

# BULLETIN

TO ALL BRANCHES:

Dear Friends:

This bulletin is in the nature of discussion articles representing points of view on various aspects of Party political program and policy. They were presented for discussion some weeks ago and were held up pending the publication of the political resolution. That having been made public, these contributions make up part of the discussion on the Party program.

A series of other bulletins on other questions is also being mailed to you. They, too, are in the form of discussion articles and are in line with the general policy of making available to the Party such materials as cannot be published for one reason or another in the press.

Anyone who wishes to contribute his or her opinions on one or more of these questions has the perfect right to do so. If there are any questions relating to the material you receive, we hope that you will communicate them to the National Office.

Fraternally yours,

ALBERT GATES  
Ass't Nat'l Sec'y

## C O N T E N T S

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APRIL 12, 1943

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# A PROGRAM FOR THE INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY

## A Discussion Article

In order to bring out the points of this article, it will be pegged on criticisms of a recent educational meeting held by the Workers Party on the subject of the labor party. The speaker was Comrade Coolidge, Labor Secretary of the Workers Party. Reference is made to Comrade Coolidge's statements only because he acted as spokesman for the Workers Party. It is the position of the Party and not of the individual that is here criticized.

One of the questions asked Comrade Coolidge was what kind of labor party he thinks is likely to develop in this country. He answered that he isn't a prophet, does not know, but thinks it is likely to be a reformist party - and our movement will support it.

### No Social Basis For a Reformist Party

The Workers Party is an organization which works to influence the course of history. To take so complacently the prospect of a national labor party being reformist in this day and age, is not a credit to it. Such a belated and outdated development in American history may prove to be a calamity - which our movement must strive to prevent.

For American labor to form what we have come to call a reformist party would be to render its political confusion more confounded. There is no social basis for a reformist party of labor in this country. Reforms are the hand-outs of capitalism in its ascendancy. We are now in the period of capitalist decline.

It is true that if the United States wins the war and revolution does not upset its apple cart, American imperialism at least will have acquired a new - if short - lease of life. However, it will be able to hold its mastery only by virtue of actual military domination of the globe through a colossal policing force the like of which has not yet been known in history.

Will bettering working class conditions at home - granting reforms - be consistent with the maintenance of such a vast and costly imperialist set-up? Only a rhetorical question. Global domination by American imperialism will have to rest on the backs of a more intensively exploited and more regimented working class at home.

Present developments make the conclusion unavoidable that the period of reformism in this country reached its acme during the heyday of the New Deal. It is one of the quirks of history that American capitalism instituted its reforms without benefit of a reformist party of labor. Through the class-collaboration policy of labor rewarding its friends and punishing its enemies, "enlightened" capitalism had its field day of reforms.

Whatever is now left of the New Deal has been merged and blended with plans for a "benevolent" dictatorship now and in the post-war period. The "benevolence" consists in not annihilating labor's org-

anizations but in using them to serve the ruling class - even as the Roosevelt administration is doing to put over the war program.

Where in this coming American dictatorship is there a basis for a reformist party of labor such as European countries had before this era of world wars and revolutions? It could be only an unfortunate anachronism.

### Labor Leaders For Closer Class Collaboration

Labor leaders understand the trend of American capitalism, but they shy away from calling it dictatorship. They envisage government control and more government control - with themselves having a hand at the controls. Labor leaders want more posts on more government boards. They have their toe in the door of government and hope to get their foot in.

This newest wrinkle in class collaboration in this country is not only for the duration of the war. Labor leaders are anticipating the post-war period also. They will, in other words, "protect labor's interests" by collaborating with the ruling class in its global military dictatorship. Needless to say these class collaborators will have the fate of all appeasers. Already we see it in the growing number of unanimous anti-labor decisions handed down by the War Labor Board.

If the United States wins the war, leaving "enlightened" capitalism still in the saddle here, the "benevolent" dictatorship of the post-war period will have no objection to labor representation on government boards. It will graciously permit labor leaders to do the nasty job of snapping the whip over the rank and file - as is happening right now. At the same time, labor representation on government boards can serve as the padding under the harness on labor's back. Who said there is a dictatorship over labor? Are not labor's leaders in the seats of government!

It is even conceivable that labor leaders will sponsor a national labor party - if they think this step will enable them the better to wield labor's votes to get more posts on more government boards. This seems to be the only kind of "reformism" left for a reformist labor party to pursue. It means ever closer class collaboration - and in this period when the continued existence of capitalism must be at the expense of labor, it means betraying labor. This is certainly not the substance for the independent labor party that our movement can support.

### Will the Rank and File Go Along?

Will labor go along with its present leadership in its pursuit of bigger and better class collaboration? Undoubtedly the experiences of the war will have made the workers wiser. But if nothing else concrete enough for them to follow is presented to them, they will tag along with their present leadership.

