

# Bulletin

## OF THE WORKERS PARTY

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RESOLUTION - THE SITUATION IN THE US  
AND OUR NEXT TASKS

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The following resolution was presented to the last meeting of the P.C. but the Committee did not have the opportunity either to discuss or decide upon it. It will do so at its next meeting. However, in order that a minimum of time be lost and discussion in the ranks facilitated, the PC agreed to publish the resolution for the membership immediately as the document of its sponsors, Comrades Draper, Gould and Shachtman. The results of the discussion and decision of the PC will be communicated to the membership immediately so that the official status of the document is formally established. The resolution on "The situation in the US and Our Next Tasks" submitted earlier by Comrades Gould and Shachtman has been withdrawn and is superseded by the resolution which follows. It will be noted that Part I of both resolutions is the same.

VOL. III NO. 1A

Convention Bulletin No 87

January 14, 1949

tact, was the only one in a position to satisfy the requirements of this market which were extensive enough to eliminate the danger of an economic crisis in the United States immediately after the war. Except for isolated and specialized branches of industry (aircraft, for example), American economy, following the reconversion period, entered into production on a scale unprecedented in peace-time and now exceeding even the highest war-time peak, both from the standpoint of the number of workers employed and (again ignoring the difference in price levels) of the value of goods produced, both of which are now the highest in history.

However, the very expansion of the industrial plant has made it possible for the economy, in the two-three short years after the end of the war, to satisfy the previously parched consumer market in one field after another. In some branches of industry, particularly in the "soft" or non-durable goods, the tendency toward overproduction is already clearly manifest. In these branches, the "sellers' market" is turning or has already turned into a "buyers' market." This tendency is so marked that the textile industry, for example, has already resorted to deliberate underproduction, by means of partial shutdowns or the shorter work-week, in an effort to maintain the inflationary high prices. The same tendency will necessarily manifest itself in other branches of industry. A different picture is presented by heavy industry, by the producers of "hard" or durable goods. Steel, with an all-time high production capacity, is still in short supply and is available to many manufacturers only on the grey market, despite a war-time and post-war expansion and modernization program. Automobile production continues to be heavy, with a recorded backlog of orders to assure anywhere from one to two more years of top production. The same holds true for such vital branches of industry as those that supply railroad equipment, for replacement or modernization, and the continuing farm machinery and equipment market. The oil industry continues to operate under a heavy and almost insatiable demand. There are no signs of an early decline in the rate of production or in prices of the output of such basic industries as rubber, aluminum, non-ferrous metals (especially the more rare and strategic metals that are being stockpiled), industrial chemicals and rayon, coal, lumber and other building materials.

If it were possible to abstract the United States and its economy from the rest of the world, the undebatable conclusion could be drawn that in another year or two the country would be plunged into another of the classic capitalist crises of overproduction, probably the most severe and lasting on record. Such an abstraction is impossible; in any case, it renders impossible any concrete analysis. By its whole nature and its whole past, the United States has matured for its decisive part in the struggle for single world domination which is now going on and which must, given the imperialist character of the contestants, culminate in the most violent war in history. The United States is driven to subjugate but not to annihilate its satellites and junior partners. It is driven to invade their national sovereignty or to reduce its significance, but not to deprive them of all economic life. To prepare these countries for their part in the United States-Russian conflict, the United States must of necessity bolster up their economies, even if essentially within the limits of a war economy or potential war economy. The economic rehabilita-

## THE SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND OUR NEXT TASKS

The United States has emerged from the second World War as the principal victor, Its economic condition is so powerful and vigorous relative to the economy of all other countries, and at the same time so vitally affected by the profound difficulties of the other countries, that it finds imposed upon it a tremendous problem. It has the task of resuscitating, maintaining and expanding the economy of the rest of the capitalist world in order to ward off or reduce to a minimum the violent social upheavals that threaten it and thereby to prepare it for its role in the coming war between the two imperialist blocs.

This task exercises a determining effect upon the evolution of the American economy. To fulfill it requires the maintenance and in some cases the expansion of the productive capacity, primarily of the United States and secondarily of the satellites dependent upon it, and a steady increase in the extent to which this capacity is devoted to the production of means of destruction, that is, production for war and for war preparation.

The United States decided the defeat of the Axis powers in the war by virtue of its crushing industrial and financial superiority. To accomplish this defeat, the United States expanded its productive forces, at the war-time peak, to twice the level of the last pre-war year (if the difference in commodity prices is ignored) and yet succeeded in maintaining an almost equal division between production for civilian purposes and production for war purposes. The expansion was thus largely accounted for by military production. The end of the war and the almost complete suspension of production for military purposes did not, however, result in a profound economic crisis with massive shutting down of industry and mass unemployment, but only in the comparatively brief dislocations of the reconversion period. A vast purchasing capacity was built up among the workers and especially among the farmers during the war. Although the income of the working class as a whole did not increase to the same degree as the faster growing national income, it did increase absolutely and, while somewhat lowered during the reconversion period and considerably lowered by price inflation, it constituted a tremendous market for post-war consumer goods. In addition, the first post-war period made possible the resumption of large-scale capital expansion, modernization of plant equipment and the production of industrial goods which was suspended during the war or which was made possible for the first time in more than a decade by the huge accumulation of financial reserves during the war. Finally, the end of the war reopened big export markets for American capital. American industry, its plants in-

tion of these countries is thus purchased at the price of enlistment or impressment into the American war bloc. The same economic rehabilitation, however, is one of the most important assurances against an early or precipitate economic crisis in the United States. Half or more of the Marshall Plan aid to the European countries is being allocated in the form of indirect orders upon American industry, providing it with an important sector of the market it requires for its relative equilibrium. Furthermore, the United States has at its disposal a considerable actual and potential market in the countries of Asia and Latin America.. The economic reconstruction or pacification of Europe is, however, only the preliminary to its increased fortification and militarization, which in turn imply increased governmental market for heavy industry in the United States.

