

Bulletin

OF THE WORKERS PARTY

CONTENTS

LET'S MAKE A FETISH OF UNITY - By Al Findley	1
THE SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND OUR NEXT TASKS: A CRITIQUE AND SOME SUG- GESTIONS - By R. Magnus, Scott Byer, M. Rand	3
NOTES FOR THE PRE-CONVENTION DISCUSSION - By E. R. McKinney.....	8
A PROPOSAL FOR A CHANGE IN OUR PRESS - By Hal Draper	14
TRADE UNION RESOLUTION - Political Committee	24
RESOLUTION ON THE TRADE UNION QUESTION - E. R. McKinney	29

15 CENTS

VOLUME IV, NUMBER 4
CONVENTION BULLETIN NO. 10 MARCH 1, 1949

2271

LETS MAKE A FETISH OF UNITY

Al Findley

Max Shactman's proposal for a change in name and for a new "Labor Party-in-the-immediate future" orientation, evaporated with the election returns. The basic problem of how to maintain and expand the influence of revolutionary Marxism and the special contributions of the W. P. remains.

The new P.C. resolution continues to advocate that we drop the name 'Party'. Whereas the Shactman-Gould resolution offered us the dropping of party rank as a panacea to all our troubles, Draper offers it as a retreat. There is no doubt in my mind that the state of the organization calls for a retreat--but for a retreat, and not a rout.

We have to--for ourselves--drop immediate hopes for anything more than a propaganda group in the near future. But to drop all pretensions at being a party is to drop all hopes of becoming one. An organization that has no pretensions or hopes, but is frankly a "talking shop", i.e., a propaganda group (whether the Johnson or Shactman variety) cannot hope to attract anybody in the United States. Even a cursory survey of the members of the W.P. will prove that the majority joined because here was an active group that they thought was doing something. A frankly propaganda group will not, and cannot, attract Americans, who are empiricists and almost despise theory and abstract propaganda. The only ones it may attract are students and born sectarians.

Slowly, and I may add reluctantly, I have come to the conclusion that the only way we can build the influence of revolutionary socialism in the U.S. is by DISemphasising political differences and by creating one viable socialist sect. Neither the W.P., the W.W.P. or the S.P. alone seem to be in a position to, or to have the ability to create such an organization.

Looking back, one cannot fail to be impressed by the fact that the tendency to political purity and splits has been one of the most important causes in the decline of the Trotskyite movement all over the world. We have operated along the lines of the 21 principles of the powerful Comintern. There are times when political differentiation and organizational separation are in order, but the Trotskyist movement carried it to an extreme. The S. W. P. carries on in this extreme spirit. We of the W. P. have somewhat modified our attitude, but basically our attitude is the same, only in our case it is tempered by common sense (which is good, but not good enough). Especially do many comrades continue this attitude in relation to the U.S., while willing to give it up in Europe.

The illusive mass labor party (or a movement for a labor party) continues to slip out of our hands. While we must continue to advocate a Labor Party, and even make it the central point in trade union work, we cannot bring it into being. Only leaders of the large unions can do that. The specific function of the Marxists in the U. S., is to create a viable socialist sect that can at least secure a hearing for socialism. In the U.S. we have a very empirical people. A people less given to theorizing and supporting splinter groups than in almost any other country. This is the people who are presented with three or four quarreling socialist grouplets, plus a viable Stalinist sect. No wonder so little progress has been made since world war I.

In the past, the argument used against someone who hesitated about a split, was always met with "Lets not make a fetish of unity", "A split is the lesser evil". This policy has failed--and utterly. The time has come for a completely new orientation--for a 180° turn.

In retrospect, I think that the Thomas concept of an "all inclusive party" (if really carried out) was best suited to the development of a viable socialist group in the U.S. In retrospect, the split from the S.W.P. was another mistake in creating two Trotskyite groups.

Unfortunately, the W.P., in its eight years of existence, has not shown real possibilities of becoming the Socialist group in the U.S. Neither has the S.W.P., the S.P. or S.L.P. The last few years have seen, not a disintegration it is true, but a definite slow withering away of the W.P. This is also true of the S.W.P. and S.P. There are many objective reasons for this. But there are also subjective reasons. Surely, somewhere in American society we could have found a few hundred people attentive to a revolutionary program. The latest organizational suggestion of Shectman, Gould and Draper, has destroyed any real possibility of maintaining the W.P. as a separate party.

The W.P. however, can perform an important task--raising the banner of Socialist unity. The W.P. is the only organization that can take the first step to create a real socialist sect in the U.S. Ultimately this means unity of the three socialist grouplets in the United States--the W.P., S.W.P. and S.P. The W.P. must make socialist unity its main political line in the next few years.

The first step is for the W.P. to united with the group nearest it in basic concepts--the S.W.P. There can be no doubt that the S.W.P. is nearest us. Proof? with whom do we polemicize? with the S.W.P. why? Not for lack of copy, but because we speak a more common language with the S.W.P. than with the S.P. Given the sectarian arrogance of the S.W.P., real unity will not be easy, as experience has shown. It is however, the political necessity for the Marxists in the U.S.

The concept of socialist unity includes C.O.'s, critical supporters of both American Imperialism and Stalinist Imperialist, provided there is "sufficient" criticism. This does exist in the S.P., the Bund and the S.W.P.

The "rank" of party vis-a-vis these grouplets that are only slightly larger than the W.P. will aid in the fight for unity and should be considered as an additional factor in favor of retaining the name Workers Party.

There is no doubt that the road to socialist unity in the U.S. will be a difficult one, but it is a necessary step for the American Socialist movement, and the working class. If there is no labor party, the need is obvious. If there is a labor party, it would be mandatory to create a unified socialist league for work in the labor party. The groundwork should be laid now.

The Workers Party is the only group with the necessary political originality and is the only group that is looked upon with sufficient confidence to be able to raise this political slogan for the U.S. radical movement--socialist unity.

THE SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND OUR NEXT
TASKS: A CRITIQUE AND SOME SUGGESTIONS

By R. Magnus, Scott Byer,
M. Rand (San Francisco)

- - -

(1) The document on "The Situation in the United States and Our Next Tasks," by Comrades Draper, Gould and Shachtman* can only be welcomed by the Party as an attempt, a rather puzzling attempt, to come to grips with the economic and political developments in the country; and to assess the past and present position and future perspectives of the Workers Party within this milieu.

(2) The document, unfortunately, fails to accomplish this task for two rather obvious reasons: 1) party tradition and the need to justify - to rationalize - "things as they are," forces the authors to place undue significance on objective factors, and 2) the authors' mistaken attempt to deduce the immediate practical tasks of the party from their excellent, if general, analysis of the politico-economic trends in the country. It is also true, as is the case of so many documents, that tasks, orientation, and perspective for growth are stated in such general terms, and so many conditions and exceptions are thrown in, that it becomes almost impossible to determine just precisely what changes are envisioned. The fact that no organization or trade union resolutions have come out adds further mystery to the present enigma and reduces criticism to trying to feel the wind.

(3) Our differences with what we think the document means are significant. Our agreement, however, is also considerable and should be stated at once. Despite the fact that it overstates the speed of development and general revolutionary significance (is our morale that low?) of the "third party (labor based)," the document's analysis of the general economic and political situation in the U.S. is fundamentally sound. Furthermore, we believe the document states a generally valid proposition when it says that the socialist movement can attain significant growth only in relation to the growth of a labor party movement, and then only if the revolutionary sects become a left-wing of this movement. We might only add the further condition that even in this event considerable growth of the left-wing groups will be limited by the extent to which the labor party movement reflects a real and deep radicalization of the working class and not just a movement of their leaders. In any case, the perspective of the development of a mass revolutionary party out of a mass reformist (the S.P.) party is envisioned instead of the cumulative growth of our party into an agitational party through its own efforts. This is correct. In line with this general perspective, the document lays down an excellent series of agitational proposals to be used by advanced militants for the extension of the struggle for a larger party.

* Subsequent to its publication in the WORKERS PARTY BULLETIN, the resolution was adopted by the Political Committee. 1274

(4) It is especially heartening to see the abandonment of the conception that our group is an agitational party or is now on the way to becoming one. No question of preference can be involved here, only a question of "saying what is." This specific illusion has been responsible for a tremendous amount of unfruitful work such as the recent election campaign fiasco in New York, and must be completely abandoned. We are a propaganda group and we must so coordinate and integrate our activity that we will function as one. This, the document does not do. Even worse, unfortunately, in the document's conception of our specific propaganda group in this specific historical situation and what its main practical activities should be, a large gust of wind blows in from the recent past. All of our illusions have obviously not been dispelled. Party momentum conquers the analysis precisely at the point where the utmost of clarity and precision are demanded, i.e., Our Next Tasks.

(5) Given the same general economic and political situation, we propose a considerably different conception of what the immediate practical tasks facing the party are. The reason for this is simple. The authors make the mistake of deducing the practical-political and organizational tasks of the party from the very conception of an agitational group which they have just decisively rejected. It is not a question of a general perspective, a line, the next step in the class struggle, the way out for American workers. Any serious group, no matter what its size, must be concerned with and take a position on these questions, and on this point the document is the embodiment of realistic appraisal. It correctly charts the unfolding of this process and presents detailed agitational proposals to use in helping it along. The authors still have dangerous illusions, however, about the role of our party generally in this process. They hold with amazing tenacity to the idea that we will have a significant influence on the course of this struggle in the near future, when a realistic appraisal of our minority position even in the socialist world refutes this idea completely.