Today labor has what it considers - by and large - very good reasons for following the lead of the ruling class in the prosecution

of the war: Hitler's victory will mean the end of the American labor movement, the end of the American high standard of living, the end of the "American way of life". Their leaders tell the workers it is a "People's War" because these things are at stake.

The post-war period will present equally good reasons for following the lead of the ruling class. American labor will be urged to work hard, sacrifice and submit to dictatorship so that the starving world can be fed. The military world dictatorship of the United States will be justified by the alternative that chaos, bloodshed, civil and international war will rule the world unless the United States police force does. Labor will undoubtedly also be warned that it must cooperate voluntarily with the "benevolent" dictatorship - or the fascists will get control of the country and make them. This, in fact, is the line of reasoning labor leaders follow today in making the workers take one defeat after another presumably to forestall the passage of anti-labor laws.

Because there is this possibility of labor being hog-tied to the post-war dictatorship, the responsibility of our movement is tremendous. Labor must be acquainted with a non-class-collaborationist program - something concrete - something the workers will know they have to fight for in self-preservation - something to oppose to what their present leaders stand for. This question of program is taken up under the following heading.

#### Leadership Will Develop Around a Concrete Program

Another question our movement stumbles over is who will lead the kind of labor party we stand for. Again spokesmen for the Workers Party protest that they are not prophets and do not know, but yes, it could be that Murray-Reuther-Green-Tobin will blossom out as leaders of an independent labor party. But isn't this fantastic? How can an independent labor party - that is, with the class collaborationist umbilical cord severed - be led by these labor leaders in whose very blood stream flows the poison of class collaboration?

There is a grave inconsistency here. Comrade Coolidge, in discussing the future of the trade union movement, states that the unions can be pulled out of the deep ditch of class collaboration only under new leadership. Incidentally, he also states that the influence of Marxists and Marxism will have to be instrumental in building the new leadership. How, then, can this old leadership be the spearhead for a labor party freed from class collaboration?

The question of the leadership for an independent labor party has been looked at upside down. The reason for so much confusion is because we do not relate leadership to program. The most militant and the most politically advanced cadres in the unions will come forth as leaders of an independent labor party when they can rally their strength behind a specific program. Emphasis must be given to program.

In an article on the labor party Comrade Coolidge wrote: "Independent political action is a result of political education and unfolding class consciousness. The decisive factor for this consummation is an organized, articulate political leadership and a sharply

defined working class political program and dedicated to militant class economic and political action."

That "sharply defined working class political program" is the nub of the political education for an independent labor party. It is the sine qua non for building that "organized, articulate political leadership". The men will follow the program. We take a wrong - a laissez faire - attitude on the question of program. We call loudly for independent political action, but don't worry too much about program. That will somehow come, we hope.

### A Program For the Independent Labor Party

Now we come to the very heart of the to-be-or-not-to-be proposition. Whether it is better to keep the transitional planks of the Workers Party platform unsullied and nicely boxed off on the editorial page of LABOR ACTION - or whether it is better to propagate these transitional planks as the platform for the only independent labor party that can be worth its salt in this period of American history.

The "Labor Must Defend Itself" planks, the "Soak the Rich" planks, the "Democratic Rights" planks, the "Smash Jim Crow" planks - these are all basic independent labor party demands. To these must be added the post-war program for solving unemployment, including taking over and operating idle plants. Also enlargement and emphasis should be given to the anti-fascist preparations and struggle labor must wage at home.

Is not this the "sharply defined working class political program" that Comrade Coolidge has in mind? In fact, can there be any other "dedicated to militant class economic and political action"? On this program there can be no class collaboration. To this program can rally the most militant and most politically advanced elements in the trade unions.

It is, of course, customary for a political party to project its own program. However, we cannot afford to be too formalistic. When a new political party is born, the men and women sponsoring it first know what they want it for - they have a program. Our movement must unfold its hands from its stomach and get to work to influence the course of labor's political development. Instead of merely endorsing independent political action in the abstract, we must start pushing a definite program for independent political action - the program of our own transitional demands.

Would this steal the thunder of the Workers Party? Not at all. The Party can tell the workers that, of course, it stands for the program it puts forth for the independent labor party. Because it is a revolutionary party, even politically advanced workers are not yet ready to go along with the Workers Party. O.K., boys. You want these demands, don't you? Either you get them or you go under, not true? Well go get them through your own political party. And we are right behind you, backing you up at every step.

What's wrong with that? Or is it better to sit around waiting for that national labor party which will "in all likelihood be reformist" but which we will support anyway.

## The Historic Choice Between Socialism and Fascism

At the educational meeting referred to at the beginning of this article Comrade Coolidge was asked a question to this effect: In this period when the historic alternatives are Socialism or Fascism, can the formation of a reformist party be a progressive step? The question is not a new one. The answer also was not new and just as unconvincing as ever. It consisted of two parts. One was to the effect that cutting loose from FDR's apron strings is itself progressive. The other was to the effect that you have to go easy with the workers - a step at a time - you can't make Socialists out of them at once. These are not verbatim quotes, but simply give the sense of both question and answer.