The main arsenal of American imperialism must remain within the United States, which must be in a position not only to contest successfully with its principal enemy but to dominate successfully over its satellites. As the tendency to overproduction on the domestic market becomes marked, and even before, the whole international situation - not at any given conjuncture but taken in its broad and long-term development - increases the tempo and scope of the armaments program which operates as a counteracting tendency. Although the second World War ended only three years ago and the third World War appears to be still off in the distance; and although, on the other hand, there are still no serious signs of an economic crisis in the nerve centers of American industry today -- the United States has already launched a domestic armaments program so imposing as to have no parallel in the peace-time history of the country. The immediate armaments program already voted by the government calls for the expenditure of \$14,000,000,000, of which one-fourth has already been placed, mainly in aircraft orders. What this already authorized amount signifies may be judged by comparing it with almost exactly the same amount supervised by the Office of Production Management in the 20,000 supply contracts of \$10,000 or more placed as war orders in September, 1941, that is, at a time when the United States was but a few weeks away from full-scale and official participation in the war. Orders already placed under this program mean the revival of the huge aviation industry which was allowed to collapse at the end of the war; it means the sustainment of the weakened machine-tool and precision instruments industries; it means the re-allocation of steel and other products, already in short supply, to war instead of civilian production. There is little reason to believe that anything but an increase and extension of the American armaments program is to be looked for in the period ahead. This trend is recognized in all serious economic and political circles. It is the reason for the notable shift of traders and investors from consumer goods to capital goods. A heavy armaments program - to say nothing of war itself - gives the heavy or capital goods industries all the assurances of material supplies and gives no assurances of such supplies to the consumer goods industries. The shift to the capital goods industries is further stimulated by the consideration that continued inflation will produce far greater "buyers' resistance" from the individual consumer than from the corporate consumer whose market and income is far more extensive. The Shift is stimulated, finally and paradoxically, by the consideration that the boom usually declines first in the consumer goods industries, in the "soft lines" which feel the recession sooner than the heavier industries.

The principal factors in operation therefore dictate the conclusion that the United States may very well, in fact almost certainly will, experience radical dislocations, especially in the light and auxiliary industries, and even an economic recession, at the end of another year or two. However, there is no serious reason to look forward, within any such period, to the classical capitalist crisis of overproduction which, in the past, periodically and repeatedly maimed and prostrated the basic industries of the country, bringing in its train a multi-millioned army of unemployed. A crisis based upon a narrowing market in consumer goods at a time of a sustained or widening market in capital goods, is, if not inconceivable, then very improbable. At the same time, the very way in which the crisis is to be averted or "surmounted", constitutes the most crushing indictment of decadent capitalism. The traditional economic collapse can now be averted only by threatening all civilization with collapse. In reality, it is not averted at all. It is merely transformed into the most comprehensive, profound, convulsing and agonizing crisis the human race has ever known - modern total war. The change in the character and form of the crisis, corresponding to the change in the economic structure of capitalism and the social decay it entails, is a question of cardinal importance.

The continued shift from a "normal" economy to a war or war-preparation economy is becoming more and more the normal state of capitalism. It substitutes for the sufferings and contradictions of the traditional crisis a number of new and different sufferings and contradictions. It assures a high level of employment, but the steady income of the workers brings about not a real but a pseudo prosperity. Concentration on armaments and capital goods industries, which have priority of allocation of raw materials, machinery, labor forces and government subsidy, occurs at the expense of the consumer goods industries. Shortage of the latter's products in the face of widespread demand, maintains a steady inflationary pressure to raise prices, accompanied by the scourge of black market prices - the deadly combination against the standard of living of the masses. Government budgets, swollen by armament expenditures, require a tremendous tax burden which always weighs down disproportionately upon the living standards of the people; while the armaments makers and monopolists enjoy the special protection of the government which guarantees them a profitable market for their products, and are the principal profiteers from the protracted inflation.

Still early in the shift to the armaments economy, the United States now has a national budget of \$40,000,000,000. The bulk of this unparalleled budget is assigned to war costs, past, present and future. This budget represents a tax of about twenty percent upon the total present national production of the country -- and if the state and municipal budgets are added, the tax on the national income runs to about twenty-five percent. To run the governmental affairs of the wealthiest and most powerful of the decaying capitalist nations now requires two out of every eight hours of the work of every individual in the country. The national debt is now a good fifty times greater than it was before the first World War; the interest alone on the national debt today is larger than the national debt as a whole about thirty years ago; and the big bulk of the

present national debt was incurred during the four years of American participation in the second World War and as a direct result of this participation. The difference between the two capitalist parties over the size of the national budget is, at its extreme points, inconsequential; it is a matter at most of a very few billion out of the total of forty. The national budget, including the servicing of the fabulous national debt, which are respectively primarily a war budget and a war debt, constitutes by far the greatest single inflationary force in the economy of the country. On the basis of the present national budget, that is, even before it has assumed the much greater proportions which the growing war preparations will surely give it - for the capitalist politicians to speak of any serious check on inflation is at best a sign of ignorance or utopianism; as a rule it is sheer demagoguery. The harshest effects of inflation are always felt by the working masses. Only the mass production of consumer goods under conditions of a high wage level can put an end to inflation on a sound basis. The growing government bureaucracy and growing governmental expenditures necessitated by the growing complexity and antagonisms of capitalist economy, on the one hand, and the growing armaments economy that inevitable accompanies capitalist imperialism, on the other hand, are the most gigantic and principal obstacles to the mass production of consumer goods. Even in the wealthy United States, an armaments economy means a constant undermining of the prosperity and well-being of the people.