(6) The document sets our main task as being "propagandizing for the formation of a labor party." All activity shall be subordinate to and shall lead up to this main task. The perspective of industrialization and the specific proposals for labor party agitational slogans are linked to this main task, and our press and publications (of which the Danger pamphlet is probably a good example) must align themselves more than ever in this direction. We must flatly state that this formulation is not consonant with our size or nature and harks back to a period when we were under the illusion that we were an agitational party, i.e., that our agitation would to a greater and greater extent have a leading, a decisive, or a significant effect on the class struggle and that we would recruit thereby. After generally condemning campaigns as fruitless and utopian the authors are preparing to embark on an even more fruitless activity -- agitating, propagandizing, and expending the major part of our energies working for the formation of an independent labor party. The authors still believe "that we can overcome the general party situation ... by our leadership in or line on the immediate class struggles." *

*See "A Realistic Propaganda Approach," by Dave Corbin, W.P. RULIE-TIN, Vol. III, No. 9, p. 12.

(7) What makes this orientation all the more incorrect is the fact that by concentrating in this way on an activity which by its very nature can only lead our group to expend a major part of its energies in unproductive and indecisive agitation, the party ignores those very sources of recruitment which can give it immediate and steady growth as a propaganda sect. The youth, especially in this insecure and hopeless period can be attracted to our revolutionary socialist ideas. Many Stalinists, left-wing social-democrats, and advanced workers and negroes can accept our complete ideology. This is not a question of hundreds and thousands of workers flooding the party overnight. It is a question of a small but steady recruitment to a propaganda group. This becomes all the more imperative when a group gets to be as small as we are. Our size plus our demoralization produces a qualitative change in the organization and functioning of our group. This process must be stopped. In short, we must concentrate on the working class and especially its advanced elements, but not to the exclusion of politically advanced and leftward moving people in other areas.

(8) We counterpose to the labor party activity a different general orientation for practical party activity in the immediate future. We must double or triple the size of our tiny sect by individually recruiting politicalized and leftward moving people on the basis of rounded revolutionary socialist ideology. This does not mean a rejection of the labor party perspective or our agitational and propaganda work in its behalf, but the correct integration of this work into the total ideology of a socialist propaganda sect. We must seek out revolutionary individuals, workers especially, who can be given the party Weltanschauung, who have the "political habit" and can stick with us. But this requires a politically alive membership which is looking for these individuals. If the document is serious, how does it propose to politically educate the party membership if its press is almost exclusively dedicated to labor party propaganda? How can it recruit revolutionaries with this press? In certain circumstances we will recruit advanced workers by labor party agitation, but we will also recruit advanced students by our revolutionary ideas. In the San Francisco Branch, at least, this has been our experience, and if the party generally spent more time and effort on student work it could recruit considerable numbers today. But it is precisely the advanced worker, the youth, the students, the advanced and politicalized people who are not attracted -- moved -- and who we cannot recruit, by mere labor party agitation and propaganda.

(9) To put the matter as bluntly as possible (and despite the fact that we will be verbally whaled for our extreme generalizing) what we do not desire is that the party will be turned more than ever into a small, impotent, "Committee to Form a Labor Party," with a socialistic tinge. It would, on the other hand, be just as sectarian and disastrous if our group turned into a small, wild-haired, "Committee to Preach the Value of Soviets to Uninterested Workers." Both of these are foreign to our conception. Is it eclecticism to attempt the reconciliation of these two conceptions? Nonsense! It is precisely our nature as a propaganda group, and a very small one, that demands such an approach. We are a group, with a set of important, significant and correct views on the world situation, which does not have contact with the class it

is supposed to represent. There are two opposite roads out of this dilemma. One of these roads has a double fork leading nowhere in both directions, i.e., the idea that we must either preach the necessity of Soviets regardless of historical circumstances (the Robertson document) or that we must capitulate to the backwardness of the working class (the approach of the Seattle Branch). The document comes dangerously close to the Seattle concept, and this is the motivation for this critique. We must choose the second road, that of becoming a well-integrated, well-coordinated revolutionary socialist propaganda group.

(10) What precise tasks will this orientation pose for our group? We must 1) increase our membership, 2) spread our well-rounded socialist ideas among growing circles of politicalized people. In general, a propaganda group seeks to spread its ideas and to recruit primarily through the following mediums: work among politicalized and leftward moving people primarily within the trade unions and labor movement (this may start with labor party agitation but will soon turn into a complete political discussion); work among left political tendencies (Stalinists, Social Democrats, SWP, SLP, etc.); circulation and sale of a press which is devoted (not completely) to reaching these people; public meetings and classes. The conception here is well-roundedness as opposed to single-minded, exclusive concentration on labor party agitation and propaganda. This will involve a change in the activity, the psychology, and the perspectives of most of the members of the WP. No more barren and fruitless work in building the "small mass organizations;" no more uncoordinated distributions of LABOR ACTION just to "get rid of the bundle." (instead we must distribute where we have strong industrial concentrations, and where the paper deals with the problems of a specific organization). We must take a political, tactical and psychological turn from the mass to the individual -- individual contacting, individual recruiting, a knock-down and drag-out battle of our total conceptions against the Stalinist, the trade union bureaucrat, the social democrat, the Wallaceite, and the radical youth.

(11) The document seeks to refute, to answer, and to confound everyone but its authors, by seeking to be on every side of every question. If the above conception of our tasks can be encompassed within the framework of the American resolution, then it should be. That is, the resolution on Our Tasks should certainly contain a number of detailed proposals on practical party activity besides those that have been worked out for our labor party agitation. Forgive us for saying that since they are not present, we believe they will not be attempted, and the party will continue in the direction of becoming a labor party propaganda sect with an excellent list of purely verbal agitational slogans and a continued and unabated demoralization. Snide remarks about wild-haired "solutions" to the problems of American socialism should not obscure the pregnant fact that this resolution spends more time on documenting the status quo with brilliant generalizations than it does on presenting an integrated picture of the activities of our propaganda group in the immediate future.

(12) The late date at which the American resolution came out has made it impossible for us to present a complete, detailed and thoroughly satisfactory critique. Also, the absence of a trade

union and organization resolution, and our total agreement with so much of the document combine to produce a situation where we are compelled to guess what is in the mind of the authors. In any case, we are planning an amendment to the resolution which will embody our general orientation for the party. We hope that the specific proposals of the sort we envision will be added to the document by the convention.

#

NOTES FOR THE PRE-CONVENTION
DISCUSSION

By E. R. McKinney

- - -

"CAPITALISM, STALINISM AND WAR," By Susan Green

Comrade Green's article is, I believe, an illustration of what Trotsky was talking about when he wrote:

"Leninism consists in not looking backward, in avoiding being bound by precedents, by purely formal reference to quotations... Lenin can not be chopped up into quotations suitable for all cases in life, because for Lenin the formal is never higher than the reality, it is always the tool which makes possible grasping the reality and dominating it... it is necessary to see not the formal relationship between one passage and another, but the real relationship of each to the concrete reality in which the former was introduced as a lever. The Leninist truth is always concrete."

All we need do is insert Marx and Engels. Comrade Green seeks to illustrate and validate her contentions in connection with a war between Russia and the U. S. by analogical reasoning. This type of reasoning is useful at times, but I give Comrade Green a quotation from Lenin: "All analogy is lame." Lenin, of course, did not invent this notion. The quotation is merely his succinct formulation of an important bit of knowledge which I suspect antedates Aristotle who also was fully acquainted with the frailty of this very elementary type of reasoning.

I also very respectfully call the following to the attention of Comrade Green and all other quotation addicts. If a writer is worth quoting, if what has been said is really of significance as proof of one's side in a dispute; then the user of the quotation must be as competent to deal with the disputed questions as the writer who is being quoted as proof. That is, the quoter must be thoroughly and competently acquainted with the subject matter under discussion, in order to be proficient in selecting the proper quotations and in their proper use.

Quotations may be used to clarify an argument. One may say "the matter has been excellently formulated by Blank." "It would be difficult to improve on the formulation of X." Or, "X is completely correct when he writes..." Or, "X discovered..." These are instances of the use of quotations by a quoter who is competent in the field under discussion. To use quotations in this manner the quoter must be able to meet the person quoted as an equal or nearly so. This use of quotations is the exegetical method of religious scholarship and the analytical method of secular scholarship.

There is another method, however, that is the apologetic and the polemical. Here, very often, the approach is by way of appeal to authority, to tradition and to precedent. One's understanding need not be of very high grade to do this kind of quoting.

You merely appeal to "the gospel once and for all delivered to the saints." And all the "saints" are not in the church: some are in radical political parties. This approach results in a battle of quotations and the piling of precedent upon precedent. But, unfortunately, very little real thinking is done. Hands merely go up in support of the side with seemingly the most plausible quotations and the precedents which seem to fit. The whole, of course, is accompanied with great polemical vigor and show of learning.