For an organization that works to influence the course of history as the Workers Party does - this does not answer the question but sidesteps it. Because this is the era when the historic choice is between Socialism and Fascism - because there is no social basis for reformism the step away from FDR has to be in the right direction. There is no time now for labor to step away from FDR only to land in the pitfall of political confusion. Labor cannot permit itself the luxury of mistakes - at least not such bad mistakes - for Fascism is not a sporting adversary and will not allow labor time to correct its disadvantageous position.

This eventuality we must try to avoid by acquainting labor with a program for which it will want to fight both against "enlightened" capitalism and against the fascist contingent. That is the program of transitional demands of the Workers Party - the struggle for the realization of which will inevitably lead to the revolutionary struggle.

At the same educational meeting referred to above, a comrade asked about the responsibility to the workers if the Workers Party supports a reformist labor party that can only be a sell-out. Again the answer was something of a dodge. It was to the effect that the Workers Party never takes responsibility for any organization but its own. Its own organization would, of course, be kept strictly kosher.

The purity of the Workers Party would bring small comfort to workers who had had high hopes they thought a reformist labor party could fulfill. Neither would landing in the lap of Fascism be counterbalanced by the programmatic purity of the Workers Party. The workers among whom the Workers Party will have influence, would turn on it with hot contempt. "Why didn't you hit us over the head with the idea that there is no time to fool around with this reform nonsense? You knew, didn't you?"

We do know, don't we!

To summarize the point of this article.

The formation of the independent labor party called for by this period in our history depends on putting forth a program that workers will recognize as something they have to fight for to save themselves.

Such a program will serve to educate and rally to action the best cadres in the unions - from whence will come those who will lead the workers to independent political action. Our own propaganda for independent political action must, therefore, become concrete. Concretization can only be accomplished by pushing a program. With modifications and additions, that program is the transitional demands of the Workers Party.

Is it too much to say that on the issue of independent political action the working class either makes the grade or breaks its neck - and ours too? Our movement can influence the course of labor's political development if we get to work along the lines indicated above.

Susan GREEN

## FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WAR AGAINST FASCISM

The arguments made in this paper are as old as the Socialist movement. At times the facts fitted the arguments and at times they did not. I believe these arguments are correct for the facts today. A more thorough presentation of a similar point of view was recently made by Comrade R. Ross, a former party member, in his article, "An End to Ambiguity."

The position of the W.P. on the war is ambiguous and incorrect. The Party correctly characterizes World War II as an imperialist war. To point out this fact in World War I made for an adequate characterization of the war. The only matter that could be settled by World War I was which set of thieves was to be boss over the colonial and semi-colonial countries. It was a matter of indifference to the interests of the working class which imperialist camp was victorious.

The situation today is quite different. Beside being a period of imperialist war this is a period of rising fascism. The victory of fascism, either at home or abroad, would mean the elimination of the meager democratic rights now possessed by the working class. For this reason we cannot be indifferent to the outcome of this war.

While a victory of the third camp is a likely outcome of the war and the one for which we must work, a Nazi victory is still a real possibility. But the W.P. has no real attitude toward it. From every issue of L.A. it is clear that the W.P. is against the imperialist war. Good. But L.A. brings this point out 10,000 times for every time it says it is also against an imperialist peace. The impression a worker gets from this is that we are for peace today--on our terms to be sure, but on any terms rather than see the war continued. Inasmuch as the preservation of the meager democratic rights now held by the workers in some of the Allied countries is quite as important an aspect of this war as that of imperialism, I believe the slogan "against the imperialist war" should be used today in a way that emphasizes "imperialist". The slogan should be only the first half of the full slogan--"against the imperialist war -- against an imperialist peace". And this slogan should be supplemented by slogans against a negotiated peace (which could only be a fascist peace today), appeasement, capitulation.

As long as the Axis fascists are on the march, a static defense of democracy will not do. While the Axis armies are marching into France, we cannot tell the French workers to just sit tight as far as the military front is concerned, until the workers take power on the home front. The very defeat on the military front means the destruction of the conditions which could some day make possible a workers government. At the same time we can give no support to the bourgeois government, because this would mean giving up the struggle against fascism at home and at the same time limiting the defense of democracy to the point that the bourgeoisie is willing to go.

In 1917 Lenin's strategic slogan "turn the imperialist war into civil war" was concretized in the demand for "peace", for the conditions in Russia at the time, namely, a war weary population fighting a war, the outcome of which was a matter of complete indifference to the interests of the working class, this slogan was correct. It was

only natural that any war enthusiasm on the part of the Russian workers would wear off when the struggle was not to their class interest.

The slogan of peace plays no such role today. The working class wants no peace in the fight with fascism. The peace slogan is today the slogan of the bourgeois appeasers. The advanced workers can only be rallied around the demand for a revolutionary war against fascism. The two main propaganda slogans expressing this demand in the advanced capitalist countries today are for a workers' government and a people's army.