Parallel to the development of an armament economy runs the tendency toward a police state. It is important to judge correctly the speed of this tendency and the stage which it reaches at each point in its development. The failure to do this entails the danger of one of two extremes: succumbing to democratic illusions or confusing the partial unfolding of the tendency with its ultimate conclusion. The phenomenon, characteristic of all class states today, may be expressed almost mathematically in a broad formula: the greater the share of the armaments economy over against the civilian economy, minus the degree of resistance of the working classes, the stronger is the tendency toward converting the democratic state into the authoritarian or totalitarian police state.

The main tendency in American government for the past decade or more has been the gradual shift from rule by democratic legislative action to rule by executive decree promulgated all along the line from the presidential office down to the office of the smallest government commission or bureau. Democratic representative government is retained in all its traditional forms, but the substance is increasingly weakened. Popular control of government, even in its classic form and therefore in the form of bourgeois class rule, has become increasingly remote and ineffectual and is more and more subverted and evaded by a thousand bureaucratic devices. Given the still tremendous wealth of the United States ("democracy is a luxury of the rich states") and, what is more important, the immense size of the organized labor movement, the traditional democratic rights of the people have not yet been abolished. But these rights are continually hemmed in and restricted in one field after another. The people are less and less free to exercise their rights; the government is more and more free to exercise its power over the people.



For the first time in its history, the United States has instituted a peace-time conscript army in the guise of universal military training. Military officials and military decisions exert an unprecedented weight upon the course of the country's economic organization. Government offices, at home and abroad, are staffed with military men to a greater extent than ever before in American history. On the pretext of combatting the Communists and promoting "industrial peace," the federal and numerous state legislatures have already imposed restrictive chains on the rights and movements of the labor unions (Taft-Hartley Law, etc.) that have not been known in this country for a hundred years, nullifying or undermining most of the legislative gains made by the labor movement in the past thirty years. On the same pretext, bills providing for the outlawing and suppression of revolutionary or nonconformist organizations are already well under way in the federal legislature. The same organizations are placed under unofficial but effective discriminatory handicaps by the unlegislated and arbitrary but simple device of executive public listing as "subversive." "Loyalty oaths" and witch hunts conducted jointly or separately by the executive or legislative branches are calculated to create an ideological reign of terror not only in the ranks of government officials and employees but also in the ranks of workers in private employ. Communist-baiting and Red-baiting are now official government doctrine and the two capitalist parties vie for prominence in espousing it and practising it. It is precisely because the democratic traditions are old, strong and deeprooted in the United States that strong pressure must be exerted to undermine and break them.

But for the organized and intransigent opposition of the working class, the development of the reactionary trend to its totalitarian conclusion is absolutely inevitable. Mobilization of the working class in a resolute struggle for democracy, against militarism, war and reaction, a struggle which demands for its successful prosecution the complete political independence of the working class, is the first and most urgent task of the day.

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PART II

(1) The basic tendencies of the U.S. economy, described above, together with its inescapably accompanying political effects, also mark out the general direction of the relations between the classes and the government's domestic policy. Especially in the US, with its great wealth and therefore comparatively great room for flexibility and compromise, it is important neither to mechanically deduce a straight-line course toward bureaucratization and militarization on the part of the government; nor to make the opposite error of expecting a softening of class antagonisms such as might accompany an expanding capitalism under past conditions.

(2) What is excluded, however, is precisely the aim publicly set by the Truman administration: namely, a new "New Deal", that is, a period of real reform concessions to labor and the masses of people of any far-reaching nature -- sufficient, at least, to exorcise the specter of class struggle for a period ahead. In this it is not even a question of the sincerity of desire on the part of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party (or even of Truman himself) to carry out campaign pledges, or to appear to do so, or to appear to make an attempt to do so. What is decisive in this respect is this: if, as is quite possible for the next immediate period, American capitalism is fat enough to avoid any rapid course toward bureaucratic regimentation, even this capitalism is not fat enough to be able to afford the combination of an expanding war economy with significant domestic social reform capable of giving labor what it needs and wants.

(3) Typical of the movement of these forces has been the post-election development on the Taft-Hartley Law, the main single issue posed by labor in the 1948 presidential campaign. The fruit of the "famous victory" over the Republicans is the replacement of Taft-Hartley with a new law midway between it and the New Deal Wagner Act -- a new law which, if it had been proposed by Truman or the GOP as the substitute for the Wagner Act before the T-H Law was passed, would undoubtedly (and correctly) have been denounced by labor as a blow to its rights. This blow to labor's rights (in comparison with the New Deal labor policy) is now the Democrats' payment for the labor support without which their victory would not have been possible. This pattern--two steps backward (T-H), one step forward (the Truman revision of the law)--represents both sides of American capitalism's dilemma, and its general direction.

(4) But if American capitalism, girding for a third imperialist war, cannot afford to give labor and the popular masses what they need and want, the latter are not prepared meekly to accept less than that. The first outstanding fact about the American working class in today's world is that it is undefeated, vigorous and strong--stronger than ever in its history. Secondly: it is not on a lower plane of consciousness than before the war but (unlike the working class in Europe) on a higher plane. Its confidence in its own class power, particularly on the crucial field of politics, has increased, not decreased. This, in fact, was the most important consequence of the Truman victory in the 1948 election and of labor's participation in that campaign.

