a class conscious cadre within the unions, for the rise of a militant leadership for the union; and for the growth of socialist influence.

Independent socialist workers, together with all labor militants, participate energetically in all activities of the unions, defending them aggressively against all attacks and helping to build them as powerful instruments to advance the standard of living and rights of all working people. They join in promoting the right to complete equality within unions and industry of Negroes, women and all other workers who are burdened by discrimination. They join in defending democracy by advocating that the unions resist all forms of anti-democracy in every sphere of social life, favoring the maximum participation of the ranks in every aspect of union life, and by helping to resist the tendency of union officials to centralize all power in their own hands and to push the membership out of effective control of union affairs. And like other militants, independent socialists willingly accept the responsibility of union office to participate in the effective carrying out of these aims. In this way, socialists give lie to the slander that they are "outsiders" in the labor movement, win the respect that every active unionist deserves, and emphasize their own right to defense by their union and fellow workers.

If socialists differ from ordinary union militants, it is only because they see beyond the horizon of day to day union activity and recognize the great historic role of the labor movement in rebuilding society; it is because they have already learned what millions must and will learn, that the workers and their unions have the unpostponable tasks of stopping the drift toward devastating world war and totalitarianism and of creating a new socialist society - that the labor movement alone can carry out these tasks. The job of socialist education in the unions is to explain these truths to the workers, above all to the active militants with whom we come into contact in the course of our common union experiences; for it is these militants, above all, others, who are the socialist cadres of tomorrow.

(The following resolution is presented as a counter-resolution to that offered to the convention by the PC and will be presented to the convention along with all other resolutions.)

ON THE WAR RESOLUTION

By H. D. Coleman (St. Louis)

The resolution of the National Committee, "Independent Socialism and the Third World War," has one thing, at least, to recommend it: it reveals quite plainly a nervous awareness that the defeatist position of the ISL is subject to serious, indeed disastrous, "misinterpretations" by the very elements the ISL appeals to, the politically conscious worker and the radical intellectual. In the present situation, these elements are uninterested in or actively hostile to the metaphysical-political subtleties of the ISL's defeatism; they feel that only the military might of capitalist America stands in the way of Stalinist imperialist expansion. And unless we, as socialists, start "exactly at this point with the masses", as Comrade McKinney says, "we will have no opportunity to contribute to the political education of the masses." The masses will take even less kindly to the ISL's defeatism than will the advanced elements.

The National Committee, however, takes off on its theoretical flight from a point completely out of contact with the masses; and its attempts to re-establish contact take the form of a series of pronouncements that are sometimes merely confusing or disingenuous, and sometimes might be termed demagogic, were it not for the fact that the entire complicated theoretical analysis, in its very nature, cannot possibly influence the thinking of any considerable number of people.

The resolution condemns categorically all varieties of "neutralist" policy; they are all termed "naive or suicidal". (This is very good to hear, in view of the approval that LABOR ACTION has consistently given to practically every variety of neutralist thinking). The ISL is not "poisoned by conceptions rife in some parts of the world socialist movement which looks on Stalinist expansion as some kind of road toward socialism". (Excellent - we will have no repetition of the attempt at collective suicide, by swallowing this same kind of poison, when the entire present leadership of the ISL, a few years ago, showed admirable discipline and even a sort of ghastly enthusiasm in trying to batter its way back into the SWP. The assurance that there will be no repetition of this sort of thing is doubly welcome after the suggestion one gets from the recent anti-Franco demonstration in New York City that the SWP still has a mysterious attraction for us). "We reject entirely all...proposals which...tend to abandon or de-emphasize the need to fight for the destruction of Stalinism". (Fine. But somehow the "need to fight for the destruction of Stalinism is de-emphasized" over and over again in Labor Action, in speeches, in leaflets, in private discussions, by talking about Stalinism and bourgeois democracy in much the same terms. These are mainly, no doubt, literary and oratorical flourishes of the less politically experienced comrades. But such flourishes are seldom rebuked by those who know better; they are, in fact, encouraged as a kind of healthy radicalism. And the reason is plain: it is this kind of thing that makes the defeatist position seem somewhat rational). The climax is reached in the declaration that only the ISL's "road of struggle" "can defend the nation against the enemy without and defend the people against the class oppressor at home". (A neat formula, and one that can be fully accepted by the proponent of critical defensism. The critical defensist, however, can explain quite clearly how the nation can be defended against the enemy without and why this particular nation should be defended against this particular enemy; while the defeatist can do neither, in terms that make any sense in the world and the year that we live in. As for defending the people against the class oppressor at home, we both know how that can be done, but the defeatist is unlikely to be popular enough to make himself

The heart of the resolution is the dictum repeated in a dozen different forms, that "the Western capitalist war bloc cannot defeat Stalinism without such reactionary consequences, both for the peoples of the world and at home, as to make the 'defense of bourgeois democracy against Stalinist totalitarianism' a suicidal illusion". The ISL is not, says the resolution, "indifferent to the question of the conduct of the war or its outcome"; "the triumph of Stalinism in the war would mean the subjugation of the United States and most other nations and the enslavement of the working class by the totalitarian bureaucracy". But the triumph of the "Western capitalist war bloc" is, apparently, an outcome equally horrible - or so nearly equal in horror that the difference has no effect on the policy of the ISL. In fact, the ISL is indifferent to the outcome of the war as between these two camps. And the only way this indifference can be justified is by proving that bourgeois democracy must inevitably and necessarily be transformed into something like fascism in the course of the war. It remains to be shown just how the American labor movement is going to be destroyed; general remarks about a "war economy" are not enough. It is the old story of the inevitability of fascism in the absence of a workers' revolution; and we should be very suspicious of that kind of "inevitability" by this time. In order to give the obviously non-existent Third Camp some semblance of life and a minimum of attractive power, the proponents of defeatism must take a profoundly pessimistic view of the future of democracy in America and of the power of the American labor movement to resist fascism; and yet the actual development of a Third Camp in America is dependent on the vitality of the American democratic tradition and on the ability of the American labor movement to express that tradition in its fullest form. This is a vicious circle from which the defeatist cannot escape.