This in brief is my criticism of the W.P. position on the war. Before discussing program I shall take up the Chinese question and several possible objections to the above criticism of the W.P. position.

Inasmuch as the rule over the colonial and semi-colonial countries is essentially fascist in method, it follows that national wars for liberation are justified on the same basis as is a revolutionary war against fascism. For the W.P., however, the declaration of war by two imperialists automatically (and apparently without regard to the concrete situation) brings our support to national wars to a close. It is said that the appearance of the imperialist struggle becomes decisive and everything else, therefore, insignificant. This may or may not be so, depending on the facts of the situation. In any case, a Marxist criterion for support or no support of a national struggle is whether or not the outcome of the struggle will leave the colonial country with a greater degree of independence with which to carry on its struggle for national liberation. In the case of China before December 7th the situation was clear to most comrades. A Japanese victory would mean the reduction of the Chinese state from a semi-colonial to a colonial position. In the event of a victory of Chiang Kai-shek it would not mean the complete independence of China, but it would mean a greater degree of independence than a victory of Japan. A Japanese victory would mean the crushing of the independence movement. A victory of Chiang would mean the preservation of conditions under which the working class could continue the struggle for complete liberation. Now, if the war were to end today this would still hold true. The entrance of American and British imperialism in the war as an ally of China has not reduced the independence of China to such an extent that a Chinese or Japanese victory would end up equally quickly to an equal degree of colonial enslavement. This point will be reached only after the Allies have poured into China a few hundred thousand troops and have taken the initiative away from the Chinese guerrilla troops. When this time comes, other things being equal, our attitude toward China should be the same as to the Allies in general.

### Objections

(1) It is claimed that we can be indifferent to a Nazi victory and therefore a loss of the democratic rights now held by the workers in certain of the Allied countries because the Socialist movement has worked effectively before under conditions of illegality. But underground movements in the past worked from a center of emigres in the so-called democracies. Also there was always first a successful democratic revolution that laid the basis for organizing for Socialism. If Fascism is victorious today it will be on a universal scale and would certainly postpone Socialism for several decades.

(2) It is claimed that we can be indifferent to the Axis victory because an Allied victory will also mean Fascism. Now it is true that capitalism is extremely weak. Democracy is a luxury for capitalism today. A more effective reactionary war could be fought without it, other things being equal. But other things are not equal. It is the existence of these meager democratic rights that make the workers willing to fight at all. As long as the working class maintains its strength in England and the U.S. the bourgeoisie is forced into a position of class collaboration within lest they be destroyed from without. Barring a military defeat, it would certainly take the American bourgeoisie several years to defeat the American working class. Look how long it took the German bourgeoisie. With a military defeat the question would be decided immediately, and given the political level of the American working class, it would probably be unfavorable. When all the Allied governments have gone completely totalitarian, then the W.P. position will be correct.

(3) It may be claimed that it is not necessary to raise the slogan "against the imperialist peace" today because there is apparently no sign of the war ending soon. Now the N.C. resolution tells us we should not think in terms of Axis and Allied victories because it is not likely in the near future that one side will gain the necessary superiority of arms to knock out the other. But this is to forget about the working class. It is true that neither imperialist camp dares to carry on political warfare. But will the working class necessarily wait for a call from the imperialists before beginning to move? Certainly not. A nationalist uprising in Europe or India whether successful or not could give a quick victory to one of the imperialist camps. The only alternative the N.C. resolution sees to a victory of the Third Camp is mutual exhaustion. While this is a very small possibility, in the face of the extreme exhaustion on both sides and the stirrings of the third camp, a negotiated peace is a very real possibility. And in view of the military positions today such a peace could only be a Fascist peace. Under such conditions the struggle between Democracy and Fascism would quickly come to a head. The imperialists in the democracies would be seen by the workers to be closely allied with their class borthers in the Axis Camp. Inasmuch as the working class is sincere in its anti-fascism only a revolutionary party with an anti-peace, anti-appeasement program could lead the workers to victory.

(4) Another possible objection may be the claim that although an Axis victory would probably mean the end of all free labor move-

ments in the world, any attempt today ("in the midst of an imperialist war") to encourage the military defeat of the Axis will lead straight to class collaboration. I cannot see this at all. It is traditional in the revolutionary movement to push the bourgeoisie into granting social reforms. We demand these reforms because they benefit the working class materially. Also they serve as a lesson in the class struggle. It is part of the struggle that is to lead to dual power. But while we demand of the bourgeoisie that certain social reforms take place, as long as the government is theirs we take no political responsibility for the way in which the reform works out, nor do we take any responsible part in their administration. In the same way, in the event of a negotiated peace, we should call for the continuation of the war (in a revolutionary manner, of course). If, partially through our efforts, the war is continued we can be very proud of the fact. But this does not make us politically responsible for the further conduct of the war unless it is continued in a revolutionary manner.