(5) The 1948 election and its consequences may well mark a turning point in the development of labor political action. Instead of the expected victory of the more conservative wing of capitalism, the election results clearly showed a leftward swing, as compared with



1946 especially. That this leftward swing had to express itself through the re-election of a president who has broken strikes and who brought back government by injunction only underlines the blind alley into which "lesser-evil" politics has led the labor movement, but cannot blind one as to the nature of the political stirrings which were manifested. The labor vote was mobilized behind Truman in unexpected strength not primarily as an endorsement of Truman, his actual record or his politics, but in spite of them. Labor generally voted for Truman as a resounding rebuff to the conservatism and reaction of the 80th Congress and as the only "practical" way of endorsing the increasingly radical line which Truman was astute enough to present during his campaign under the pressure of labor and the threat of the Wallace movement. His presidential campaign was also to a significant extent carried by the momentum of the local congressional campaigns which were sparked by the AFL and CIO political arms. It was possible to mobilize the vote of labor because of the greater politicalization of the workers that exists today, a political consciousness which made abstention difficult for the most backward elements of labor but precisely for the best strata. This political consciousness -- not an independent class political consciousness to be sure, as yet -- is today at its highest point in US labor history. In addition to the vote itself the most prominent official manifestation of this fact is the entrance of the AFL into the path of trade union political action that was taken by the CIO (the PAC and its predecessor, the LNPL) -- in the case of the AFL, with the organization of LLPE, its plans for the permanent existence of this body, and its plan for the organization of a locally-based political machine through "political stewards," etc. The concept of "no politics in the trade unions" is at its lowest ebb, and, if it has not completely disappeared by any means, has at least ceased to be the official approach of the majority of the labor movement. With this, the question before the labor movement becomes: "What kind of trade union politics?"

(6) A policy of abstention in the election on the part of the Marxist socialists would have, therefore, been misapplied in this election, in which it was among the best, and not the worst strata that the urge to vote -- that is, to "participate in politics" as that is understood at present by the politically backward labor movement -- was strongest. At the same time, the only working class vote, the only vote that would strengthen the hand of independent labor politics -- and also, it goes without saying, the only vote that would be a protest vote against the policies of both sections of the capitalist class -- was a vote for one of the socialist candidates, given the absence of authoritative labor candidates and given the character of the Wallace movement. The National Committee position of calling for a socialist protest vote in the election was therefore correct. This includes also the reasons given in the NC statement for refusing to support the candidates of only one of the socialist sects as against the others.

(7) Even more than in the case of Roosevelt's electoral victories, the re-election of Truman against all the odds has had the effect of convincing labor of the tremendous importance of its own class power on the political field. This is not to say that either the labor leadership or rank-and-file militants conceive of it in these terms or that clearly; nor does it gainsay the fact that a section of the rural vote may also have been essential to the Democratic upset. It is sufficiently marked by the reaction: "We did it" throughout the ranks of labor. It was not the famous "Roosevelt coalition" which did it -- this having been broken on one side by the Dixiecrats and on the other by the Wallaceites. It was not Truman who "did it", in spite of his personally strenuous campaign and his electoral ascension

in appealing to the leftward sentiments of the people--certainly not in the sense that the kingpin of the Roosevelt coalition was always Roosevelt himself. If a section of the farm vote was as necessary to the final result as was the labor vote, the important fact is that it is only the organized labor movement which is in a position to take advantage of its social weight.

(8) A third respect, therefore, in which the US labor movement is now at its highest point in its history is in its political self-confidence amounting--particularly right after the election--to cockiness. If since then there have been indications that the labor leaders themselves have been trying to moderate this reaction, it is because this political self-confidence is alighted fuse under Truman and under the liberal-Democratic-labor coalition. This is so for two reasons. One is the inevitable disillusionment with the "victory" of November 1948 when the fruits of the second Truman administration are again assessed, and after the heady exhilaration of the first flush of victory has been completely worn off by events. This will be especially true if there is an intensification of the economic struggle--strikes-- in the course of the next two years. The conflict between the social needs of American war economy and the ever more confident aspirations of labor is heading in the direction of sharper class struggle.

(9) But while this first reason is basic, by itself it does not necessarily lead to a change in labor policy: labor has been disillusioned before. The second fact is that labor is driving, and is being driven, to a fourth new high in its history--a new high in political organization, in the building of a labor political machine. The forms under which this process is developing and bids fair to develop are important for an understanding of its probable consequences.

(10) There are, first, the impact and lessons of the Wallace movement. The Wallace Progressive Party as an organized movement was mainly the creation and tool of the Stalinists, who organized it as their widest political front to serve as an instrument of Russian foreign policy in the US; but the broad mass support it attracted and the healthy progressive sentiment it tapped was not the creation of the Stalinists. While its domestic reform program was by far the most advanced of the petty-bourgeois radical parties in the history of the country, its Stalinist control and reactionary foreign-policy program of appeasement and capitulation to Russian imperialism clearly outweighed what was progressive in the movement and ruled out support by the socialists. Its meteoric rise, as well as its swift decline following its disappointing showing in the election, is a social portent. For one thing, the attractive power it displayed in the early months of 1948 up to its national convention--and at this time its expectations of a ten million vote were not pipe-dreams--showed not so much the personal drawing power of Henry Wallace and least of all that of the Stalinists, but rather the power of the third-party idea, of a radical break with the two old parties, of these masses' hungry search for peace and their desire to find a way out of the evils of capitalism. Secondly: with an apparatus based on that of the CP but set up from scratch in all parts of the country in a few months, the Wallace Party succeeded in overcoming the reactionary electoral laws of the states and in getting on the ballot in forty-five states (in the only important state where it did not make the ballot, Illinois, this was as much due to its own carelessness as to the reactionary state law and the Democrats' eagerness to take advantage of the latter). Following this experience, the anti-third-party state laws will never again be the prominent argument against independent politics that it was up to this year. Third:

the success in the early months especially of the Wallace appeal to the Negro masses --one of the most progressive aspects of the movement--demonstrated the fact that these masses are a ready and powerful reservoir of support to a left-wing third party. Fourth: in spite of its Stalinist coloration and pro-Russian foreign policy platform, the Wallace party appeal to militants in the labor movement was strong enough to cause real anxiety and fear to the labor leadership. The magnetic pull which a similar third party without these two handicaps would have been able to display is a matter of speculation but there can be no doubt that it might well have changed the course of the entire campaign, even without the blessing of the official labor leadership. There is also no doubt that even the Wallace party as it was constituted, with two strikes against it, was significant enough to stimulate the labor leadership to increased political activity in order to be able to present a counterforce to its attraction.