In spite of all talk about "Marxist concretization", the resolution can do no more than indulge in pseudo-Marxist, ultra-radical oratory to the effect that "the socialist movement does not have and the working class should not have the slightest confidence in the democratic pretensions or intentions of the American capitalist class, its government, its war, its conduct of the war, its war objectives, its war allies". This kind of wind does not belong in a serious document. If the members of the ISL took this literally, ninety percent of the practical activity of the League would be ruled out.

The concrete "proofs" that the consequences of World War III must be completely reactionary if the Western bloc triumphs are equally windy. (a) It is a war "not merely between two rival imperialist blocs, but between two different and mutually antagonistic social systems". This proves nothing; but it suggests that it is all the more likely that the essential features of bourgeois democracy will be preserved in the face of attack by a different social system. (b) the war is "for domination and control of the entire world, including the leading nations themselves". This does not unequivocally distinguish World War III from World War II, and again proves nothing. Moreover, the importance of what the resolution calls the "national element" in the situation does not at all tend to give the defeatist position more meaning - on the contrary, it strengthens those considerations which support the position of critical defensism. Precisely to the degree that "national resistance" movements gain importance, does defeatism in the classical Leninist sense (and I am still waiting for a definition of it in some other sense!) lose meaning. (c) The war is a "struggle which bears within itself the potentiality for the destruction of all civilization". This merely emphasizes how rash it is for the ISL to attempt to avoid choosing sides in the actual struggle. The horrors of atomic warfare will be minimized by no one. But to use those horrors as a screen to conceal the real possibilities and the real choices of the situation, this is indistinguishable from the methods of Stalinism.

The resolution does not succeed in adding any substance to the phantom of the Third Camp. Third Camp elements are spoken of as being "in abundance in the world today" - but it turns out that they are "unorganized, inchoate, politically confused, immobilized"! In that sense, the Atom Bomb was ready for use in World War

1: The "neutralism" so thoroughly denounced a little way back turns out to be one of the principal sources of the Third Camp. The "vast forces of the Third Camp" require for their victory "only greater organization and greater consistency of expression than can be given by the British Labor government and by Nehru! The neutralism of Nehru and the Indian socialists is, however, the peculiar phenomenon of an industrially backward Asiatic nation isolated from the West and only recently freed from its colonial chains; and it is a neutralism which will have absolutely no future in the face of a decisive Stalinist victory elsewhere on the Asiatic continent. We shall then see how Nehru and the socialists will either capitulate to Stalinism or turn to America for military assistance. This Indian neutralism has somewhat different roots than the neutralism of Western European nations, where it is based principally on the political discouragement and cynicism of the masses, where the intellectual leaders of the movement are in so many cases corrupted by Stalinism or blinded by its poison, and where the techniques of capitulation have been developed to a high degree of perfection. These "Third Camp tendencies" are very far from being a "natural reservoir of strength for a revival of the socialist movement" in Europe. In the face of a decisive Stalinist victory on the continent of Europe, the revival of the socialist movement will spring, as was the case in World War II, from the national resistance movements - which, as in World War II, will be effective during the entire first phase of the war only to the extent that they are integrated with the military operations of America and Britain. As for the British Labor government, it is very unlikely that it will ever succumb to neutralist tendencies - fortunately for all of us. "socialist" Britain has the least inducement of any to cut itself off from capitalist America; and the more the British economy becomes genuinely socialized, the more the Stalinist attack will be pressed, and the more will Britain turn to America for military support.

At the end of the resolution, the ISL, with exceptional tolerance of the idiocy of the American working class in supporting military resistance to Stalinism, "invites" American workers to fight for a democratic foreign policy. Exactly what role the ISL can play in such a movement is highly problematical, since the ISL rejects in advance any possibility of such a fight succeeding even partially. I cannot think of any other example of our offering advice with such a positive prognosis of its absolute hopelessness and utter futility. The attention the ISL will receive can be imagined! A very similar outline of a democratic foreign policy can be advocated by the critical defencist, with much greater consistency and much more hope of influencing events.

Let me conclude my criticism of the resolution by pointing to two examples, in the resolution's outline of a democratic foreign policy, of the weasel-worded defeatism by means of which the leadership of the ISL seems to be attempting, these days, to avoid embarrassing questions and even more embarrassing explanations. First as one might expect, the demand for withdrawal of troops from Korea is completely omitted. Even the ambiguous formulation of withdrawal of all troops is absent. We may now take it as official that the withdrawal slogan has become "stupid" again. Secretaries of branches take note! Second, the program calls for the "withdrawal of all occupational forces from Japan and Germany", and once more that serviceable little weasel-word "all" comes into action. With respect to Japan, there is no ambiguity-that country is occupied by American troops only; moreover, its national sovereignty is fully recognized and a peace treaty may soon be signed. With respect to Germany, however, the ambiguity of the resolution is positively ludicrous. This is weasel-wording that can only deceive idiots. Does the resolution mean unilateral withdrawal of American troops from Germany? If so, then why not say so? If not, why not? If so, how about a little "Marxist concretization" as to the probable political effects? After all, this is the very storm center of the cold war.

The convention of the ISL has the clear responsibility of stating its position on the war in a manner that will be fully understood by American workers and

intellectuals in general. The questions in the minds of these people must be answered, or at least discussed, and not simply dismissed by some confusing circumlocution or by the blanket denial that certain problems can even be posed. These are faults of the resolution of the National Committee. I believe that there are still effective political means that the capitalist government of the United States could use, and can be consistently urged to use by socialists, to combat world Stalinism—means that would contribute to the strengthening of democratic forces throughout the world. The elements of such a program have been developed by various liberal and labor groups in America, and are also embodied in the concrete program of the resolution.

But I know of only one rational approach to politics, which I identify with the Marxist approach: the detailed analysis of all the main alternatives in any given situation, the analysis of all the possible developments that are politically significant. And the plain fact is that practically every political tendency of any importance in America today acknowledges that the situation may soon be such that there will be no choice for anyone except between the military victory of America or the military victory of Russia. The ISL, however, seems to deny that such a situation can possibly arise; or perhaps means the possibility is so slight as not to warrant serious consideration. Or perhaps the ISL means that such a situation may arise, but that the choice will be between two absolutely indistinguishable evils. And much of the time, the ISL seems to be saying that any kind of attention given to the possibility of such a situation developing must in itself contribute to the development of the situation. Only by single-minded concentration on our Third Camp rosary, by telling bead by bead the "unorganized, inchoate, politically confused, immobilized" elements of the Third Camp, can we foil the capitalist Devil and guarantee our Salvation!