If Comrade Green will really dig into her quotations from Marx and Engels, she will, I believe, discover that they refute her argument. She quotes Engels saying that "our people can join the national movement...insofar as and for so long as it is limited to the defense of Germany...at the same time emphasize the difference between German-national and dynastic Prussian interests..." Does Comrade Green believe that this is the situation which will exist in relation to the U.S., Britain, France and Italy in the war between these nations and Russia? That is, that the participation of these countries will be a "national movement?" That is, the next war will be what the Stalinists called the last war -- after the attack by Hitler? How about Russia? Will the war on Russia's side also be a "national movement?" Should the Russian workers support it?

Comrade Green writes: "Marx said Germans were fighting for national existence. Certainly if and when World War III comes the whole of Western Europe will be fighting for national existence." I say again that one must understand before invoking the aid of quotations. What was at stake: the unification of Germany. That was what was meant by Germans fighting for their national existence. This was the period of bourgeois-democratic revolutions and the formation of national states. The Germans were behind and the bourgeois-democratic elements were aiming at the unification of Germany. Also, if Comrade Green will study the argument of Engels about how the working class would develop in that situation she will know that she cannot use the position of Engels to support her present-day position. The matter can be formulated in one sentence: the national states are already formed today and so is the working class.

Now as to some of Comrade Green's conclusions. The fact that we prefer bourgeois-democracy to totalitarianism is not political justification for supporting bourgeois-democracy (the U. S.) when engaged in an imperialist struggle with totalitarianism. We have no preference either for U. S. or Russian imperialism. To say that we prefer bourgeois-democracy to totalitarianism is not to say that we are for bourgeois-democracy. We do not give principled support to bourgeois-democracy; but only to socialist democracy, that is, to workers democracy.

Our preference for bourgeois-democracy over German or Russian totalitarianism (or any totalitarianism) is for tactical reasons. Under it we can continue with the class struggle with only slight or occasional abatement. We don't carry on class struggle for exercise. We want to transcend bourgeois-democracy and achieve socialist democracy. It is at the time the call goes out for the "defense of the fatherland" that Marxists have to stand themselves.

This is exactly the period when workers are won over to "national unity" by the bourgeoisie. This is when the class struggle will reach low tide. What does Comrade Green think will result from the Marxist's participating in this general retreat? How can one talk about the struggle for socialism and at the same time surrender the very nerve center of that struggle; the class struggle. Comrade Green didn't read far enough in Left-wing Communism. She can read there what Lenin had to say about how Marxists determine the nature of a war and why it might be possible during a war to overthrow one's own bourgeoisie.

Comrade Green is really saying that we should first decide the aggressor. If one is guided by her argument we must say that for her Russia will be the "aggressor."

Marxists can know now what position to take in case of war between Russia and the U. S. All we need answer is: Is the conflict between two imperialist nations? Is the U. S. an imperialist nation? If it is then I am certain that Comrade Green knows the answer. Comrade Green is perhaps worried for fear Russia may win. She should save a little of her worry for use in case the U. S. should win.

Marxian theory and politics are not a Saturday bargain counter, to which one can rush for a last minute cut-rate week-end purchase. We are attempting to engage in the theory and practice of proletarian revolution. This is a long range activity and a very steep climb.

THE GARRETT-JUDD AMENDMENT

Comrades Garrett and Judd write: "It is false and misleading to pose the political problems of Germany (in particular Berlin) today, around the issue of 'withdrawal of the American and allied troops;' or to put unilateral withdrawal forward as a key slogan in the struggle for independence. To do so obscures the special and unique problems confronting the German independence movement...."

This is a strange statement and somewhat obscure. It does not answer the "key" question: should we, the WP, the U. S. workers, demand that the U.S. be evacuated from Germany and brought home? Well, if we don't get our troops out of Germany, who will? Comrades Judd and Garrett have a proposal by which the Germans can drive the U. S. army out. Here it is:

"Revolutionists inside the SPD should properly demand that the SD government proceed immediately to the organization of a national militia (an army) regardless of the prohibitions imposed by the occupying powers (and indeed, requesting military supplies from those powers)." I say -- "indeed."

I say that Comrades Garrett and Judd say to the Germans, "If you don't like the American conquerors in your country, organize an army and run them out." If this isn't what the army is for, then what is it for? To drive the Russians out of East Germany? Would the new German militia join with the "occupying powers" in

driving the Russians out? Is this the deal through which the German militia would get "military supplies" from the "occupying powers?"

This proposal is just a little cowardly. (Among other things.) We don't demand the withdrawing of U. S. troops; we only tell the Germans to drive them out. What Comrades Garrett and Judd must do is answer the question which they are called upon to answer as American Marxists: Should the U. S. army be withdrawn from Germany? Should that demand be part of the political program of the WP for Germany irrespective of what Russia does or does not do? This question must be answered directly, forthrightly and without any delaying mumbo-jumbo.

PALESTINE AND THE JEWISH QUESTION

Comrade E. Findley submitted the "minority" resolutions of the Second World Congress of the Bund to the Party BULLETIN for the pre-convention discussion. Comrade Findley wrote: "...my own views coincide fairly closely with the general lines of this proposal..." (the minority resolution). The BULLETIN carries both Majority and Minority resolutions.

I participate in this discussion with some reluctance. My ignorance of what goes on in the Jewish organizations, among the Jewish people, what organizations there are and their programs, is very great indeed. Therefore, I shall attempt to be very cautious in what I say.

I am not certain that I understand the difference between these two resolutions. It is not clear to me what is the distinction made by Comrade Findley which leads him to support one and reject the other. As I read the resolutions, both take the position the problem is not solved by the establishment of Israel but will be solved by the coming of socialism - both accept the following resolutions: (1) The majority of Jews are now and will remain outside of Palestine. (2) The new Jewish state will not solve the Jewish problem. This can only be done by the victory of socialism. One resolution says that Israel resulted from "artificial partition" and the other says that Israel is "a palliative solution." (3) The Majority calls for "the fight against assimilation and for the free development, strengthening and popularization of Yiddish culture; the fight for the rights of the Yiddish language...." The Minority demands that the Bund "dedicate its forces to the struggle of the Jewish masses for their national and social rights, for the existence of the Jews as a people, based upon Jewish culture and Jewish autonomous life." These three points seem to cover what both sides are for. What they are against is far from clear to me. The Minority seems to be more strongly opposed to the Zionists than the Majority. Also, the Minority seems, on paper at least, to be more "socialistic" than the Majority.

What is important is the points of agreement. They both say, if I understand, that the Jews are a nation. This nationhood is not based on the existence of Israel but is prior to the establish-

ment of Israel. Both seem for the secularization of Jewish life. Both emphasize the importance of Yiddish as part of Jewish culture. The Majority calls for the "fight against assimilation," the Minority for "the existence of the Jews as a people, based upon modern Jewish culture and Jewish autonomous life."

I do not see how a Marxist can differentiate between these two resolutions in the sense of supporting one and rejecting the other. A Marxist will reject both of them. This has nothing to do with whether or not a Marxist might or might not support the partition of Palestine. Each of these resolutions is essentially chauvinistic and therefore certainly not to be supported by a Marxist. In my opinion they are both reactionary. If one is worse than the other, it is exactly the Minority resolution. This resolution reads very much like the old social-democratic argument that the "problem of the Negroes in the South can only be solved by socialism." This was the signal to do nothing; to stay out of the South or to succumb to many of the South's Jim Crow practices. Also, this Minority resolution sounds as if written by a group of petty bourgeois liberals who want to remain on good terms with the "white folks" in the countries where they live. The resolution is against a "narrow-minded nationalism and chauvinism." But it is for "a future voluntary federation or... a bi-national state." As socialists these Bund minorityites have nothing to say about how Israel came into being, how it is a creature of both American and British imperialism, about the Arab majority, or the fact that whatever happens in Palestine can only occur under the patronage of the imperialist powers.

This Minority is not only for the sequestration of the Jews in Palestine but all over the world. At the same time they are for socialism. They are not satisfied with Palestine as the Jewish state; the Jews of the world are a nation. They want socialism on a world scale and Jewish autonomous life on a world scale.

Again I say that I cannot understand how a Marxist can support either of these resolutions. They both cringe before imperialism and both are chauvinistic.

I am opposed to all chauvinism and will make no compromise with it. All chauvinism is reactionary. Chauvinism resplendent in the garb of racial oppression is particularly objectionable and nauseating. Chauvinism buried beneath emotional verbiage about the right of nationhood or the preservation of one's culture or the demand for the opportunity to make one's cultural contribution is still chauvinism and such demagoguery should fool nobody.

In the first years of the WP we were plagued with a rash of the defense of black chauvinism. This came from white comrades who were convinced that the Negroes were a nation, or ought to be a nation, or who were certain they knew precisely "what the Negro people want," each and everyone of them. Some of the comrades who were friendly to black chauvinism and Negro nationalism are today advocating Jewish chauvinism. Some of the remarks I listened to at a membership meeting in New York on the Jewish question might have come from a Bund member or a full-fledged Zionist.

Jewish chauvinism has no more place in the Party than has Negro chauvinism. We carried on a struggle against Johnson who was the protagonist of the black chauvinism. We must carry on a struggle against Jewish Johnsons who would saddle the Party with Jewish chauvinism. No compromise with chauvinism or with chauvinist demagogy. I hope that never again in our Party will I listen to a Party member justify a chauvinistic stand on the ground that "I am a member of an oppressed race."