The example given us by Marx and Engels together with Prussian War bears out this point. Marx and Engels together with the LaSallian socialists in Germany correctly analyzed the beginning of the war as an attempt on the part of Napoleon III to prevent Bismarck's unification of Germany. The war was, therefore, progressive on the side of Germany. ~~Liebknecht and Bebel~~ on the other hand analyzed the war as a reactionary dynastic war between the Prussian junker Bismarck and the Bonapartist dictator Napoleon III. Now, when it came to voting for German war credits in the Landtag, the LaSallians voted for the credits, Liebknecht and Bebel abstained. Although Marx and Engels disagreed with the analysis of the war of Liebknecht and Bebel, they did agree with their vote in the Landtag. Marx and Engels thought the outcome of the war made a difference to the working class, but this did not lead them to give a vote of confidence to the reactionary Bismarck regime. In the same way today the outcome of the war makes a difference to the working class, but from this fact it does not follow that we are bound to support Roosevelt.

Labor Action probably came nearest a correct line on the war in the editorial in its June 24, 1940 issue, just after the fall of France. The editorial, "A New Commune can Save France", compares the defense of France against Hitler to the defense of France against Bismarck in the last half of the Franco-Prussian War. (The war was then progressive on the side of France. Napoleon had been captured and a republic had been established in France. But Bismarck continued the war in an attempt to take over Alsace-Lorraine). Very Good! The impression one gets is that Labor Action is really interested in -- not indifferent to--what a Hitler victory is to mean to the French labor movement. What Labor Action overlooks is that to be consistent, we should have supported all along (in a revolutionary manner) a war against Hitler in the same way that Marx and Engels supported a war against Germany in the second half of the Franco-Prussian War. But for Labor Action this editorial is only a tactic. It is not long before it returns to its former semi-pacifist line.

(5) It may be asked, "What are you going to do with the workers who are sick of the war?" In the first place our comrades are in a

habit of mistaking every sign of disgust ~~workers have~~ for the reactionary manner in which the war is being conducted for a real anti-war feeling. This disgust takes on two forms, Isolationism (a real anti-war attitude) and Jacobinism (a demand for a more efficient and equitable conduct of the war). The Isolationist attitude is usually found among the backward workers. The Jacobinism is found among the more advanced workers, as in the UAW etc. This attitude is too widespread and existed too long before June 22nd to be attributed to the Stalinists. Now either attitude is potentially progressive, but given the class interest the workers have in this war, it is to be expected that the Jacobin attitude will ultimately be channelized into revolutionary internationalism to a far greater extent than the anti-war attitudes of the Isolationists. Labor Action certainly does not realize this. Now as for those workers whose disgust for the imperialist war has temporarily turned them against any war against the Axis, we treat them the same way we would treat workers who are sick of being out on strike. We may even have to call for a truce, if the feeling grows. But in any case, if the workers' interest lies in the struggle we must have faith in their return to the battle.

This problem is certainly a small one today. Isolationist attitudes must certainly be hard to find outside of the Americas. The greatest resistance the Nazi army came across before the Russian campaign was from the Socialist defenders of Warsaw. Everywhere the working class has proved that it is for the defeat of the Axis. It is the Bourgeoisie that has prevented any mass resistance to the Axis. What is the composition of the guerrilla troops fighting in the occupied territories? Would the W.P. dismiss the Communist Guerrillas in Yugoslavia as mere Russian agents?

(6) Finally it may be objected that the slogan "For a revolutionary war against Fascism" cannot be our central slogan today because there is only one kind of revolutionary war; that is by a proletarian dictatorship. This is simply false. There are many kinds of revolutionary wars. There are revolutionary civil wars (Spain), revolutionary national wars (China), bourgeois revolutionary wars against Fascism (the Serbian Chetniks before the Communist Guerrillas were formed), and finally there may be revolutionary wars during the proletarian revolution, but before the dictatorship of the proletariat. Wars in defense of bona fide workers' governments short of communist governments would be examples of revolutionary wars conducted in the course of the revolution but short of the dictatorship of the proletariat. To be a defeatist in such wars would be to invite the fascists to crush the developing revolutionary movement. I support all existing revolutionary wars against fascism (China, Yugoslavia guerrillas, etc.) I am for the establishment of a workers' government in this country at almost any time, i.e., in almost any circumstance. I am especially for a workers' government under the circumstances that exist today because only a workers' government could carry on an effective war against fascism, i.e., a revolutionary war. Inasmuch as the main justification for a workers' government today is to make possible an effective war against fascism, I call for a workers' government (and a peoples' army) in the name of a revolutionary war against fascism.

As for program, I could accept the transitional program of the W.P., but it should be looked upon as a real transitional program. The slogan "Conscript the war industries under workers' control" is a slogan for today and not something to be favored only upon the arrival of Socialism. And the specific reference to the war industries today should not be passed over as just meaning industry in general. The motive for the slogan should be that, while we are against the imperialist war, we are for a real war for democracy. The war industries being taken over under workers control would mean both making the war a democratic one and a more effective one. In order to win over to Socialism the support of the anti-fascist workers, we must put forward our program both on the basis of justice and on the basis of making a revolutionary war against fascism.