To clear up this confusion, I therefore introduce the following very brief resolution. It would obviously be foolish to propose it as an amendment to any specific section of the National Committee resolution. I am introducing it, consequently, as a separate "Resolution on Socialist Policy in the War", and it is intended, of course, to modify the line of all other resolutions adopted. Almost every word in my resolution could be expanded into paragraphs, but the net result would be merely to afford greater opportunity for quibbling and avoiding the issue. I am by no means satisfied with the exact form of the resolution, even within the limits I have set for myself; but I believe every comrade will understand well enough what I am saying, and the resolution should not be interpreted as saying anything more than the plain meaning of its words indicates. I insert this caution because I have by no means expressed my viewpoint as forcefully as I would have if the purpose of the resolution were simply to express my viewpoint and nothing more. I deliberately express myself in terms not incompatible with a Third Camp position at the present stage of the cold war, in order that the resolution may receive the serious consideration of as many comrades as possible, and in order that it may be as difficult as possible for the convention to avoid an unambiguous answer to the question I am placing before it.

Because of the extremely cautious way in which I have phrased my resolution, I do not hesitate to say that, in my opinion, either the refusal to consider or the outright rejection of this resolution will be an acknowledgement that the ISL has retreated into a position of sectarian insanity on the most important question confronting the socialist movement. And I may say that, while I have accustomed myself over many years to a slightly loony political atmosphere, (which I have found stimulating rather than stultifying); and while I have occasionally, (though not in recent years, thank God!), followed the lead of our most eminent theoreticians in burying my head in the sand with a banner reading "No Moral Responsibility" draped over my upraised rump; I have no intention now of graduating into such full-fledged insanity, even as an objecting minority.

Resolution on Socialist Policy in the War

The ISL recognizes, as a possibility which cannot be ignored, that in the course of World War III there may arise a situation which will be the product of the interaction of the following three factors :

- (a) the urgent military pressure of Stalinist imperialism.
- (b) The weakness of the Third Camp throughout the world, with no immediate prospect of the strengthening of these forces.
- (c) The preservation, within the principal nations of the capitalist bloc, of a significant degree of democracy as compared to Stalinist Russia.

In such a situation, the ISL declares that the socialist position must be one of critical support of the military struggle of the capitalist bloc against Stalinist totalitarianism.

TOWARD EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACY IN THE ISL

It is the purpose of this article to point out certain undemocratic aspects of the Independent Socialist League, to show that these aspects interfere with the effective organization of the League, and to outline a new organizational structure that couples the maximum of democracy with the maximum of effectiveness.

The limits of this criticism must be clearly understood. The determination to be democratic, deeply imbedded in the leadership as well as rank-and-file, is recognized by the signers of this article. The Workers Party was born in a struggle against SWP bureaucracy and, having that living example ever before it, remained actively inimical to any signs of similar developments within itself. The ISL, as the WP before it, has welcomed revolutionists of a wide variety of opinions, publishing their conflicting programs before not only the membership, but also the interested public. Full equality of space in the Forum, and time on the convention floor, is allowed even the tiniest minority. All things considered, the democratic intentions of the ISL? and the democratic rights of its membership, are as well established as the most critical could demand.

Democracy, however, presents more than one aspect. However important democratic expression may be, democratic control is more so. Unless there some organizational method of expressing, within the leadership, changing rank-and-file attitudes, other democratic rights are reduced to sources of frustration. From this standpoint the ISL does not rate so well. Discuss as they may, there is no handle by which the membership may take hold of and control the policies of the organization during the two-year periods that ordinarily separate conventions.

It is not the "democratic idealism" alone that motivates this criticism. The purpose of our organization is the mobilization of working-class and allied forces for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of democratic socialism. It is the aim of this article to show that every undemocratic aspect of the ISL is a stumbling-block in the way of political effectiveness; i.e., that the road to increased striking-power lies in the direction of increased democracy.

I. THE PRESENT STRUCTURE OF THE ISL.

According to the constitution the National Convention is the "highest governing body of the ISL". If we are to be practical, however, we must modify that statement. In the first place, during the two-year intervals the interpretation of convention rulings is entirely in the hands of the NC. In the second place, for a revolutionary organization operating in the milieu of a rapidly changing society, the determination of policy is a constant process, so that the rulings of a convention cannot be considered nearly as important as those of the NC that acts in its place.

In view of these facts we must recognize that the policy-making function of the convention is usually secondary and, on most questions, inconsequential. If we take a realistic view of things we must regard the NC and PC as the major policy-making bodies of the ISL, the National Convention being primarily a mechanism for electing these governing bodies.

The policies and activities of the ISL are completely governed by the NC and PC between conventions, there being no provision for referendum "except where the National Committee thinks it necessary to call a referendum" (Art. 6, Sec. 2). It is true that the membership may call a special convention, but the constitutional provisions (Art. 6, Sec. 2 & 3) make this process so dilatory (to say nothing of its expense) that such action might be expected only under the most extreme circumstances. The membership has no practical recourse between conventions should the NC and PC prove less than satisfactory.

The NC and PC combine legislative and executive functions. These functions differ widely with respect to the activities and qualifications they demand. We choose, therefore, to discuss them separately. Our first task is the analysis of the election procedure of the ISL to determine (1) are they adapted to the selection of satisfactory legislative (policy-making) bodies; and (2) are they adapted to the selection of satisfactory executive bodies?

The NC and PC as legislative bodies.

The purpose of a democratic legislature is to furnish a small, manageable arena within which differences of opinion may be fought out in microcosm. The confidence of the membership in such a legislative body depends upon its belief that the results of programmatic battle within that body fairly represent the results that would follow a similar battle within the organization as a whole. In other words, a satisfactory legislature is one which represents, reasonably proportionately with respect to strength, the various viewpoints held within the organization as a whole.