#

A PROPOSAL FOR A CHANGE IN OUR PRESS

By Hal Draper

- - -

The purpose of this article is to present to the Party a new proposal on our press, and not to make a report on the problems of LABOR ACTION and THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. However, without at least a reference to the latter, the proposal cannot be given fair consideration, since it is made on the basis of the actual situation and problems confronting us and not on the basis of abstract considerations about the kind of press we would like to have.

The proposal, in brief, is for a new kind of publication to take the place of both LABOR ACTION and THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. I would first ask the comrades reading this to try to suspend final judgment at least until the whole idea has had time to sink in and begin to feel at home, since -- for good and laudable reasons -- there is likely to be an initial revulsion, if not a feeling of scandalized horror, at the very idea of making what amounts to a thorough change-over in those party institutions which have the firmest place in our affections. It is true that such a change cannot be made lightly; but it is at the coming national convention that an even more sweeping change will be taken up -- namely, the proposal of the Political Committee for a change in name of the organization -- and it is at such a time that further changes would be most expedient.

The proposal to be made here is not a necessary corollary of the Political Committee Resolution on the United States and the Role of the Party -- that is, it stands on its own feet; but it is in line with the orientation presented in that resolution.

Following is a discussion of: (I) The problems out of which this proposal arises; (II) The kind of publication which is to replace LA and NI; and (III) A few specific problems.

I.

Only a full-length report in some detail on the concrete problems besetting our press work would do justice to the motivation for a change in our press setup. And this would have two aspects: one, from the angle of the National Office in getting out the publications, and two, from the angle of the branches in utilizing them. Naturally, the comrades in the branches are only vaguely or generally acquainted with the first, and cannot (or at least do not) fully appreciate the pressures which motivate the change from this angle.

But all I shall try to do here is to point to both sets of problems sketchily. The following five are not in order of importance, but go from the most concrete to the more general organizational and political considerations.

(1) FINANCES. Even without the gory details to make it vivid, it is still perhaps enough to say that the publication of LA and

NI on the present basis is a constant oppressive burden upon the Party rendered more acute than usual by the fact that the financial situation of the Party is worse than it has been in the past years. The effect of this upon the publications themselves is most visible to the naked eye with regard to the NI, for the simple reason that it is LA that gets the right-of-way (and properly so, to be sure). It is, of course, the money problem which, both directly and indirectly, is the main reason for the irregular publication of the magazine; the NI, so to speak, is the slow freight which may be sidetracked for a couple of weeks or so to permit the LA express to go through.

But still both are coming out, even if there are some skips on the part of the NI, and we could probably continue to get them out in this fashion if need be. But this is only at the expense of the constant, immediately pressing drain and load upon the resources of the organization; at the very least, any easing of this load would be, not a solution of our financial problem, but an important contribution toward it. Certainly, something has go to be done.

The proposal here to be made would represent a substantial saving -- roughly, about \$200 a month. To point this up in terms of another problem which is not within the purview of this article: this sum is more than enough to pay the wages of at least two N.O. functionaries. It is enough to make the business end of the press itself something less than a daily headache and scramble, or to go a long way in this direction.

On my own part, the proposal is not decisively motivated on the basis of this consideration alone, nor did it arise merely out of this consideration. If it were simply a question of money, and if there were no workable alternative, one might hope to muddle through as usual. But if the retrenchment aspect of this proposal is going to be necessary, then the best time to take action on it is at the same time that the "face" of the organization is being changed in other respects -- now.

(2) WRITING FORCES. "Copy" is a second pressing concrete problem of both publications, in this case most particularly LABOR ACTION. This is reflected in the long articles in the paper and the amount of ad material. In the case of the NI, it is at least a contributory factor in delaying publication dates. Abstractly, it can be argued perfectly truly that we have within our ranks sufficient writing forces to provide the necessary copy; but the fact that the problem exists and is acute, and has been getting worse, not better, in the past year -- this fact is not susceptible merely to abstract exhortations about our writers doing their duty. It is related to the weaknesses of our organization as a whole in the present situation.

By "writing forces" I mean all the comrades in all the branches who should be writing for either LA or NI, at least from time to time; but here I would throw in also a somewhat different consideration which bears likewise on the money question. This is the staff for the publications. One comrade cannot possibly edit both newspaper and magazine; it is too much of a job. (As a matter of fact, getting out LA alone with only one full-time editor is

NI on the present basis is a constant oppressive burden upon the Party rendered more acute than usual by the fact that the financial situation of the Party is worse than it has been in the past years. The effect of this upon the publications themselves is most visible to the naked eye with regard to the NI, for the simple reason that it is LA that gets the right-of-way (and properly so, to be sure). It is, of course, the money problem which, both directly and indirectly, is the main reason for the irregular publication of the magazine; the NI, so to speak, is the slow freight which may be sidetracked for a couple of weeks or so to permit the LA express to go through.

But still both are coming out, even if there are some skips on the part of the NI, and we could probably continue to get them out in this fashion if need be. But this is only at the expense of the constant, immediately pressing drain and load upon the resources of the organization; at the very least, any easing of this load would be, not a solution of our financial problem, but an important contribution toward it. Certainly, something has got to be done.

The proposal here to be made would represent a substantial saving -- roughly, about \$200 a month. To point this up in terms of another problem which is not within the purview of this article: this sum is more than enough to pay the wages of at least two N.O. functionaries. It is enough to make the business end of the press itself something less than a daily headache and scramble, or to go a long way in this direction.

On my own part, the proposal is not decisively motivated on the basis of this consideration alone, nor did it arise merely out of this consideration. If it were simply a question of money, and if there were no workable alternative, one might hope to muddle through as usual. But if the retrenchment aspect of this proposal is going to be necessary, then the best time to take action on it is at the same time that the "face" of the organization is being changed in other respects -- now.

(2) WRITING FORCES. "Copy" is a second pressing concrete problem of both publications, in this case most particularly LABOR ACTION. This is reflected in the long articles in the paper and the amount of ad material. In the case of the NI, it is at least a contributory factor in delaying publication dates. Abstractly, it can be argued perfectly truly that we have within our ranks sufficient writing forces to provide the necessary copy; but the fact that the problem exists and is acute, and has been getting worse, not better, in the past year -- this fact is not susceptible merely to abstract exhortations about our writers doing their duty. It is related to the weaknesses of our organization as a whole in the present situation.

By "writing forces" I mean all the comrades in all the branches who should be writing for either LA or NI, at least from time to time; but here I would throw in also a somewhat different consideration which bears likewise on the money question. This is the staff for the publications. One comrade cannot possibly edit both newspaper and magazine; it is too much of a job. (As a matter of fact, getting out LA alone with only one full-time editor is

than it is now. The PC Resolution on the U. S. and the Role of the Party, for example, recommends (as we have recommended before) that the NI ought to carry more material on the problems of the American labor movement and American politics. If this were actually done, there would be still less of a gap between the two publications. But what really highlights the problem is this fact, of which I can speak at firsthand since I have been working with both LA and NI for over a year now:--- The main (not the only, but the main) reason why it is so difficult to get "American" articles for the NI is the simple fact that there is little to be written along these lines which is not gobbled up by LABOR ACTION's need for copy and which does not get channeled toward LABOR ACTION. And because of the change in character in LABOR ACTION, there are no bars to its use there. This has not been the result of editorial policy -- just the contrary! and this is just the point! -- but of the "gravitational pull" of the respective organs on the available writers and their inspirations.

The result is obvious: a substantial part of the contents of any issue of LABOR ACTION could just as well be material for the NI, and vice versa. The main difference in this sector has been in style and length: and in both these cases, the difference is not always a fortunate one. That is: quite a number of articles in LA are too long for a newspaper (especially a "popular" newspaper); and there is a stubborn prejudice on the part of our writers that, regardless of subject, an article is not fit for submission to the NI unless it is written in a special, "profound," "theoretical" fashion and style. A little more growing-together in both respects would be a good thing.

But as we shall see, the proposal is neither to make an NI out of LA, or an LA out of the NI; it is rather for a new type of publication which shall seek to combine both aspects of the political impact which we wish to make, in a more rounded fashion, in a single publication. The point involved here is that the evolution of both publications makes this possible -- for us, today -- where it would not be possible of one persists in thinking of the dividing line between the two publications as being "popular agitational newspaper" vs. "theoretical journal." These categories are obsolete, and do not conform to the reality of either our tasks or of our present press work.

The change in character of LABOR ACTION has also had a transforming effect on the utilization of the paper by the branches and comrades. Here some statistics, which I reluctantly forego, would be illuminating: on the bundle orders of the various branches. The mass distributions of the war years are gone and we would not revive them even if it were financially possible. We are not expecting to recruit average unpoliticalized though militant workers who are stirred by reading agitational articles, and who are attracted to us because we are "getting things done" (or yelling to get things done) in the broad class struggle. We can expect to recruit the more advanced, more politically educated who can join us on the basis of understanding our distinctive political character. One of our best branches gets a bundle order of LA's which is practically insignificant; their utilization of the paper is mainly through getting contacts, whom they are engaged in politicalizing

and educating, to subscribe. It is along these lines that recruitment is possible for us -- and along these lines it is possible for us to recruit substantially. The final consideration flows from this:--

(5) THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF OUR PRESS. During the war years, it was a common observation on our part that a reader of LABOR ACTION could read the newspaper for the life of a 6 month sub without learning or absorbing very much about our distinctive political ideas. It was our general concept that the interest and sympathy thus aroused agitationally would be the starting point for politicalizing such readers through personal contact. This was in line with, and of a piece with, the policy of mass distributions and mass sub campaigns, and it was of a piece with the agitational character of the newspaper. More important, it was of a piece with our conception of the role of the party and of national and even international political developments.