(11) By the end of the 1948 election campaign, each of the three main sections of the labor movement, including the AFL and railroad brotherhoods had its own political machine at least in framework. The question which faced them following the election was: What shall be done with these machines? Partly under the impulse of the self-confidence generated by Truman's victory, partly under the stimulus the Wallace groundswell (including thereby those masses which did not support Wallace even to begin with but which were impelled by his challenge to demand more from their own leaders), and partly because of the internal drive created by the existence of the machine itself (a political machine has to be used or it cannot hold together), at least sections of the labor leadership have let it be known that they are now girding for a new objective: the capture of the Democratic Party by the labor political forces. Futile and utopian as the project is, the first significant thing about it is the fact that they thereby indicate that they can no longer continue to put forward the perspective of merely "supporting" the Democrats. Even in their own minds, and before their rank and file, they are making a turn, striking out more boldly and ambitiously. From the more militant-talking union chiefs, and as translated by militants in the unions, the aim of capturing the Democratic Party becomes: capturing it and transforming it into "our" party.

(12) It is this latter goal in particular which is futile and utopian. It is quite possible that, given real effort in that direction, a new relationship of forces in the leading councils of the Democrats can be won by the labor leadership--greater positions of power and influence for labor Democratic politicians, the replacement of certain old-line politicians by union figures, in a reshuffled but continued coalition of the capitalist politicians and labor. It is also quite probable that labor can "take over" the Democratic label here and there, as it has done in Michigan (where the Democratic Party was a shell when the UAW stepped in to re-create it). Given a serious drive, there is absolutely no doubt that a series of "victories" will be chalked up, which will be hailed as milestones along the road to the "capture" of the Democratic Party, and which would indeed have important effects on the structure and functioning of that party. But the transformation of the Democratic Party into a party really representing the interests of the masses is something quite different. This opinion does not spring from any dogmatic objection to this road toward the

building of a party of labor if the transformation of the party into a party of labor and the little people was really the goal, and if it were possible. But the character of the Democratic Party as a capitalist party is not merely a matter of program; its capitalist character is manifested in and founded firmly upon two very concrete political realities: (a) the fact that the main support of the power of the old capitalist political machines is patronage,

particularly federal patronage, controlled from and doled out from the White House; (b) the fact that the old-party machines depend for their basic character upon the innumerable threads of their connections with the ruling economic powers--with the moneybags, with business, with the capitalist press, etc., with all the thousands of channels whereby capitalism maintains control over its political creatures. The actual result of a serious drive in this direction would be the emergence in the U.S. of the European-type lib-lab coalition (some of which, in Europe, even went so far as to masquerade under the name "socialist"). It is, however, not yet at all decided that this course toward the Democratic Party will be adopted by the labor movement. An immediate job of the militants--especially the militants in the UAW -- is precisely to prevent their leaders from trying to lead the unions down this blind alley, and to demand and fight for the perspective of transforming their own political machines into an independent party of labor.

(13) In any case, however, what is indicated for the period ahead is a process of the growth, consolidation and extension of the political apparatus of the labor movement or of its three sections. This holds true even if -- indeed perhaps especially if -- the project of "capturing" the Democratic Party is embarked upon. This process has a logic and internal drive of its own and also presents great opportunities for the left wing of labor and for pro-labor-party militants. These have, in the first place, the task of demanding that these political machines do not merely remain top committees of bureaucrats; that they be extended and built from the ground up, or at any rate extended down to the involvement of the rank and file of labor; that the rank and file have the decisive voice about what these political machines should do, what politics they should pursue, what candidates endorse, what platforms put forward; Shape the PAC and LLPE into functioning membership groups in the grass roots of the labor movement!

(14) The main slogans of the militants in implementing their fight for a labor party are thereby indicated: Organize labor's political machine in the ranks! Call representative conventions of the PAC, of LLPE! Organize labor's forces with a Political Action Congress of labor! The framework is there -- it has to be given flesh and muscle and blood. Who is going to decide the many important questions of policy facing labor's political arms? Who is going to decide whether labor's resources are to be expended on the will-o'-the-wisp of transforming the Democratic Party, or on building its own party? On the state and local level, looking forward to the elections of '49 and '50, who is going to decide whether to endorse Democratic politicians or to put up united trade-union slates in favorable localities? It is only by bringing together in convention the active forces of the organization, after

first involving rank-and-file forces, that a democratic decision can be arrived at. It is on this basis that the official labor leadership can be made to present and defend their proposals on the Democratic Party, and the left wing can obtain the widest hearing for its proposals for labor-party action -- and the convention adopt a line.

(15) This slogan and demand for a Political Action Congress of labor does not merely envisage a national convention of the PAC or LLPE (or what would, of course, be most desirable: of the political arms of both federations plus the brotherhoods); it is equally important and desirable, and probably more immediately realizable, on the smaller scale, on a state-wide basis, on a city-wide basis, especially since the elections in the coming two years will be on this smaller scale. In any event, the demand for a Political Action Congress of labor, for a PAC convention, for an LLPE convention, is of the greatest importance in the immediate period, today, after the pledges and vows by Reuther and others that political action would remain a top-flight task of the labor movement following the election and in order to capitalize on labor's reaction to the election results.