Unless we are considering extraordinary or artificially contrived situations, we must accept one axiom. no elected body ever represents its electorate perfectly. However well-contrived the method of election - however sincere the attempts at proportional representation - there inevitably result observable and relevant differences between the attitudes of the elected body and those of the organization by which it was elected.

If this inevitable gap exists between the rank-and-file and its elected representatives, it exists no less between those representatives and such bodies as they in turn may select. Indirect elections operate to widen the gap between representative and represented.

It is true that, by happy accident, the upper level gap may tend to cancel that created by the lower-level elections. Such a possibility in no way vitiates our argument; it can be realized only despite, rather than because of, the electoral system. Such pyramidal systems of election have frequently been written into constitutions for the direct and even avowed purpose of frustrating popular will - a most familiar example is the Electoral College!

In the ISL the NC and PC are elected indirectly, as follows:

- (1) members of branches elect delegates to the National Convention;
- (2) the National Convention elects the members of the National Committee; and,
- (3) the National Committee elects the members of the Political Committee.

From the previous discussion it should be clear that:

- (4) each branch delegation is to some degree non-representative of its branch membership;
- (5) the National Convention is probably even less representative of the membership as a whole;
- (6) the National Committee, being to some degree non-representative of the Convention, is apt to be far from representative of the membership as a whole; and,
- (7) the ISL elective methods offer no assurance that the PC will be in any way representative of the membership.

Yet that is not the whole story. Let us suppose that at the time of their election the NC and PC are perfectly representative of the membership. Will the same be true six months later? To accept this we must also accept the bourgeois notion of a static "normalcy" within society. Between conventions there occur a myriad political and social events that affect - or should affect - the attitudes of the membership. Burning issues of convention time may be cold ashes within a few months, the current conflagrations being quite differently related to the previously conceived tasks of the League. Do the NC and PC remain representative of the membership? Who knows? Who can know?

As an example of this, consider the trade union discussion at the 1949 convention. Almost the whole discussion revolved around the question of Stalinism vs the native bureaucracy. Not long later the native bureaucracy began ridding the CIO of Stalinist officials and, to a considerable degree, stalinist members. How would the delegates have voted had the Stalinists been already out of the CIO? Who can tell?

The NC and PC as executive bodies.

But suppose that the PC is an effective executive body. After all (activists may ask, is not intelligent and dynamic action valuable even if the absence of a satisfactory legislative body permits a few programmatic errors? As intelligent and dynamic action is dependent upon an effective executive, is not the League structure justified if it assures us of a PC that is satisfactory in this regard?

Despite its weaknesses this argument would be quite persuasive were it not that our present structure gives us no more assurance of an effective executive than it does of a satisfactory legislature.

It is the purpose of a legislature to determine the will of the majority. It is the purpose of an executive to organize the activities desired by the majority. The executive, in other words, should represent the majority and the majority alone.

Because the constitution gives no assurance of any kind of representative legislature, we have developed the custom of giving minorities representation on the NC and the PC. While this in no way weakens our case against the NC and PC as legislative bodies, it is almost certain to prevent the formation of a functioning executive. Its most fundamental flaw lies in the number of decisions which must be preceded by ideological struggle within the PC itself. This renders difficult any speedy reaction to new events. A further result is that a section (the minority) is rendered incapable of doing its best practical thinking, for rare indeed is the person who can plan effectively activities which he does not approve.

Once again let us suppose that the Convention selects a satisfactory NC from the executive standpoint. Let us further suppose that the NC selects a similarly satisfactory PC. In other words, that at the end of the convention we find ourselves with a unified executive, representative of the majority and the majority alone. Once again, would the same be true six months later? Here we repeat: "To accept this we must also accept the bourgeois conception of a static

"normalcy" within society. Between conventions there occur a myriad political and social events that affect - or should affect - the attitudes of the membership. Burning issues of convention time may be cold ashes within a few months, the current conflagrations being quite differently related to the previously conceived tasks of the League." Will the NC and PC remain representative of the majority? Who knows? Will the NC and PC even remain programmatically united? Again, who knows? There can be only one answer: "wait and see!"

It is clear that the ISL, organized as at present, can assure itself neither of an adequate legislative (policy-making) body nor of an adequate executive.

Is the ISL democratic?

The purpose of democracy as a political structure is the implementation of majority will! This is quite different than the usual definitions. The general conception is that democracy is a social system in which people permit others full democratic rights - in brief in which people are "nice" to such others as disagree with them. Minority rights are extremely important but, insofar as we are considering political structure, they are important only because if we deny them there is no way to determine a majority and its will. Hence the opportunity for minorities to become majorities must be defended in any democracy.

It is not from any feeling that minority rights are irrelevant that we emphasize "majority". Among our fundamental purposes and reasons for political existence is the extension of those rights to all fields of human activity. But a conception of democracy within our organization must be based upon the need for positive accomplishment, rather than pure and simple tolerance. We explain this in order to point out that there are situations where so-called "democratic rights" are not democratic. When people defend as "democratic rights" the opportunity to regularly prevent majorities from carrying out their purposes they are not for democracy but for pseudo-democratic minority rule. The most democratic organization is that which is most effective in determining and carrying out the will of the majority. It is upon such a conception of democracy that this article is based.

If we accept this definition of democracy it is clear that our problem centers around the phrase, "determining and carrying out the will of the majority". Determination of majority will requires a satisfactory legislative body - such a body we do not possess. The carrying out of majority will require a satisfactory executive body - such a body we do not possess.

IN THE FACE OF THESE FACTS, CAN IT BE DENIED THAT THE ISL EXEMPLIFIES A DEMOCRACY OF VERY LOW ORDER?

II. THE EFFECTS OF UNDEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE.

Ever since the "end" of World War II our discussions have been heavily weighted with the problems of low morale and low educational level. Time without number we have hashed and rehashed these problems, only to arrive sooner or later at the same whitewash, objective conditions!

We do not deny that conditions outside the League are important contributors to our failures. We do, however, deny that they are the sole contributors. It is the placing of sole responsibility upon a situation beyond our control that we term "whitewash". After all, there are conditions within the League which we might well examine for their contribution to our failures. Not least among them is our undemocratic structure, something that we can do something about!