If it was not fruitful, it was not because that policy was wrong in itself (so to speak) but because our orientation -- as we have since been emphasizing -- did not conform with the actual post-war developments and our own forces. At this convention we are proposing to make explicit a different orientation which is in closer conformity. But the same reasons, in my opinion, point to the adaptation of our press in this direction also. Our press ought to give its readers a more rounded education on our politics than is to be gotten from reading the NI alone, or from reading LA alone. Both types of material are needed if our press is to fulfill its role -- for us, today, not for any old propaganda group in the abstract -- of recruiting, or helping to recruit.

Our readers of LABOR ACTION ought to be exposed to the kind of political educational articles which appear in the NI. Our readers of the NI (and I am here particularly thinking of the circulation of the NI on the campuses, among students) ought to be exposed to the kind of weekly analyses of national and labor politics that appear in LABOR ACTION. And insofar as there is a wide area of overlapping, as I have pointed out, there is still less reason to maintain the division between them.

I must repeat, at this point, to avoid misunderstanding, that I am not laying down any automatic requirement for any propaganda group, but am speaking of our concrete needs and tasks now. There may indeed well be propaganda groups whose resources, forces and opportunities make a newspaper-magazine dual setup worthwhile and fruitful in actual utilization, as well as materially feasible. I do not believe that is the case with us, now. This is indicated in its own way by another example of "growing-together" of the NI and LA: their convergence toward approximately the same level of circulation. The difference between the press run and circulation of the two is amazingly small for anyone who persists in hanging on to the abstract view of what should be the difference between a "popular newspaper" and a "theoretical journal."

If that difference does not at least manifest itself in the number of people reached by the respective channels of propaganda, the difficulties of the dual setup are hardly repaid. And this

situation is not due to the deficiencies of LABOR ACTION, whatever those deficiencies are claimed to be: it is due to the nature of the public we can hope to reach and influence with our propaganda press. We can reach them more effectively and do a better propaganda job on them with a single organ in which our rounded political impact is concentrated and behind which all the energies of the organization can be put.

II.

What kind of single public organ shall this be? There are, of course, the usual number of variants, and I cannot here go into a critical discussion of all of them. One of them, however, deserves a word because it pops up frequently and because it is what I do not want.

This is the conception that we ought to put out a publication which is a kind of socialist version of the Nation or New Republic. For a party with sufficient forces, such a publication might be a good thing as an addition to a newspaper and theoretical journal (cf. the CP's New Masses for many years). But we are not talking about that. The single propaganda organ of our group should not be a magazine for intellectuals primarily.

I think we have to be very clear about two sectors we do not want to aim at primarily: (1) On the one hand, the famous "average worker," and (2) on the other hand, sophisticated politicians and the intellectual peripheries of radicalism who are "interested" in following the radical movement. The audience we want to reach in the first place are the advanced workers who are interested in politics, and capable of being interested in our politics.

This is how, in fact, LABOR ACTION is pitched now, more or less. I would not change this for the bulk of the proposed organ. There is lots of room for improvement of the execution of this aim (this is beside the point at the moment) but this type of material would be the bulk of the organ.

The question is: In what form shall this type of material be combined with the articles of political and theoretical analysis which now go into the NI? I have pointed out above that the gap has become less and less, but it is there and should be there. The first thing to decide, therefore, is the format which can best achieve this combination, together with the internal organization of the organ.

A combination of LA and NI can best be achieved in the physical format of a magazine. Neither the blanket-size format (of LA at present) nor a tabloid-newspaper format could successfully integrate the NI material. Even now, the long (though excellent) articles in LA analysing important political events (China, Palestine, Washington plans, etc.) seem out of tune with the format of a newspaper. An article which takes up most of a whole page of LA would take about four pages of an NI-size magazine; but in LA it looks like a solid mass of print, while in a magazine format it looks merely like a special article. To put it another way: An article in LA which takes a half page is a "long" article; in a

magazine format it is a "short" article of two pages.

The point here is not how to convert a "long" article into a "short" article without cutting it, but to indicate that only in a magazine format can some longer articles be used (as we have to do) without detracting from the character of the publication as a whole. LABOR ACTION as it is now (and as it is essentially going to remain, no matter what plans are made or resolutions passed) is -- from the viewpoint of the relationship between format and contents -- neither fish, flesh nor fowl; it is not exactly a newspaper and it is certainly not a magazine. Time and again, it prints (and ought to print) articles which are fully as long as many NI feature articles, but their publication in LA gives them willy-nilly an ephemeral, journalistic character which detracts from the attention properly paid them and from their readability -- and from their dignity, if I may use that word with the hope that it is understood in the proper way.

This would be as true, or even more true, for the articles which now appear in the NI. The NI has built up a great deal of respect for itself as a vehicle for thought-provoking and educational political and theoretical analyses. I believe that this can be preserved without difficulty in the setup I propose, after the first wrench of the change-over, especially with regard to title; but it is certainly not lightly to be thrown away; It is, however, only in the magazine format that it can be preserved.

I propose, therefore, a single organ physically made up like the present NI in its essential format -- i.e., magazine size.

It is to be published weekly, as LA is at present.

It is to be of 16 pages. (This is equivalent in paper to the present LA or half of the present NI.)

At least two-thirds (say, 11 pages out of the 16) is to consist of the same type of material which now makes up LABOR ACTION -- organized somewhat differently.

Each weekly issue will contain, as a special feature or department, one article such as would otherwise have gone into the NI. (Naturally, there is no emphasis on the "one" -- it may vary, depending on length, character, subject, importance, etc.).

* * *

There is no other publication I can point to as representing fully the type of publication the proposed organ would be -- at least without raising misconceptions. It certainly would not be accurate to call it a socialist version of Time or Newsweek, though it certainly would be a kind of socialist "newsmagazine" -- in something like the sense in which LABOR ACTION itself at present is an inconsistent kind of newsmagazine. That is, we do not pretend to supply a digest of the week's news for run-and-read readers, but rather; a socialist analysis and commentary on the week's politics and events, with special articles on the broader aspects of politics today. This is and has to be our "Formula."

2291

Let me try to convey a more vivid impression of what the bulk of such an organ would have to look like (without a spate of technical details such as the editor would have to consider in executing the idea and giving it life).

The makeup of LABOR ACTION, as a newspaper, enforces a miscellaneous front page -- and a "lead." The makeup of the NEW INTERNATIONAL is mainly simply one article after another. There is a broad field in-between (Time, Newsweek, Business Week, and a number of other special magazines illustrate in their own way the variables in organizing and livening up the internal organization of a type of newsmagazine). One characteristic of any type of newsmagazine is departmentalization of news, stories or "think-pieces" under topical groupings. Time and Newsweek do this in strictly fixed categories: National Affairs, World Affairs, Labor, Religion, etc.; but this is quite unnecessary for us. It would be enough for us to group, in flexible topical groups, the material developing for each issue. Most of the articles should not be more than one page in length, preferably (especially in the first half of the magazine) with short items breaking up the page. (Note: Most of the articles now printed in LABOR ACTION are somewhat longer than this, but could profitably be cut to this size; if it is not done now, the decisive reason has been indicated -- the "copy" problem.)

One thing will be eliminated that at present is only a headache, and is a hangover from an agitational newspaper, enforced by the newspaper format. That is the problem of the "lead" -- the most prominent story on the front page (upper right spot and main heading).

Nine times out of ten, this story is not the most interesting thing in the paper; but only stories of a certain character (newsy, even semi-agitational, etc.) are fitted for use in this spot. Week after week, the hardest problem in getting out the current issue of LA is the question: "What shall we use for the 'lead!'" The real feature of the issue may be an excellent feature on China, or the UAW, or the Irgun, or something else, but as long as LA is even to create the illusion of being a newspaper, these have to be rejected for the lead spot, and a thin piece on Truman's latest speech employed instead. Everyone actually involved in the production of LABOR ACTION feels this strongly: the "lead" problem is an artificial one, required only by the newspaper format and not by our needs or aims or appeal. I might be willing to give odds that the "lead" story is usually the one least read in the paper.

Even the newsmagazines which do pretend to digest the week's news (Time, Newsweek) are not thus bound, nor do they have this hangover from the requirements of a daily newspaper. Their "cover story" (newsmagazine equivalent of the "lead") goes far afield indeed. For us it would be determined by the political interest of the story for our projected audience and not by artificial considerations.

I will here have to leave to the imagination of the comrades the possibilities of headlines, cuts, pictures, cover, columns, etc. in making such an organ the kind of "socialist newsmagazine PLUS" that it can be, on the basis of the material that at present goes into both LABOR ACTION and THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.

III.

(1) Price? This can be decided by itself, but there is obviously no problem since the cost to us of publishing such a 16-page weekly organ would be the same as the present LABOR ACTION. LA sells for 5 cents, and at certain sub rates. A magazine, even a 16-pager, for 5 cents would indeed be unusual today! But precisely for that reason, it might be advisable to sell for 10 cents, which would be financially advantageous also. I mention this only because the question of price invariably arises as soon as the proposal is made; whatever the decision, the advantages of the choice are on our side.