Of course, I am not arguing that the words, "For a revolutionary war against fascism" be necessarily used in our propaganda. This is the central slogan which must be tactically translated in ways that the workers will understand.

Tony STEIN

THESE DEMANDS ARE ATTACHED TO THE ABOVE ARTICLE:

I. For a revolutionary war against fascism and oppression.

1. Free the colonies.
2. All aid to the Chinese people.
3. No suspension of the struggle against imperialism.
4. Abolish Jim Crow.
5. Defend the democratic rights of labor, the right to organize and strike, free speech and free press.
6. No suspension of workers' struggles.
7. For the right of all nations, vanquished and colonies included, to self determination. No annexations or occupations after the war.
8. No indemnities, no humiliating peace terms.
9. For a voluntary United States of Europe and of the world.
10. Abolish secret diplomacy.
11. No peace, no compromise with fascism.
12. Oust the appeasers and "dollar a year" men.
13. Put the burden of the war on those who can bear it. For a 100% excess profits tax. No income over \$20,000.
14. Conscript the war industries under workers' control.

II. For a peoples' army.

1. Citizens rights for the soldiers: the right to organize, to bargain collectively, free speech, and free press.
2. Arm the people.
3. For military training of all the workers by their trade unions at government expense.

III. For a workers' government.

1. For an independent labor party.

## FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WAR AGAINST FASCISM

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While a victory of the third camp is a likely outcome of the war and the one for which we must work, a Nazi victory is still a real possibility. But the W.P. has no real attitude toward it. From every issue of L.A. it is clear that the W.P. is against the imperialist war. Good. But L.A. brings this point out 10,000 times for every time it says it is also against an imperialist peace. The impression a worker gets from this is that we are for peace today--on our terms to be sure, but on any terms rather than see the war continued. Inasmuch as the preservation of the meager democratic rights now held by the workers in some of the Allied countries is quite as important an aspect of this war as that of imperialism, I believe the slogan "against the imperialist war" should be used today in a way that emphasizes "imperialist". The slogan should be only the first half of the full slogan--"against the imperialist war -- against an imperialist peace". And this slogan should be supplemented by slogans against a negotiated peace (which could only be a fascist peace today), appeasement, capitulation.

As long as the Axis fascists are on the march, a static defense of democracy will not do. While the Axis armies are marching into France, we cannot tell the French workers to just sit tight as far as the military front is concerned, until the workers take power on the home front. The very defeat on the military front means the destruction of the conditions which could some day make possible a workers government. At the same time we can give no support to the bourgeois government, because this would mean giving up the struggle against fascism at home and at the same time limiting the defense of democracy to the point that the bourgeoisie is willing to go.

In 1917 Lenin's strategic slogan "turn the imperialist war into civil war" was concretized in the demand for "peace", for the conditions in Russia at the time, namely, a war-weary population fighting a war, the outcome of which was a matter of complete indifference to the interests of the working class, this slogan was correct. It was

only natural that any war enthusiasm on the part of the Russian workers would wear off when the struggle was not to their class interest.

The slogan of peace plays no such role today. The working class wants no peace in the fight with fascism. The peace slogan is today the slogan of the bourgeois appeasers. The advanced workers can only be rallied around the demand for a revolutionary war against fascism. The two main propaganda slogans expressing this demand in the advanced capitalist countries today are for a workers' government and a people's army.

This in brief is my criticism of the W.P. position on the war. Before discussing program I shall take up the Chinese question and several possible objections to the above criticism of the W.P. position.

Inasmuch as the rule over the colonial and semi-colonial countries is essentially fascist in method, it follows that national wars for liberation are justified on the same basis as is a revolutionary war against fascism. For the W.P., however, the declaration of war by two imperialists automatically (and apparently without regard to the concrete situation) brings our support to national wars to a close. It is said that the appearance of the imperialist struggle becomes decisive and everything else, therefore, insignificant. This may or may not be so, depending on the facts of the situation. In any case, a Marxist criterion for support or no support of a national struggle is whether or not the outcome of the struggle will leave the colonial country with a greater degree of independence with which to carry on its struggle for national liberation. In the case of China before December 7th the situation was clear to most comrades. A Japanese victory would mean the reduction of the Chinese state from a semi-colonial to a colonial position. In the event of a victory of Chiang Kai-shek it would not mean the complete independence of China, but it would mean a greater degree of independence than a victory of Japan. A Japanese victory would mean the crushing of the independence movement. A victory of Chiang would mean the preservation of conditions under which the working class could continue the struggle for complete liberation. Now, if the war were to end today this would still hold true. The entrance of American and British imperialism in the war as an ally of China has not reduced the independence of China to such an extent that a Chinese or Japanese victory would end up equally quickly to an equal degree of colonial enslavement. This point will be reached only after the Allies have poured into China a few hundred thousand troops and have taken the initiative away from the Chinese guerrilla troops. When this time comes, other things being equal, our attitude toward China should be the same as to the Allies in general.