Consider the reactions of the members to activities decided upon by the PC. Those members who believe those activities to be well chosen will tend to act with some

enthusiasm, because of their agreement; but this enthusiasm is somewhat dampened if they do not feel that many others will be similarly enthusiastic. Especially is this true if thru the years there has been (as there has) a tendency for branches to give PC directives a cool reception. Even if the PC happens to represent a majority, the impossibility of knowing that it does renders it difficult to avoid the original dampening of enthusiasm.

Suppose, on the other hand, that we have a democratic structure such that all members may know that the executive is continuously representative of a majority. A member of that majority will know that his enthusiasm is shared by a large section of the League, so that to his original enthusiasm is added confidence that he will not be acting alone, but as part of an inspired majority. Then those who believe less strongly will be swept along by the stream, the result being an active organization with good morale.

An additional factor in morale is participation in the determination of policy. When we participate in planning we assume, within our own minds, responsibility for carrying out the plans. A democratic structure, by facilitating rank-and-file participation in the determination of policy and tactics, must automatically increase the internal forces directed toward carrying out those policies and tactics.

The problem of educational level.

The original high theoretical level of the Trotskyist movement was based upon the fact that Trotskyism fed upon other anti-capitalist political movements, and therefore its members required the ability to debate opponents, week in and week out, on a high political level. Since the war activity has been in a different field, made up of less politically developed workers. In "speaking their language" we have gradually lost the knack of speaking the language of scientific socialism, and along with it the feeling of compulsion to understand socialist theory. Today the importance of such understanding is impressed upon us only once in two years, at convention time. Is it any wonder that there is a marked lack of enthusiasm for classes or for individual study?

The high theoretical level of early Trotskyites existed because theoretical understanding played a continuous part in their roles as members. Unless we change things so that theoretical understanding once again plays such a part the general educational level, at present founded mainly on memory, will sink lower and lower. But how are we to create such a part? Should we return to the old arena of inter-party strife? I think few would favor such a move. What alternative is there? Only that of giving rank-and-file education a meaning and function within the organization. This can be done only by rank-and-file participation in the formation of ISL policy - not merely participation, but continuous participation.

Because theoretical understanding has lost its importance in our organization, older comrades are apt to be lax in carrying out the task of educating new recruits. With a more democratic structure all would realize that new members must be educated for their function as participants in the formation of policy. This realization, in itself, would raise the theoretical level considerably.

III. SOME CRITERIA OF DEMOCRACY

Our criticism of the present structure of the ISL leads us to formulate criteria by which any proposed new structure should be judged. The parenthesized numbers beside these criteria represent sections of the resolution we propose for referendum in order that the reader may easily compare them. The first five are presented without discussion.

- a) the separation of legislative and executive functions. (16)
- b) An executive body which continuously represents a majority, and that majority alone. (16)

- c) A legislative body which, when elected, represents proportionately the various attitudes present within the membership; (30,31,32)
- d) A method by which changing attitudes within the rank-and-file may be reflected within the legislative body between elections; (25)
- e) power of the leadership to make rapid decisions, and act upon them, to meet the demands of dynamic circumstances. (18,13)

A legislature must be a functioning body, each member of which should carry on extensive investigation of problems in order to discuss them fruitfully and vote upon them intelligently. Any basis for membership which renders his continuation on the legislature ephemeral or unpredictable tends to destroy the value of a legislator. Therefore -

- f) Representatives on legislatures must be elected for definite terms. (10)

The method of causing the legislature to reflect changing membership attitudes must not depend upon special organized action, for then no change takes place unless the situation becomes explosive. Such a requirement tends to create a fictitious "unity" (similar to that existing at present within the ISL) until, the elastic limit being reached, an upheaval occurs. The legislature must change as gradually and transitionally as the membership itself if such upheavals are to be avoided. For this reason we add the criterion:

- g) Automatic and continuous membership control of the legislature. (25)

The function of a legislator is to direct his best thought to the solution of the problems faced by the organization. One's best thought is necessarily independent thought, intended to suit only one's own sense of correctness. Legislators who trim their programmatic sails in order to please others succeed only in lowering the intellectual level of the legislature. Hence -

- h) Membership control of the legislature must not depend upon any binding of the particular legislators.

Membership in a legislature should be based upon general program, not particular issues. At times, however, a very representative legislature may be quite the opposite with respect to some particular issue considered important by the membership. Were it necessary to change the relations of legislative forces in order to handle that issue satisfactorily, it would be equally necessary to reverse the change immediately after the decision. This would be cumbersome and disruptive. Hence -

- i) There must be a mechanism, distinct from that for control of the legislature, by which the membership may quickly and easily intervene with respect to specific issues. (26).

- j) It must be possible to express disapproval of legislative or executive action without putting anyone "on the spot" in public by untimely termination of the action. (13a, 13b, 16a, 16b)

Not only the physical division into majority and minority, but also the programmatic basis for that division, depends upon the particular issues paramount at the time in the minds of the membership. When changing situations bring other issues to the fore, those programmatic bases may become irrelevant. Specifically, the problems which impress us so strongly at election time may lose their significance before the next election. Unless some legislator has an approach significant in the new situation, the organization becomes ineffective. As the required shift is usually unpredictable, it is necessary to elect the widest possible variety of viewpoints to the legislature. Hence -

- k) Presence on the legislature of the maximum programmatic dispersion possible.

The existence of a legislature represents a division of labor, in which the legislator plays the role of a specialist in political thought. It is not desirable that this particular division of labor exist within the legislature itself.

It is the duty of each legislator to direct his full power of mind toward the solution of problems, and his powers of expression toward convincing the others that his are the best solutions. It is necessary, therefore, that there be time and opportunity for each to participate fully in the consideration of problems. In a large body such full participation would seriously impede functioning. For this reason we add the criterion -

l) The legislature should be as small as is consistent with fruitful consideration and wide programmatic dispersion.

It is desirable that many capable members become skilled in the work of a legislator. Similarly, it is desirable that leaders return periodically to the rank-and-file, getting the rank-and-file, "worm's-eye view" of the problems of the organization. Hence -

m) There should be a limit to the number of consecutive terms a member may serve on leading committees.