(2) Distribution and Sales. LABOR ACTION at present is not often used for give-away distribution. In any case, the point made above on cost means that any exceptional free distribution, or sample give-aways, is exactly as feasible as now. The proposed organ could be sold as successfully as the present LABOR ACTION, at meetings, etc. I will forbear arguing here that it could be sold more easily than a four-page newspaper, including sales at union meetings, etc., provided one does not think in terms of mass sales -- and these are not the terms of the present LABOR ACTION either, nor our expectations for it.

But the most important utilization of our press at the present time is in the education and politicalization of workers whom we contact, our sympathizers, our periphery, shop mates and fellow union members who can be approached politically. And this means getting them to subscribe. (I have mentioned above that, not in our poorer branches but in our best branches, this is indeed the main role of our press, specifically LABOR ACTION.) And it is precisely in this respect that the proposed change would mean most.

(3) "What! Give Up the NI?" We will, I suppose, be giving up the name, since I do not imagine that the name "New International" could be used for the name of the proposed organ. But it would be quite foolish to look upon this in the same way as, for example, the question would appear to Collier's or Time or other big-time magazine; whose name is part of its built-up stock-in-trade and selling potential. The fact is that quite apart from the present proposal, if we were to change the name of the NI to something else right now, that in itself would not lose us a single reader; and in four months the new name would have exactly the same place, as the NI's successor, as does the NI now. That is a fact that is due to the present size and character of the NI's readership. The European socialists (not to speak of our home circulation) who look eagerly to the NI now would look just as eagerly to the new organ, and for the same reasons. They are going to have to get used to a new name for our group, if the PC proposal on that carries; the time to make other similar changes in our "face" is at the same time, now, not separately. Without necessarily derogating reasons of sentiment and continuity for maintaining the name NEW INTERNATIONAL, such can hardly weigh in the balance as against the material considerations and our needs which I urge.

(4) But will the role of the NI be lost? The proposed organ will carry each week an "NI section" (so to speak) of 4-5 pages as

the advanced section of the magazine, weekly, to fulfill that role. The only concrete question involved is that of space. It may come as a surprise to realize that not much is lost even in space.

The NI, for the past two years, has published nine issues a year. Thirty of its pages are available for text. This makes 270 pages over the year.

In a weekly magazine, devoting five pages to the "NI section" would mean 260 pages over the year -- almost exactly as much. But even this does not tell the whole story, because of the fair amount of overlapping between LA and NI material (especially when it comes to "Notes of the Month," which indeed ought to appear more frequently than it has) and also when the pages devoted to book reviews are taken into consideration. Even if the "NI section" were to average only 4-1/2 pages (234 pages over the year) or even 4 pages (208 a year), I doubt very much whether we will find NI material crying for publication with no place to go.

And if this problem ever does arise, its solution is also very simple: it may be a special issue of 24 pages for one week; or a supplement; or a quarterly supplement... but this question is completely theoretical at the present time.

More important in my mind is the fact that the proposed organ would, every week, present our reader-circles with the type of propaganda and political education which now is divided between two different publications, and which belong together for our total political impact.

Such a publication, with the undivided drive of the organization behind it, could be made the really outstanding organ of socialist opinion and analysis in this country, far beyond the potentialities of either LA or NI taken by themselves, with their delimited spheres.

#

TRADE UNION RESOLUTION

I.

(1) Intimidated by the Taft-Hartley Law and loath to strike because of its seeming uselessness in the face of the rising cost of living, the union movement, headed by its conservative leadership, turned to political action in mid-1948. The re-election of Truman, due in large measure to the activity of the labor movement, particularly the CIO, was the unexpected result. It marks a stemming of the conservative attack and a further small but definite qualitative change in the evolution of the consciousness of the labor movement, a change toward increasing politicalization.

Erratic though this development has been since the end of World War II, several milestones along the way can be indicated: the Reuther slogan of "Wage Increases without Price Rises" and its corollary, "Open the Books!", the GM contract embodying the sliding scale of wages, the increasingly vocal sentiment for a labor party, and a growing uneasiness over the end results of an unrestricted campaign against the Stalinists.

(2) Following the victory of Truman a subsiding of the labor party sentiment was inevitable. Fortunately, however, even much of the official labor leadership is maintaining an attitude of watchful waiting toward the Truman administration, despite the general surge of confidence which swept labor's ranks after the election. In fact, the CIO's PAC and the AFL's LLPE, far from being liquidated, are being extended.

(3) Whatever the hopes of the labor bureaucracy for an "easy" solution, or whatever the good intentions of Truman and other Democrats, the evolution of the United States economy and the development of the international situation will not permit the maintenance, not to speak of the expansion, of the current standard of living of the working class. Already "overproduction" in textiles and electrical equipment is an early warning that, as in the period 1937-1941, full employment can be sustained only by conversion to armaments production. Such production will be highly inflationary, for the dimensions of the contemplated United States. Russian war will in all likelihood not permit such expansion of the civilian component of production as was possible in World War II.

The speed of this development is not easily predictable, depending as it does upon multiple factors--not the least of which is the attitude of the United States labor movement itself, particularly in respect to the creation of a labor party. But the inflationary trend is obvious, despite whatever temporary lulls may be induced by an easing of international tensions or by other factors. These lulls can in turn create dissatisfaction because of the unemployment which may well accompany deflationary movements. Disillusion is bound to follow, even though the 81st Congress will undoubtedly restore, if in unstable and abridged form, some of the rights which labor lost during the tenure of the last Congress. An elemental task for our membership in the unions is to resist tend-

encies by the labor bureaucracy to compromise on this issue.

(4) At present, however, there is no clearly defined movement for a labor party. One section of the labor leadership is flirting with the idea of capturing the Democratic Party, another would like the labor movement to constitute itself as the left wing of the Democratic Party, another wants to continue the same general policy of endorsing Democratic or Republican candidates, another would like to build a labor party. The first task of our members in the unions is to strengthen the sentiment for the building of a labor party based primarily on the unions.

In cases where labor's intervention in the electoral struggle takes other forms, it shall be the duty of our membership to enlarge the independent character of such a movement, as well as its internal democracy, its mass base, and the militancy of its program. The exact extent and character of our participation in such movements can be decided only when they achieve more palpable form. A primary step is to call for delegated local, state, and national conventions of PAC and LLPE to determine policy. This policy can be summed up in the slogan: "Build labor's independent electoral machine!"

(5) Though the immediate past period has committed labor more strongly than ever to political action, a major field of work for our party still remains that of wages and working conditions. Here the dominant present fact is inflation. While advocating the creation of a labor party as a necessary political weapon against inflation, we must supplement this with economic demands. The present disinclination of the working class to strike for wage increases which are immediately swallowed up by rising prices is apparent.

The GM sliding scale of wages, while representing an advance in thinking on the wage issue, has proved in practice to have these defects: (1) It tacitly assumes the adequacy of the 1948 standard of living and freezes the worker at that level, (2) it was based upon inaccurate Bureau of Labor Statistics figures, and (3) it cuts wages when the cost of living drops--a fact which is currently causing discontent in UAW ranks. Our agitation should concentrate upon what we have always considered the superior program, Reuther's 1945 proposal of "Wage Increases without Price Rises" and its powerful corollary of "Open the Books!" Similarly, the slogan of a guaranteed annual wage eliminates many of the disabilities inherent in the sliding scale of wages proposal.

The current trend toward pension plans, hospitalization programs, and social security proposals must be supported, both for their practical results and for their educational value in underlining the negative social role of big business and the positive social role which should be assumed by the labor movement. Such plans should be financed out of corporation profits, should aim to be on an industry-wide basis as in the UAW, should provide for increases in the cost of living and, most important of all, should be under union control. It should be borne in mind that special circumstances at any given moment may compel a union to work towards an industry-wide agreement through a strategy of tackling one corporation or one section of an industry at a time.

Attempts to have these welfare proposals considered as substitutes for wage demands must be opposed. From the point of view of the over-all welfare of the worker the two types of demands are interdependent.

Other trends which must be combatted are the speed-up, which is particularly pronounced in the auto industry, the arbitration of wages issues, as recently occurred in the textile industry, and a general complacency which is settling over the labor movement. This latter is noticeable in the (often dishonest) ascribing of militant actions such as picket lines and demonstrations to Communist ideology, to some alien influence, thereby casting suspicion upon all proposals for aggressive action, obscuring, in the process, the great native militant trade union tradition of this country. The war and post-war generation needs a good education in United States labor history.

(6) An integral part of the fight against inflation is the struggle against the war preparations. The standard of living of the working class cannot be maintained with an increasingly large sector of production being diverted to war production, whose inevitable end is a catastrophe of unparalleled horror. As against an armaments program we must counterpose demands for housing, socialized medicine, and the expansion of educational facilities. Objections to these demands based upon steel shortages (to cite one example) permit the introduction of proposals for nationalizing the steel industry or for government construction and ownership of steel plants -- this latter a proposal which even Truman has been forced to play with. Similar demands for nationalizing industry emerge from the Reuther housing plan. We must oppose conscription, against which there can now be advanced particularly good economic arguments, in addition to the normal political ones.