(16) This goal of a labor party is, more than ever, the central tasks of American socialists today. Before the presidential election on the basis of the general expectation of a bad defeat for the Democrats, it looked for a while as if independent political organization by the labor movement was immediately on the agenda. The paradoxical result of the leftward swing which led to the upset was to postpone such action by the labor tops and to make necessary a longer period of development and incubation for such a step; at the worst, the labor movement may actually be obliged to go through the experience of trying to capture the Democratic Party before a sufficient number of elements become ready for the next step. But there is no reason to believe that the labor leadership of the U.S., pushed from behind by sentiment in the ranks and driven by the consideration that their own positions can best be secured by acquiring political bargaining power which is directly under their control, will fail to take the political road of its similars in virtually all the other capitalist countries of the world. The U.S. working class -- stronger than ever, and on a higher level of political consciousness, political self-confidence, and political organization than ever -- is driving in the direction of a new, third party based on the labor movement.

(17) For us the goal is a labor party based primarily on affiliated trade unions, a radical anti-capitalist program and complete independence from the old parties. Between this and the reality of the third party which is to come, there will in all likelihood be a wide gap. All the present indications are that the party, when formed, will have a program and a leadership which will stamp the movement as a "third capitalist party," or more accurately, a petty-bourgeois workers party -- proletarian in composition and petty bourgeois in program and leadership. In this respect, it may not begin in any important respect different from the Wallace party minus its Stalinist perversion -- indeed, in its domestic program it may not even be as advanced; or different from a national version of the New York State Liberal Party. The traditional distinction which has been made by our movement between a "genuine labor party"

and a "third party" (labor-based) does not, in fact, correspond to the developing reality, and it is sterile to counterpose the two concepts to each other. The progressive and even revolutionary meaning of the organization of such a third party would be determined by the fact that it organizationally separates the working class from the two old capitalist parties in a political instrument which they look on peculiarly as their own, which by virtue of its composition and leadership is peculiarly susceptible to their influence and control, through whose experiences the political understanding and class consciousness of the entire working class will be progressively raised, and in which the Marxist vanguard can find an arena for developing intimate ties with the political development of their class -- in short, by the fact that such a third party is based upon and represents the main mass of the working class in motion under the existing conditions. While recognizing this to be true, the Marxist vanguard -- because it, unlike all other tendencies, represents the future of the working class in the present -- will seek to push the movement even further in program, democratic control by the trade union rank and file, independence not only from the old capitalist parties but from capitalist politics, and militancy in action. It can do so, however, only as a part -- as the left wing -- of labor's third-party movement, and not as an outside critic of it. The formation of such a party is on the horizon. Its founding will have the most dynamic political repercussions in this country and throughout the world. The Marxist vanguard looks forward to it with eagerness, enthusiasm, and unbounded confidence in the political development of the working class and in the new role which the bearers of the socialist program will play in its midst. Now more than ever we regard its acceleration as the activity to which all other is subordinated and to which all other must lead.

### PART III

(1) The perspective for the growth of the socialist movement in the U.S. depends primarily on the rate and strength of the development of a labor-third-party movement in this country and on the success of the Marxist vanguard in sinking its roots in this developing movement and tying itself organically to the mass movement. There is no substitute for this road and without it no means of achieving any substantial change in the presently extremely weak state of American socialism. Indispensable to the fulfillment of this task is a clear understanding of the present position and role of the Marxist movement, in which the Workers Party represents the most advanced, conscious and consistent section.

(2) The main predecessor of our party, and the one with whose tradition and struggle it is most clearly tied, is the Trotskyist movement, enriched and broadened by the inflow of streams with other political origins. In this country, the Trotskyist movement never succeeded in developing beyond the stage of a faction of another political party or an independent propaganda group. On three different occasions it attempted to organize a political party (WPUS, SWP, WP of today). As in practically all other countries, the attempts made in the U.S. were not crowned with success. That numerous errors were made in the course of these attempts is now incontestable; it is likewise clear that they were not the



primary or principal cause for the failure to establish a genuine independent Marxist political party. The principal causes are to be found outside the Trotskyist movement itself. The degeneration of the Russian revolution not only weakened and discredited Marxism but produced the most powerful and reactionary pseudo-Marxist movement ever known. To the extent that Stalinism appeared to be the continuation of the socialist content of the revolution, it diverted to itself and thereby subverted the revolutionary elements who would otherwise build up the genuine Marxist party. It is the strength of Stalinism that has primarily determined the weakness of Marxism. The latter can be restored as a powerful force if Stalinism is decisively defeated. But this holds true only if Stalinism is defeated by a progressive or revolutionary force, that is, one based upon the working class and operating in its interests. This concept of the struggle against Stalinism is decisive for the Marxian movement. Secondly: In the United States, the slow growth and at times the standstill of the Marxist movement, determined on an international and historical scale by the rise of Stalinism, have been specifically influenced by the particular circumstances of the growth and power of the American working class. The Marxist movement can and must be further advanced than the working class in whose midst it develops, but it cannot acquire a strength in arbitrary independence of the conditions and stage of development of the working class itself. These conditions have militated against the growth of a significant working-class political party in the U.S., either reformist or revolutionary. In addition, today, the Second World War and its aftermath -- its conclusion without successful revolution and with the strengthening of Stalinism -- has produced a post-war situation in which the working-class and socialist forces of Europe have been atomized and weakened, and now face the task of rebuilding in the face of great Stalinist strength. This unfavorable international picture, together with the impact of the many new problems thrown up by the development of capitalist bureaucratization and expanding Stalinism, and by the threat of a third, imperialist, atomic world war, has had a deep-going effect upon all socialist cadres even in this country.