The organization of a legislature fitting these criteria might seem difficult, as no significant organization has ever approached them. Historical precedent furnishes us with no organizational forms even approaching democratic representation. It is fortunate that the future is not rigidly bound to the forms of the past. Socialists, having spent years struggling for an unprecedented social system, should not find it difficult to conceive of effective organization with unprecedented structure.

In the hope that the Independent Socialist League may soon step forward as the only modern human organization that has approached real democracy, we offer to this convention the following resolution for a referendum.

J. Wallis
Leo Schmidt
Margaret Carr

(Resolution to Follow)

REFERENDUM ON PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE

It is the will of this convention that the membership of every branch shall, during the week following October 28, 1951, vote upon the following proposal; and that the ballots shall be immediately forwarded to the National Office for counting. The Forum shall, during this period, welcome articles discussing the problems of internal democracy.

Proposal for reorganization

1. All provisions of the constitution as amended by the 1951 convention, excepting such as conflict with these articles, remain in force.
2. The National Convention, as a governing body, is hereby discontinued. The National Committee established by convention, as well as its associated Political Committee, shall dissolve immediately upon the election of the Provisional National Committee described herein.
3. The PC shall, immediately after the adoption of this proposal, define a roughly circular Headquarters Area, containing the National Headquarters. The Headquarters Area shall be as inclusive as is consistent with regular attendance at meetings, at the National Headquarters, by employed members.
4. During the week following November 18, 1951, all branches within the Headquarters Area select nominees for the Provisional National Committee. The prescribed rules for nomination shall be followed, excepting that none may be nominated nor participate in nominations for the Provisional National Committee unless they are residents of branches within the Headquarters Area. Eligible members of the outgoing NC, or alternates thereto, are automatically nominated. The PC shall determine the number of nominees to which each branch is entitled. Immediately following nominations the nominees shall prepare statements of no more than 200 words, presenting their attitudes on political issues. Special bulletins shall contain these statements, arranged in alphabetical order with respect to the names of the nominees.
5. During the week following December 16, 1951, elections shall be held for the Provisional National Committee. The prescribed rules for selective election shall be followed, except that voting shall be limited to members of branches located within the Headquarters Area. Seven members and four alternates are to be elected.
6. All the rules governing powers, duties, and membership-control of succeeding National Committees shall apply to the Provisional National Committee. The Provisional National Committee shall have the additional task of preparing a new constitution for the ISL, for the approval of the National Committee that follows it.
7. During the week following January 6, 1952, nominations for Provisional Local Committees shall be held in branches represented on such committees. During the week following January 27, 1952, Provisional Local Committees shall be elected. Such nominations and elections shall take place in accordance with the rules governing those of succeeding Local Committees. Members of, and alternates to, the outgoing Local Committee are automatically nominated. All rules governing powers, duties and membership-control of succeeding Local Committees shall apply to the Provisional Local Committees. Provisional Local Committees shall have the additional task of preparing new constitutions for the Locals, to be referred to the Local Committees that succeed them.
8. Membership on Provisional National or Local Committees shall not be considered in the determination of eligibility for future committees.
9. During the week following the last Sunday in March, in 1952 and succeeding years, nominations for the NC (National Committee) shall be held. During the week following the last Sunday in April election of its members and alternates shall take place. Local nominations shall take place the week following the second Sunday in May, and elections the week following the first Sunday in June.
10. The National Committee shall consist of nine members with five alternates

elected for a period of one year. Local Committees shall consist of five members, with three alternates, elected for a similar period.

11. On questions involving only the internal functioning of the NC or LC itself each member casts a single vote, which shall be termed a "unit" vote. On all other questions each member casts as a block the votes of all League members who have selected him as representative; such a block shall be termed as "representative vote".

12. Unless countermanded by the membership, decisions of the NC shall be binding upon all members of the League. It shall be the duty of the NC to determine policy for the national organization, and to establish and maintain as strong and unified a National Executive Committee as internal conditions permit. The chairman of the NC, termed the National Policy Chairman, shall be elected by unit vote, and shall be the official spokesman on policy for the ISL.

13. Should the NC feel that awaiting membership approval of a given action would imperil effectiveness, it is empowered to direct the NEC (National Executive Committee) to carry out the action. Under such circumstances the NC minutes must contain three motions the substance of which are: (a) the action was justified; (b) the action should be continued; and, (c) the action should be repeated under similar circumstances. Such motions are to be underlined in the minutes.

14. The NC may request locals or branches to experiment with organizational methods or political approaches consistent with fundamental national policy.

15. The NC may, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the membership, establish classifications of material that is not to be reported in the NC minutes. Motions to establish such classifications shall be termed "non-recording" motions, and must be underlined in the minutes. Under no circumstances may a non-recording motion be so interpreted as to apply to itself or to other non-recording motions.

16. The executive functions of the ISL shall be vested in an NEC (National Executive Committee), which is installed by, and responsible to, the NC. The National Policy Chairman shall approach an individual who has the confidence of NC members holding a majority of the representative votes, asking him to select an executive committee with which he can work. If the committee he selects can command a majority NC vote it is installed as NEC, and the individual who chose it the National Executive Chairman. The NEC may resign or be dissolved by a majority vote within the NC, at which time another must be formed by the same process. The NEC shall offer its resignation to each incoming NC, and even the rejection of such a resignation shall constitute, for the determination of eligibility, the installation of a new NEC.

17. With the exception of other special dispositions that may be made by the NC, the NEC is in complete control of the organizational and political activities of the ISL. The NEC has power to hire such technical help as may be required, and to fire same; with the proviso that anyone so fired may appeal to the NC, and insert into its minutes a statement of no more than 500 words with respect to such firing. A report on the past activities and proposals for future activities must be presented at each NC meeting. NEC members may attend NC meetings, with voice but no vote.

18. The NEC is empowered to act immediately in any situation demanding such action, without awaiting NC approval. Under such circumstances the NC must, at its next meeting, consider four motions, the substance of which are: (a) the situation justified such prompt action; (b) the action itself was justified; (c) the action should be continued; and, (d) the action should be repeated under similar circumstances. Such motions are to be underlined in the minutes.