Part of the war drive by the government and its business backers is the present campaign against the Communist Party. Without lessening our attack against the Stalinists, we must point out the reactionary significance of the government's drive against the "reds", which, in the name of a struggle against Communism, will move on to an attack against all union rights. This does not mean that we must change our general--though not invariable--orientation of working in the anti-Stalinist caucuses. The past period--most strikingly in the case of the UAW and the UE--has demonstrated the correctness of our attitude. It does mean that we must seek to create a differentiation within the anti-Stalinist caucuses between the actual and potential militants and the patriots, ACTU (which has furnished a good deal of the leadership in the anti-Stalinist struggle) and elements to the right of even ACTU. We must bend every effort to aid in creating a militant leadership based upon a progressive program and supported by an informed and active membership. Simultaneously, we must seek to win over the many good elements in the Stalinist caucuses who are attracted to them by their current pseudo-militant line, which ultimately rests upon a desire to embarrass United States foreign policy and not upon a wish to benefit the working class.

The war drive will force most of the non-Stalinist labor leadership more and more into the war pattern, of which the attack against

the Stalinists is the first step. The labor leadership will once again be asked to give a no-strike pledge, endorse incentive pay, and more--much more. The question of union democracy, always a problem (particularly in the AFL and in some sections of the CIO), does not occupy first place in the thinking of a majority of workers today. But it is an issue which, under the impact of the war drive, will become a burning one. We must carefully guard and extend the democratic traditions of the United States labor movement, beginning now with the attacks against the Communist Party, in which the labor bureaucracy is playing a leading role, nearly always on an unprogressive basis.

We must also oppose the creeping campaign being waged against civil liberties by means of loyalty purges, guilt by association, FBI and Army and Navy Intelligence intervention in union affairs, wire-tapping and other measures which smack of the totalitarian state. We must help to re-establish the right to the holding of all political opinions within the labor movement without discrimination and not excluding the Communist Party.

II.

(1) The first step toward implementing this program must be the reconstitution of the national labor committee of the Workers Party on a functioning basis. The responsibility for the operation of this committee will, in the first instance, reside with the Political Committee, but it can be sustained only by the cooperation and the initiative of the branches and individual comrades in the field.

(2) The national labor committee will provide year-round guidance of the trade union work based upon the following conceptions:

(a) The new orientation of the party does not mean a slackening off of our trade union work. On the contrary, our analysis of the probable genesis of the labor party movement gives the trade union work greater importance than before. Work in the unions must remain the main axis of our activity. We must seek to involve the maximum possible number of comrades in such work and attempt to establish concentrations in selected plants where we now have either isolated individuals (many times in excellent positions) or no comrades at all.

(b) In the coming period we must increase our political propaganda in the shops, though, as we have already indicated, not to the exclusion of demands based on wages and working conditions. This is dictated to us by a number of factors: (1) our role as a propaganda group, particularly in respect to labor party and anti-war propaganda, (2) the modest size of our forces, which mandates a husbanding of time and energy, and (3) our aim to recruit advanced elements, which in many cases--notably in the UAW--cannot be done on the trade union level of consciousness since such elements are as skilled as we are in practical trade union work and since, in any event, trade union problems are increasingly becoming political ones.

As an immediate step, LABOR ACTION, which enjoys exceptional status among advanced elements in the union movement, must

achieve the larger circulation that-its unique character and its possibilities warrant. It shall be the task of the Political Committee to devise and prosecute a program for increasing the number of shop readers of LABOR ACTION. The same is true, in one degree or another, with our other party literature.

As before, our comrades must participate in the normal routine of union life, firmly maintaining a just proportion between the minutiae of that life and the larger propaganda aims we are seeking to serve on a modest, possible scale.

(c) In the past period there has developed a tendency among our comrades to accept relatively high offices in union and in area bodies. While in the next period such posts can prove of value, especially in initiating labor party sentiment, the closest scrutiny must be given to each concrete opportunity which is presented to us. Though we cannot lay down a blanket prohibition, this tendency must, in general, be discouraged, for in the past period the results have been the following: isolation from a mass base, tapering-off of our political propoganda, failure to recruit or even to establish a circle of worker sympathizers for the party, and alienation from the party proper.

(d) We must continue our efforts to recruit from the shop. It is unquestionably true that our failure to grow is primarily based upon objective conditions, by which we mean: (1) the present high level of employment, (2) the traditional political backwardness of the United States working class, (3) the pervasive influence of Stalinism, and (4) the anti-radical drive of the government, which is achieving its intention of making workers wary of radical parties.

But it is impossible not to feel that, given all this, we are not exploiting the possibilities which the dynamics of the domestic situation (and to a lesser degree, the international one) afford us. It is obligatory upon every individual and branch to reassess our recruiting techniques from the point of view of the direct, personal, sustained and political effort to recruit workers to our movement, and, once recruited, to hold them. The recruiting of a few informed workers to our party, bringing to us a measure of the combativeness, confidence, and strength which they have so abundantly demonstrated in the post-war years, would go a long way toward restoring the flagging vitality of some sections of our party.

POLITICAL COMMITTEE

#

2299

RESOLUTION ON TRADE UNION QUESTION

I. WHERE DOES LABOR STAND TODAY?

The labor movement in the U.S. particularly the CIO has recently passed through a period of exaltation over the part it played in the defeat of the Republican Party and the election of President Truman. This exaltation and enthusiasm was expressed in the phrase, "We won." What the labor leaders mean by this is that organized labor won, that the victory of Truman and the defeat of Dewey could not have been achieved without the planned and organized, detailed and persistent activity of such organizations as the PAC and the AFL-LLPE.

After the elections and in preparation for the opening of the 81st Congress, organized labor began to turn its attention to organizing its program for the consideration of Congress. This labor program presumably was to be based on all the varied experiences of labor and the working class over the past few years: the war years and the post-war experiences. What were these experiences? First of all, the whole of the working class is fully aware that labor permitted itself to become enmeshed in support of the Second Imperialist War, and the "foreign policy of the President (Roosevelt)." Labor had permitted the union bureaucracy to give a no-strike pledge in its name without first seeking the permission of the union membership.

The reward given labor after the war by the capitalist ruling class for its support and collaboration during the war was the Taft-Hartley Act, the most reactionary legislation enacted in the United States since labor organization had been legalized. Also, the capitalist ruling class persisted in its program for ever higher prices, the pegging of wages, opposition to Federal Housing and the ever-recurring demand for injunctions from the Federal courts.

The Government bureaucracy, on its part, also sought injunctions and got them. The Truman government threatened to use the troops to run the trains and the merchant marine. This government initiated the indictment of the UMWA and sat in at its conviction. Furthermore, in the words of Philip Murray, the Truman government program for aiding the people was merely "quack medicine."

Workers were confused and bewildered by the developments which confronted their organizations following the war in which they had given support to the Government and the employers. The trade union leadership was not much help because they were busy trying to maintain their leadership and control. The strikes for a year following the war were organized and controlled completely from the top and in the most bureaucratic manner. There were "national wage patterns," government formulas for wage increases. The labor leadership usually accepted the government awards.

At the first opportunity for registering its opinion at the polls, the 1946 Congressional elections, labor found itself without

even the political leadership which was in evidence at the Presidential election two years before. The PAC had all but left the field. The elections were an overwhelming victory for the Republican Party which assumed control of Congress. This Republican victory and the attitude of Truman created a situation bordering on panic in the ranks of the labor bureaucracy. As for the rank and file, it only knew that labor was on the defensive and not in position to do much fighting.

Labor's leadership, however, had really learned nothing from its many unfortunate experiences with the "friends of labor" in Congress and the White House. Even after the passage of the vicious Taft-Hartley Act and the threats of Truman to use the armed forces to break strikes, the leaders of labor were prepared to fall in behind the war preparation plans of the ruling class, the Government anti-Stalinist drive and as one further act of homage to the capitalist ruling class, to block all motion toward independent political action and to order labor to go out and win for the Democratic Party in the 1948 elections.

The labor leadership with no program of its own in connection with militarism, war preparations, Stalinism and U. S. imperialism, is forced always to take its lead from the bourgeoisie and its government at Washington. When the U.S. and Russia were allies during the war, the trade union bureaucracy and the Stalinist bureaucrats were allies. When the alliance between Russia and the U.S. was broken, the trade union leadership began a campaign to "drive the communists from the unions." When the ERP was announced and the law passed, the trade union officialdom accepted it without a question and only demanded that the labor movement, that is, the bureaucracy, have a seat on ERP boards and committees.

This continued political bankruptcy of the trade union command has not tended to clarify the issues before labor or to aid the working class in combatting its enemies. The Government proceeds apace with its war plans. The bourgeoisie holds on to its plans to squeeze out the last ounce of profit and to hold wages low enough to accomplish its aims.

Both labor federations have programs. The leading aspect of their programs right now is demanding that the Truman government carry out its "campaign promises." The chief demand, of course, is for the repeal of the Taft-Hartley law. Each federation plans also to continue its political organization. Both are now engaged in discussions on ways and means of carrying on year-round activity and in preparation of the 1950 Congressional elections.

The labor leaders forget or wilfully ignore the fact that they have no machinery today for bringing pressure either on Congress or on Truman, that is, not at least for two years. They have only the machinery which they used effectively to put the Democratic Party in office. This machinery was merely a vote-getting mechanism which the trade union bureaucrats put at the service of the Democrats every four years. Its name should be Labor's Organization for the Election of the Candidates Put Up by the Democratic

Party and the Defeat of Those Put Up by the Republican Party. This would be a truthful description of the functions of the PAC and the LLPE.