(3) These are the basic and interdependent causes for the isolation of the Marxist movement in this country, for its continued existence as an essentially propaganda group. On this point the views put forward in our 1936 Convention Resolution on the Tasks of the Party have to be drastically modified. The following should especially be seen now as an illusion: the view that the road ahead for our party (or for any of the other socialist sects in this country) is that of slower or faster growth by accretion from a propaganda group to an agitational group; the view that we were at a point at least approaching the second stage and that sufficiently successful recruitment on the basis of our cadres would be enough to advance us further along the line. This is the illusion. We are a propaganda group; we must plan and organize, not under any impression that our self-transformation into a party depends only or mainly on how well we work, but on the realistic basis of understanding the limitations and narrower tasks to be undertaken as a propaganda group.

(4) In most of the Western European countries, we have likewise taken a similar view of the present tasks and perspectives of the Marxist vanguard groups. Specifically we have expressed the

opinion that these groups would do best by entering the mass social-democratic parties in their countries (England, France, Italy, etc.) as their left wing, not for the purpose of a quick "raid" but in order to work toward developing a substantial Marxist movement. This orientation toward the social-democratic parties does not at all, however, depend on the fact that these parties are social-democratic but solely and decisively on the fact that they are mass working-class parties. In the U.S., on the contrary, there is no mass social-democratic party; in fact, the two social-democratic groups that do exist (SP and SDF) are -- giving them the maximum credit -- as isolated and weak as the Trotskyists, above all in the ranks of the labor movement. In the U.S., the opportunity for the Marxist vanguard to function as the leftwing of a mass political movement of the working class will arrive only with the formation of the coming labor party.

(5) Our aim is to be a propaganda group in the labor movement and in the mass organizations. Far from invalidating or diminishing the importance of our orientation in this direction, it none other than these movements which should play a more predominant role than ever in our orientation. Where a party of agitation and action, if it is really such, properly seeks to involve itself in all fields where the fight against capitalism can be carried on, from the cultural field to the agricultural, the primary job of a Marxist propaganda group is to bring the basic ideas of socialism and socialist policy to the more advanced and conscious strata of the working class and oppressed minority groups. First and foremost of the fields of activity for such a propaganda group is in the trade unions, where its main object is not to gain organizational power or influence or to play a leading role in the conduct of affairs, but to bring its ideas to as wide a circle as possible. It is necessary only to understand that there is nothing mechanical about the application of such a perspective: there is no contradiction between it and the making of action proposals by our press, spokesmen, or comrades in the unions; indeed, propaganda groups have even been known to play a leading role in large strikes (as in the case of the CLA). It is a question of the general orientation and emphasis, not in special cases but in the usual case.

(6) A propaganda group is neither an educational society nor a discussion club. It goes without saying that one of the most important tasks of not only a propaganda group but of a genuine party is the education of its own members and sympathizers. In an educational circle, the function of a propaganda group is -- propaganda, that is, outside activity. The members of an educational group need do nothing except become educated; members in a propaganda group, most especially in a Marxist propaganda group, join in order to help carry the ideas of socialism to others. The maintenance of an acceptable standard of activity is therefore a condition for membership. While it has never proved possible in practice in any organization to define with any exactness the precise limits of tolerance allowable, it is perfectly clear that comrades who consistently contribute nothing or next to nothing to the activities of the organization (no matter how firm their political agreement) or who even contribute to demoralization and discouraging such activity, cannot be permitted to remain as members.

(7) It also goes without saying that internal discussion -- completely democratic, completely free and unhampered on all differences, etc. -- is as vital to a healthy propaganda group as is education. But similarly, there is a sharp difference between a propaganda group and a mere discussion group. As in the previous case the dividing line was activity, in this case the dividing line is program. A mere discussion group, by definition, either has no group program, line or policy on the questions it discusses, or -- if a vote is taken -- considers the majority view merely an advisory or recorded expression of opinion, in any case involving no discipline or obligation to act. In any case also, it feels no obligation to adopt any view on the important questions before it, nor to integrate whatever views it expresses. A propaganda group is based on a program -- namely, the program for which its members are obligated to propagandize actively.

(8) The ideals and practices of internal democracy are in no way affected in relation to this question. The demonstration made in practice and the concepts of party democracy developed during the eight years of existence of the Workers Party continue to be our standard in every respect. The combination of complete freedom of discussion with political intransigence on the basic questions of socialism and Marxism has been demonstrated in life in the WP to a greater extent than in any other socialist movement, not only by reviving the best democratic traditions of the revolutionary Marxist movement but by sloughing off all the hangovers from Stalinism and Zinovievism which have trailed the Trotskyist movement, and by developing these traditions in a way that was not possible for an illegal movement like the pre-1917 Bolsheviks. No organizational reprisals against any political points of view within the group -- and no political concessions to any politically disintegrative tendencies: these are our guiding concepts.

(9) A propaganda group is not an "all-inclusive revolutionary party," in the sense explained in the 1946 Convention Resolution on the Tasks of the Party -- the latter being a concept obviously meaningful only to a movement which is either a party already or striving to become one in an immediate sense. The emphasis on "all-inclusiveness" for such a party is dictated by the desire to make clear that different and even irreconcilable political tendencies can and should live together, on the basis of the free play of democracy, under the single roof of a party which has, or is striving to adopt as its main reason for being, agitation or action in the class struggle. In the case of a propaganda group whose ideas are its main stock in trade and binding force, and not its agitation and action in the class struggle, it is clearly impossible to maintain that a political tendency whose ideas are admittedly irreconcilable with that of the group is yet morally obligated to remain in it. (Vide: our insistence with respect to the Johnson tendency.) Once this has been made clear, it is necessary to emphasize once more that the determination at any time by a majority that the ideas of a minority are "politically irreconcilable" cannot in our group be made the basis of organizational measures. In the case of a real political irreconcilability between two tendencies in a propaganda group, it is rather to be expected that, regrettable as it may be, voluntary separation will be the inevitable outcome, the determination being made not by ukase but by the logic of politics.