19. The NC may adopt a new constitution or amendments to the existing constitution with the proviso that such constitution or amendments must be reconsidered at a meeting not less than four nor more than five months later than that at which it was originally adopted. No constitution or constitutional amendment changing the process of election or the power of the membership to participate in the formation of policy may be introduced during the six months period proceeding the final election of the succeeding NC. If any part of this section is disregarded in the

adoption of a constitution or constitutional amendments such constitution or amendments shall be automatically nullified.

20. Excepting such material as may be covered by non-recording motions, the NC minutes shall contain the report and proposals of the NEC, all motions considered at the meeting, the votes of each member with respect to each motion, the representative vote on each motion demanding such a vote, a tabulation of the votes represented by each NC member at that meeting, and the votes on previous motions as changed by corrective action within the branches. Should the NC consider it important that a particular motion be discussed in the branches, that motion is to be underlined in the minutes. All motions recorded in the NC minutes throughout a given term shall be numbered consecutively, the first motion recorded at the first meeting of an incoming NC being #1. Such numbers may, for future reference, substitute for restatement of the motions themselves.

21. NC minutes are to be distributed as follows: one copy to each NC, NEC, LC and LEC member; one copy for the files of the NC, NEC, and each LC and LEC; and two copies to each branch.

22. Where two or more branches are organized into a Local they shall elect an LC (Local Committee), and three LC alternates. An LC shall serve for a term of one year. The powers and functions of an LC are the same as those of the NC, except that they have reference only to the Local membership, and that no LC decision may conflict with any unrevoked NC decision. A Local membership controls its LC in the same manner that the national membership controls its NC. The rules governing the contents and distribution of LC minutes are the same as those for NC minutes, except that copies need not be sent to locals or branches outside the Local.

23. The LEC (Local Executive Committee) formed by an LC shall have all the powers, functions and limitations of the NEC, except that none of its actions may contravene unrevoked decisions of the NC, and it must carry out to the best of its ability all directives of the NEC.

24. Eligibility for an NC, NEC, LC or LEC shall be limited as follows:

- a) Three years of voting membership are required for a National Executive Chairman
- b) Two years of voting membership are required for a Local Executive Chairman and for members of the NC and NEC
- c) One year of voting membership is required for LC or LEC members.
- d) No member may be nominated to serve his third consecutive term on the NC or an LC. Anyone who has been elected a member, or who has been entitled to attend and vote at more than half the meetings, of a particular term of the NC or an LC shall be deemed to have served the term.
- e) No NEC or LEC may be installed if any of its members, including the National or Local Chairman, have served on that committee for more than 550 of the preceding 730 days. (app. 18 months out of 24). Such disqualification does not depend upon consecutive service.

25. The last point on the business agenda of each branch meeting shall be reserved for the selection of representatives. At this time each member votes, by secret ballot and without discussion on the floor, for one of the members of the NC. The results are announced, recorded in the minutes, and immediately sent to the National Office. Each NC member, in casting his representative vote, casts as many votes as there are members who choose him as representative. Determination of representative votes is a function of the NC secretary, who makes adjustments whenever communications from branches indicate them.

26. At each branch meeting, directly after branch minutes have been approved, all previously unread NC minutes are to be read. During the reading any member may raise his hand and say, "I move to refer". The chairman then asks for hands. If more hands are raised than were represented, from that branch, on the losing side in the NC, the particular motion is referred to a special order of business. All underlined motions are automatically so referred. A discussion and vote is held later in the meeting, the result being recorded and sent on to the National Head-

subtracted from the ayes and nays on that particular motion, and be replaced by the votes as they occurred in the branch itself. The result of such a replacement shall be termed a "correction by the membership", and so recorded in the minutes. Corrections are so recorded only if received or postmarked within 21 days following the mailing of the NC minutes to be corrected.

27. For branches represented on Local Committees there are two additional provisions, formulated by the substitution of "LC" for "NC" throughout 25 and 26.

28. Any member of the ISL, in good standing and otherwise eligible, is nominated for election to the NC if a petition to that effect, carrying fifteen valid signatures including his own, is received by the NC secretary neither more than one month nor less than one week before the week of nominations in the branches. Each signature must be accompanied by the date and the branch (or, member-at-large) of the signer. If two or more petitions nominating the same member in the same elections are properly received by the NC secretary, they shall be treated as a single petition carrying the valid signatures of all.

The signature of any member in bad standing on the first day for the filing of petitions shall be invalid, as shall that of any who signs more than one petition, or a single petition more than once, nominating for the same election. Any member who places an invalid signature upon a petition shall be barred from further participation in that particular nomination and election; any member who does so by signing more than once shall be totally disenfranchised for four months following the discovery.

29. Nominations for LC elections may be made in accordance with 28, amended as follows: (a) all signers, with the exception of the nominee, must be members of the Local; (b) replace "fifteen" with "eight"; and, (c) replace "NC" with "LC" thruout.

30. The method of Selective Nomination shall be as follows:

a) Selective nominations take place within branches; for the NC, within the branches of the Headquarters Area. Only branch members present or excused, in good standing and not otherwise barred, may participate or be nominated. Any of those not otherwise nominated or ineligible, who does not officially communicate to the meeting his unwillingness to run, may be nominated. Eligible members of and alternates to the outgoing NC (or, LC) are automatically candidates, hence cannot be nominated.

b) The number to be nominated from each branch shall be determined by the outgoing NC (or, LC) in accordance with the following principles:

(1) it shall be as nearly as possible proportionate to the number of members in good standing;

(2) each branch shall nominate at least two; and,

(3) there shall be at least twenty-five NC, or sixteen LC, candidates selectively nominated.

c) Each branch member, present and eligible to participate, is given a ballot containing as many blank lines as the branch is to nominate. Those whose names have appeared on successful nominating petitions shall receive ballots of which the uppermost blank space has been scratched, as tho a name had been scratched out. Such a ballot shall be treated as tho there were the name of an already nominated candidate upon that line. It shall be inoperative from the first, and immediately placed in "inoperative pile #1".