### Objections

(1) It is claimed that we can be indifferent to a Nazi victory and therefore a loss of the democratic rights now held by the workers in certain of the Allied countries because the Socialist movement has worked effectively before under conditions of illegality. But underground movements in the past worked from a center of enclaves in the so-called democracies. Also there was always first a successful democratic revolution that laid the basis for organizing for Socialism. If Fascism is victorious today it will be on a universal scale and would certainly postpone Socialism for several decades.

(2) It is claimed that we can be indifferent to the Axis victory because an Allied victory will also mean Fascism. Now it is true that capitalism is extremely weak. Democracy is a luxury for capitalism today. A more effective reactionary war could be fought without it, other things being equal. But other things are not equal. It is the existence of these meager democratic rights that make the workers willing to fight at all. As long as the working class maintains its strength in England and the U.S. the bourgeoisie is forced into a position of class collaboration within lest they be destroyed from without. Barring a military defeat, it would certainly take the American bourgeoisie several years to defeat the American working class. Look how long it took the German bourgeoisie. With a military defeat the question would be decided immediately, and given the political level of the American working class, it would probably be unfavorable. When all the Allied governments have gone completely totalitarian, then the W.P. position will be correct.

(3) It may be claimed that it is not necessary to raise the slogan "against the imperialist peace" today because there is apparently no sign of the war ending soon. Now the N.C. resolution tells us we should not think in terms of Axis and Allied victories because it is not likely in the near future that one side will gain the necessary superiority of arms to knock out the other. But this is to forget about the working class. It is true that neither imperialist camp dares to carry on political warfare. But will the working class necessarily wait for a call from the imperialists before beginning to move? Certainly not. A nationalist uprising in Europe or India whether successful or not could give a quick victory to one of the imperialist camps. The only alternative the N.C. resolution sees to a victory of the Third Camp is mutual exhaustion. While this is a very small possibility, in the face of the extreme exhaustion on both sides and the stirrings of the third camp, a negotiated peace is a very real possibility. And in view of the military positions today such a peace could only be a Fascist peace. Under such conditions the struggle between Democracy and Fascism would quickly come to a head. The imperialists in the democracies would be seen by the workers to be closely allied with their class brothers in the Axis Camp. Inasmuch as the working class is sincere in its anti-fascism only a revolutionary party with an anti-peace, anti-appeasement program could lead the workers to victory.

(4) Another possible objection may be the claim that although an Axis victory would probably mean the end of all free labor move-

ments in the world, any attempt today ("in the midst of an imperialist war") to encourage the military defeat of the Axis will lead straight to class collaboration. I cannot see this at all. It is traditional in the revolutionary movement to push the bourgeoisie into granting social reforms. We demand these reforms because they benefit the working class materially. Also they serve as a lesson in the class struggle. It is part of the struggle that is to lead to dual power. But while we demand of the bourgeoisie that certain social reforms take place, as long as the government is theirs we take no political responsibility for the way in which the reform works out, nor do we take any responsible part in their administration. In the same way, in the event of a negotiated peace, we should call for the continuation of the war (in a revolutionary manner, of course). If, partially through our efforts, the war is continued we can be very proud of the fact. But this does not make us politically responsible for the further conduct of the war unless it is continued in a revolutionary manner.

THE example given us by Marx and Engels together with Prussian War bears out this point. Marx and Engels together with the LaSallian socialists in Germany correctly analyzed the beginning of the war as an attempt on the part of Napoleon III to prevent Bismark's unification of Germany. The war was, therefore, progressive on the side of Germany. ~~Lieb~~ Liebknecht and Bebel on the other hand analyzed the war as a reactionary dynastic war between the Prussian junker Bismark and the Bonapartist dictator Napoleon III. Now, when it came to voting for German war credits in the Landtag, the LaSallians voted for the credits, Liebknecht and Bebel abstained. Although Marx and Engels disagreed with the analysis of the war of Liebknecht and Bebel, they did agree with their vote in the Landtag. Marx and Engels thought the outcome of the war made a difference to the working class, but this did not lead them to give a vote of confidence to the reactionary Bismark regime. In the same way today the outcome of the war makes a difference to the working class, but from this fact it does not follow that we are bound to support Roosevelt.

Labor Action probably came nearest a correct line on the war in the editorial in its June 24, 1940 issue, just after the fall of France. The editorial, "A New Commune can Save France", compares the defense of France against Hitler to the defense of France against Bismark in the last half of the Franco-Prussian War. (The war was then progressive on the side of France. Napoleon had been captured and a republic had been established in France. But Bismark continued the war in an attempt to take over Alsace-Lorraine). Very Good! The impression one gets is that Labor Action is really interested in -- not indifferent to--what a Hitler victory is to mean to the French labor movement. What Labor Action overlooks is that to be consistent, we should have supported all along (in a revolutionary manner) a war against Hitler in the same way that Marx and Engels supported a war against Germany in the second half of the Franco-Prussian War. But for Labor Action this editorial is only a tactic. It is not long before it returns to its former semi-pacifist line.