(10) Likewise the concept of the party cadre as developed in the aforementioned 1946 resolution automatically ceases to have the same meaning, by virtue of the points made above -- the approach of the 1946 resolution being predicated on the assumption of the more or less permanent co-existence of different tendencies within a single all-inclusive revolutionary party. What remains applicable is simply the role in almost any organization of the core of most responsible, most active, best educated and politically capable comrades on whom the practical work of the organization tends to depend for its stimulus and guidance. This latter type of cadre in the organization is still a prime necessity for our group.

(11) It is both impossible and unnecessary, outside a Plan of Action for a specific period, to detail the activities, that a propaganda group engages in. In general, a propaganda group seeks to spread its ideas and to recruit primarily through the following mediums: work in the trade unions and labor movement, above all; work in the trade unions and labor movement, above all; work in mass organizations; circulation and sale of its press and publications; public meetings and classes; individual contacting. It is to be seen that this does not differ substantially from what have been our main forms of activity, for some time. The main difference, perhaps, revolves around our attitude toward types of activity like agitational campaigns, election campaigns, demonstrations, etc. But no means must it be understood that these are excluded; in particular, a demonstration may at times be a useful propaganda medium, and an election campaign under favorable circumstances can be carried on as an intensive period of propaganda; nor is there anything in the nature of a group which is primarily a propaganda group which prohibits it from even carrying through strictly agitational activities, again especially under favorable circumstances. What, however, is clearly incompatible is such a concept and general perspective as is implied in the term "campaign party", or any feeling of obligation to carry on periodic or regular campaigns lest we fail to "do our duty" in the class struggle. These latter are the considerations of a party.

(12) The most important thing to emphasize and re-emphasize not merely in this resolution but -- what is more decisive! -- in the conduct and organization of our work in the next period, is the necessity of rooting the group in the labor movement, in the trade unions. Insofar as this is not done in practice, or at least progress made in this direction, the character of a propaganda group inevitably tends to be reduced in the direction of being merely an internal discussion and educational society. It need hardly be added that if the work and influence of our movement in the Labor Party field are to have anything but a literary significance the membership must from the very beginning be in a position from which this work can be conducted and this influence exerted--in the labor movement. Especially since the end of the war, in many sections of the country, there has been marked retrogression in the party in this vital respect -- to some extent due to layoffs in certain industries, but to a greater extent due to the fact that many comrades who went into industry during the war never did become integrated into the working class and reverted to other occupations as soon as the wartime pressures were released.

During this period also, guidance and drive from the center on this field of work fell to a low point, thus reducing to a minimum any counteracting influence which the center might have been able to supply. For an effective Marxist propaganda group, this trend must be sharply reversed; and the incoming National Committee is instructed to give top priority to the question of re-establishing a functioning trade-union-work center and stimulating the work of the branches along these lines. In any case, insofar as this can be done in a resolution, it must be stressed that our conception of a propaganda group requires more emphasis on trade-union work, not less; a stronger orientation toward the labor movement as our main field of work, not a weakened one.

(13) It is necessary to underline the propaganda-group character of our movement at this time not only to avoid any illusions on

on the part of our comrades, and not only to provide a realistic basis for planning and functioning, but also to avoid any illusions on the part of contacts, sympathetic workers who respond to our propaganda and possible recruits, to many or most of whom the title "party" means a mass organization of action. The most difficult recruits to retain are those who join under such false impressions. The fact that we call ourselves the Workers Party arouses and lends color to such illusions. In addition, in preparing ourselves for the role we must play in helping to develop and build the coming party of labor, a great deal of clarity would be gained by the public acknowledgment that we consider ourselves to be what we really are: a Marxist socialist propaganda group which aims to be an integral part of the broad working-class movement. For these reasons, we must relinquish the name "Workers Party" and adopt one that more clearly corresponds to the character and the role we propose to play.

(14) Our perspective also indicates the orientation in the coming period of our press, of our political activity and of the center of work of our membership. Our theoretical press must devote itself much more to the advocacy and defense of our theories and program as directly related to the American labor movement and the tendencies in its ranks, to political problems in the U.S. Our popular press must devote itself more to the propagandistic presentation of our program and less to agitational material. Our general political activity must be centered more firmly than ever around the popularization of our labor party slogans and our program for a labor party. Our membership must be more systematically educated in the fundamental programmatic position of the movement so that it can most ably defend itself against all others and against all critics in the ranks of the labor movement as a whole.

(15) These proposals for change in the orientation and face of the movement are not presented in the belief that they are the "solution" for the present weakness of the socialist movement or of our movement specifically, nor in the expectation that their adoption is calculated to lead to spectacular growth. At the present stage such illusions would be among the most harmful. The coming period, especially up to the definitive formation of labor's

political party, will in all likelihood see the socialist movement and all its cadres tested for resistance to all of the disintegrative and degenerative influences of modern decaying capitalism. But if the situation in which we function does not allow for immediate growth on a vast scale, it certainly does not exclude serious and significant recruitment. Our organization has a specific program which distinguishes it from all other groups. As no other does or can do, our program fully meets the need of a democratic, internationalist and socialist alternative to all forms of capitalist and Stalinist barbarism. In consequence, it has a special appeal to those seeking a way out of the futility and chaos posed by the dilemma capitalism-Stalinism. It is the emphasis on this appeal that must permeate every word and action of our movement. The justification and need for our movement lies primarily in this political character which is its mark of distinction. The Marxists are aware of the fact that their coming task will be neither smooth nor devoid of difficulties and even sharp struggles. Nevertheless, they face the coming entry of the American working class into the political field as an independent force with the greatest enthusiasm, zeal and confidence that the ideas of socialism, wedded to the working class, will constitute that power whose triumph will vindicate all the pioneers of socialism and usher freedom, peace and abundance into a brotherly world.

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