d) Each participating member lists upon his ballot, in descending order of preference, those eligible members whom he prefers to nominate. If the number of names listed on a ballot is less than the number of blank spaces, the blank spaces left are to be those at the bottom. Such a ballot shall be termed a "short ballot".

e) After each successive nomination the name of the nominee is scratched from the ballot, and those ballots rendered inoperative put aside. A ballot is termed "inoperative" if it has one or more scratched names above the highest unscratched name. Except for the situations described in (h) and (i) inoperative ballots are not counted. Inoperative ballots are separated into "inoperative pile #1", "inoperative pile #2", etc., according to whether the number of scratched names

above all unscratched names equals one, two or etc. If, on any count, the name of the nominee does not appear on a particular short ballot, the ballot shall be treated as tho that name had appeared on its lowest blank line, and that line shall be scratched.

f) On the first count the appearance of a name on the lowest line of a ballot gives one vote, on the second line two votes, etc. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes is nominated.

g) For the second and following nominations the counting is somewhat changed. Either the original bottom of the list or the highest scratched name, whichever is higher, shall be considered the "operative bottom" of the list. The first name above the operative bottom is given one vote, the second two, etc.

h) If, before the required number have been nominated, the operative ballots have been reduced to less than one-fifth of the original number, inoperative pile #1 shall be rendered operative before another count is taken. Thereafter no ballot shall be inoperative unless it qualifies for inoperative pile #2x. Should such a condition recur, inoperative pile #2 is rendered operative, etc.

If inoperative pile #x is rendered operative, the operative bottom of any ballot shall be either the original bottom or the x-plus-1 scratched name, counting from the top. In counting such ballots the first unscratched name above the operative bottom shall be given one vote, the second two votes, etc.

i) In the event of a tie all those involved in the tie are nominated, unless an illegitimate number of nominees would thereby be produced. In such a case the lowest-numbered inoperative pile is counted, with respect only to those involved in the tie. If this does not reduce their number sufficiently, the next higher inoperative pile is counted. This process is continued until the number of those tied is sufficiently reduced or the inoperative ballots are exhausted. If the number of those tied is not then sufficiently reduced, all are nevertheless nominated. No inoperative pile is rendered operative by being used for tie-breaking purposes.

j) Nominations are over when the allotted number have been selected.

31. Candidates for the NC or an LC shall list, in descending order of preference, all members of the outgoing committee. They may also accompany this list with an explanation, containing no more than two hundred words. Such lists and explanations must be in the hands of the NC (or, LC) secretary within two days after nomination, and shall be published, in the alphabetical order of the candidates' names, in a special bulletin or bulletin. Such bulletins must be mailed in time to reach every branch week before election time.

32. The method of selective election is the same as that of selective nomination except for the following:

a) Voting for selective election of NC members and alternates shall take place in all branches thruout the ISL. Members-at-large, or members legitimately distant from their branches, may send individual ballots direct to National Headquarters.

b) Eligibility is limited to nominees and automatic candidates.

c) Ballots received have spaces for the total number of members and alternates to be elected. The line immediately below the number of spaces corresponding to the committee members shall be distinctly darker than the others.

d) Election of committee members must be complete before the election of alternates begins. In the election of committee members the operative bottom of the ballot must be at or above the darkened line.

e) The names of those elected to committee membership are to be scratched both above and below the darkened line, in red pencil, and in such a manner that they are not rendered illegible.

f) After the election of the committee the darkened line and names scratched in red are completely disregarded. Any reference to "names" shall be to those not scratched in red, and names shall be regarded as consecutive if they are separated by names so scratched. Scratching of names during the selection of alternates shall be in a color distinctly different than red.

g) If there remain on any total ballot more unscratched names than there are alternates to be selected, the surplus names are scratched from the bottom of the list.

h) After the selection of alternates is completed, all ballots shall become op- 1072

erative for the purpose of determining the initial representative votes of committee members. Each ballot with any red-pencil scratchings shall constitute a vote for the uppermost name so scratched. The sum of such votes for any particular committee member constitutes his representative vote until it is changed by votes within the branches.

33. Each alternate to the NC or any LC shall indicate how he would have voted upon all motions recorded in the minutes of that committee, and a record of such indicated votes shall be available to all members of the committee. Should a member drop from the committee for any reason not involving disloyalty or improper conduct, the alternate replacing him is selected by unit vote of the NC.

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AN EXAMPLE OF SELECTIVE ELECTION

"Selective election" is modeled after a system of proportional representation, with one important difference. Systems of P.A. are designed to elect, for any given tendency, a number of representatives proportional to the strength of the tendency. Selective election, on the other hand, is designed to produce at least one representative for each of a wide variety of tendencies. Furthermore it accomplishes this purpose without the need for organized caucuses or factions.

To demonstrate its operation we present here a simplified example. In this example three are to be elected from a list of six candidates, the electorate consists of only sixteen voters and there are no alternates to be elected.

The first table represents the ballots for the first count. Capital letters represent candidates; lower-case letters, the voters casting the individual ballots. The numbers to the left of the table indicate the voting values on that horizontal line, in accordance with 30f.

(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i)(j)(k)(l)(m)(n)(o)(p)

3:	A	A	A	A	B	B	C	C	C	C	D	D	D	D	D	E
2:	B	B	D	E	A	E	A	D	D	E	C	C	C	E	F	F
1:	E	E	C	D	F	F	F	B	B	B	A	E	F	A	B	B

	A	B	C	D	E	F
3x4(12)	3x2(6)	3x4(12)	3x5(15)	3x1(3)	0	
2x2(4)	2x2(4)	2x3(6)	2x3(6)	2x4(8)	2x2(4)	
2	5	1	1	3	4	
<u>18</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>8</u>	

D is elected, having 22 votes.

It is on the succeeding counts that we diverge from proportional representation. For PR it would be sufficient to consider C and A also elected. It will be seen that selective election gives quite different results.

Table below presents the same ballots for the second count. It will be seen that most of the ballots have slipped partly or wholly out of the table proper. On principle, however, both tables are the same. In both the heavy line represents the operative bottom of the ballots. In the second many operative bottoms have been shifted by the scratching of D (see 30g) so that those candidates remaining are lowered in value or entirely eliminated.

(table on page 26)

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