(5) It may be asked, "What are you going to do with the workers who are sick of the war?" In the first place our comrades are in a

habit of mistaking every sign of disgust workers have for the reactionary manner in which the war is being conducted for a real anti-war feeling. This disgust takes on two forms, Isolationism (a real anti-war attitude) and Jacobinism (a demand for a more efficient and equitable conduct of the war). The Isolationist attitude is usually found among the backward workers. The Jacobinism is found among the more advanced workers, as in the UAW etc. This attitude is too widespread and existed too long before June 22nd to be attributed to the Stalinists. Now either attitude is potentially progressive, but given the class interest the workers have in this war, it is to be expected that the Jacobin attitude will ultimately be channelized into revolutionary internationalism to a far greater extent than the anti-war attitudes of the Isolationists. Labor Action certainly does not realize this. Now as for those workers whose disgust for the imperialist war has temporarily turned them against any war against the Axis, we treat them the same way we would treat workers who are sick of being out on strike. We may even have to call for a truce, if the feeling grows. But in any case, if the workers' interest lies in the struggle we must have faith in their return to the battle.

This problem is certainly a small one today. Isolationist attitudes must certainly be hard to find outside of the Americas. The greatest resistance the Nazi army came across before the Russian campaign was from the Socialist defenders of Warsaw. Everywhere the working class has proved that it is for the defeat of the Axis. It is the Bourgeoisie that has prevented any mass resistance to the Axis. What is the composition of the guerrilla troops fighting in the occupied territories? Would the W.P. dismiss the Communist Guerrillas in Jugoslavia as mere Russian agents?

(6) Finally it may be objected that the slogan "For a revolutionary war against Fascism" cannot be our central slogan today because there is only one kind of revolutionary war; that is by a proletarian dictatorship. This is simply false. There are many kinds of revolutionary wars. There are revolutionary civil wars (Spain), revolutionary national wars (China), bourgeois revolutionary wars against Fascism (the Serbian Chetniks before the Communist Guerrillas were formed), and finally there may be revolutionary wars during the proletarian revolution, but before the dictatorship of the proletariat. Wars in defense of bona fide workers' governments short of communist governments would be examples of revolutionary wars conducted in the course of the revolution but short of the dictatorship of the proletariat. To be a defeatist in such wars would be to invite the fascists to crush the developing revolutionary movement. I support all existing revolutionary wars against fascism (China, Jugoslavia guerrillas, etc.) I am for the establishment of a workers' government in this country at almost any time, i.e., in almost any circumstance. I am especially for a workers' government under the circumstances that exist today because only a workers' government could carry on an effective war against fascism, i.e. a revolutionary war. Inasmuch as the main justification for a workers' government today is to make possible an effective war against fascism, I call for a workers' government (and a peoples' army) in the name of a revolutionary war against fascism.

As for program, I could accept the transitional program of of the W.P., but it should be looked upon as a real transitional program. The slogan "Conscript the war industries under workers' control" is a slogan for today and not something to be favored only upon the arrival of Socialism. And the specific reference to the war industries today should not be passed over as just meaning industry in general. The motive for the slogan should be that, while we are against the imperialist war, we are for a real war for democracy. The war industries being taken over under workers control would mean both making the war a democratic one and a more effective one. In order to win over to Socialism the support of the anti-fascist workers, we must put forward our program both on the basis of justice and on the basis of making a revolutionary war against fascism.

Of course, I am not arguing that the words, "For a revolutionary war against fascism" be necessarily used in our propoganda. This is the central slogan which must be tactically translated in ways that the workers will understand.

Tony STEIN

THESE DEMANDS ARE ATTACHED TO THE ABOVE ARTICLE:

I. For a revolutionary war against fascism and oppression.

1. Free the colonies.
2. All aid to the Chinese people.
3. No suspension of the struggle against imperialism.
4. Abolish Jim Crow.
5. Defend the democratic rights of labor, the right to organize and strike, free speech and free press.
6. No suspension of workers' struggles.
7. For the right of all nations, vanquished and colonies included, to self determination. No annexations or occupations after the war.
8. No indemnities, no humiliating peace terms.
9. For a volunatry United States of Europe and of the world.
10. Abolish secret diplomacy.
11. No peace, no compromise with fascism.
12. Oust the appeasers and "dollar a year" men.
13. Put the burden of the war on those who can bear it. For a 100% excess profits tax. No income over \$20,000.
14. Conscript the war industries under workers' control.

II. For a peoples' army.

1. Citizens rights for the soldiers: the right to organize, to bargain collectively, free speech, and free press.
2. Arm the people.
3. For military training of all the workers by their trade unions at government expense.

III. For a workers' government.

1. For an independent labor party.