It is true that both the CIO and AFL are organizing and perfecting political machines styled after the bourgeois political machines of the Republican and Democratic Parties. Also they plan to carry on political activity all year 'round in the manner of the two capitalist political machines. There is no question that this activity will be efficiently organized and operated. These machines will also be bureaucratically operated. There will be no semblance of democratic control or even democratic representation from the general membership.

This attitude on the part of the bureaucracy is rooted, of course, in their class collaboration. The concrete application of class collaboration in this connection is the attitude of the labor bureaucracy that there shall be no independent political action by labor; that is, no labor party. Also the bureaucracy does not look kindly on any organization of workers which would make more difficult the complete domination of labor by the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is astute enough to know that the mere process of getting a labor party started would require the democratic participation of masses of workers, would release the workers from the hold exercised by the leadership in the economic organizations and bring a new leadership to the fore from the ranks of labor. Also, the bureaucracy fear that any freedom acquired by the workers in a political direction would also give the Marxists greater freedom of propaganda in the ranks of labor.

Both the CIO and AFL organized and perfect their bureaucratic political machines. They will be called "labor's political arm." This will not be true, however. Both the CIO and AFL machines will be only bigger and better committees for the election of "the friends of labor" and the defeat of "the enemies of labor." Both the "friends" and the "enemies" will come from the capitalist ruling class, as heretofore.

The two machines will be working class only in composition. In program and orientation they will be bourgeois-democratic. They will have not only the structure of the capitalist parties but also the basic program of the capitalist parties. Ideologically these machines will be merely a sort of left wing inside the Democratic Party. Its function will be to protect the Democratic Party from the assaults of the Republican Party, to retain the Democrats in office and to keep pressure on the Democratic Party government to adopt labor's trade union program.

These trade union political machines cannot be considered a step in the direction of independent political action. Their chief function is to serve as a brake on the movement to independent political action. The bureaucrats function here exactly as they do in connection with the economic demands of the workers in the unions. They know that they must get something for the membership to keep the ranks in line and to maintain their leadership. Therefore the leadership bargain with the employers; sometimes militantly, sometimes hat in hand, usually without the democratic participation of the membership.

As labor political leaders the bureaucracy operates similarly. The masses are groping toward working class political action. Again they must be kept in hand for to get out of hand in political thinking is far worse than in economic action. That is worse for the labor bureaucracy. Hence the trade union leadership places itself on top of the ferment and organize "labor's political machine." Again they go hat in hand, this time to the White House and to "friendly Congressmen."

Labor is right where it was before the election. "We won" but we can't count our profits yet. Truman still has the power to demand injunctions. The courts are ready to grant injunctions freely. The capitalist employer is set against another "round" of wage increases. The capitalist ruling class still has it within its power to hike prices and profits. The Government remains the creature and the servant of the bourgeoisie. Labor has no weapon and no authority with which to halt and defeat the ruling class in its strides into the Third Imperialist War. Labor should ask itself; "What did we win last November 2nd?" Labor is in politics, but as the water boy of the Democratic Party.

Labor must have its own party. The workers are ready for independent political action and the formation of a mass labor party. It is only the leadership and a minority of reactionary workers who are opposed to the labor party. While it is not thoroughly understood, the notion of independent political action by labor is well developed. The chief thing lacking is sufficient Marxist forces in the unions to develop the sentiment to the proper climax, or the alternative of one of the labor bureaucrats, for his own or unknown reasons, to decide to raise the banner of the labor party. The absence of either of these alternatives throws the matter into the lap of those militants who favor independent political action and who are ready to act. These militants can and should form small but definite labor party groups and become centers for the propagation of labor party sentiment and education. The WP can do some of this. There is no need now for any gradualist approach to the labor party question. This may have been a justified course ten years ago but not now. With what labor has already learned through practice, the propaganda of the Marxists and the successes of the British Labor Party, labor's political ignorance is not as extensive as ten years ago. To take a gradualist position or a compromise position is only to tail end the trade leadership or to become collaborators with this leadership in retarding the coming of the labor party.

Before this situation can be corrected it will be necessary for the ranks of the unions to assert themselves and demand full democratic rights for the trade union membership. This is not the condition today in the unions. The membership does not make decisions on important and decisive issues. This is true in lower bodies and at the national conventions of the federations that a few hollow democratic forms are hauled out for display but any genuine democratic procedure and discussion are circumvented by the "rules" of the convention and by decrees from the chair.

The union membership has tolerated this situation for too long. It will be impossible for the unions to make any further progress which they can hold without opening up the whole labor movement to full and free discussion of all important questions. Not only the fullest and freest discussion but full and free opportunity of the membership to vote and decide the question. Right now there can be free and prolonged discussion in a CIO convention of the resolution on "Philip Murray" but not of the resolution on "Political Action." Every delegate has the opportunity to participate in the applause for Justice Douglas but not to put in a minority resolution. Every delegate has the opportunity to serve on a committee to escort some priest or rabbi to the platform, but not to express his point of view and have it freely voted on.

The AFL is far worse than the CIO. It is more effectively bureaucratized. Its leading bureaucrats are older, have been at the job longer and have a more favorable situation due to the composition and structure of the AFL craft unions.

It is imperative that the ranks of the AFL and CIO both begin asserting themselves in the direction of opening up the unions to democratic and free discussion and decision by the lower units, that is by the locals. It is necessary for a struggle to be initiated for having the majority of the delegates in the conventions come from the ranks down in the locals. This is necessary even if a total revision of the method of electing delegates is required. This is imperative if the complete bureaucratization of the labor movement is to be avoided.

This free discussion and decision by vote of the entire membership should apply to such questions as the calling of strikes, ending strikes, wage proposals and agreements, political action, support of candidates, attitude toward the ERP, universal military training, government war policy, labor on government boards, etc. Authority should not be delegated to executive boards to settle such issues. It goes without saying that if any executive board or officer should usurp such authority, such officer or board should be thoroughly rebuked by the membership.

This is a bare essential if the labor movement and the working class are to mature and really become what labor should become. This will not only be of tremendous educational value to labor but it will also increase self-respect and competence. Such a step is necessary in the interest of efficiency; both political and organizational.

"We won," -- for the Democratic Party. This is now said to be the same thing as winning for labor, for the working class. This propaganda is put forward not only by regular labor Democrats but also by ambitious persons who deserted the socialist movement to join the Roosevelt revolution. These people and some of their dupes seem to have the belief that the Democratic Party was captured by labor last November. They will soon discover the opposite, that is, that the labor movement was captured by Truman and McGrath

There is no one in the top leadership of the union today who

can be depended on to take any independent stand for independent political action. This was demonstrated at the last CIO convention in the cowardly conduct of Emil Mazey around the so-called resolution on political action. Mazey, an outspoken protagonist of independent political action for a year before the convention, folded up completely at Portland and resorted to the usual "radical" demagoguery of those whose politics is compounded of bombast, submissiveness and holding on to one's place on the payroll.

Those who are persuaded of the correctness of the labor party notion must carry the banner of the labor party, not of the PAC, the LPEL or of that newly constructed political wraith known as "labor's political machine." For labor really to make progress politically what is required is just the kind of campaign which brought the CIO into being. The CIO could never have been born by a series of side hops and retreats, no matter how clever. It was a move too big and too decisive in the evolution of the labor movement to be formed from continual shiftings and slogan grinding. The real delineation of the industrial union concept did not come until Lewis took the lead with the necessary and correct singleness of purpose: to form industrial unions. The objective conditions were mature and the sentiment was there among the mass of mass production workers. Similar conditions exist today in connection with the labor party. Objective conditions are mature and the ranks are willing. There is no need, therefore, for any flank approach to the question.

The Workers Party has often advocated that labor should assert itself, step forward and assume the leadership of the nation. Labor has not even made a beginning in playing this role. For labor to become the leader of the nation does not mean for labor to stay tied to the Democratic Party. Labor cannot lead the nation with vain boasting about winning so long as labor is the captive of the Democratic Party. Labor cannot be the leader of the nation and divide its votes between the Republican and Democratic Parties or by voting for the "progressives in both parties." Labor can only protest its own interests by becoming the leader of the nation.

Labor as leader of the nation, as an independent political force and organization is an opponent of war and the war preparations. Labor in such a role can demand and secure an economy devoted to the production of consumer supplies and materials and not to war equipment. Labor as leader of the nation can secure the annual wage, pensions paid for by the employer, health insurance, socialized medicine, adequate educational facilities and decent homes. Labor as leader of the nation could guarantee the passage of the civil rights program so that all the people could have the same civil rights as called for in the Constitution.

This remains the big task before labor today. It is no less urgent than before the election of Truman. The present Congress is not the workers' Congress. It is no more a workers' Congress than was the 80th Congress. The task before the labor movement is the formation of labor's own political instrument, labor's own political party.

The Party is limited in what it can do by its small forces. This should not interfere, however, with the quality of what work we are able to do. The meagreness of our forces and the gigantic size of the task before us should prompt us to put forth Herculean efforts to increase our size and thereby our effectiveness. Almost every trade union resolution of the Party since its founding has dealt with this question. The Party began back in 1941 with a clear cut orientation which was called the "proletarian orientation" of the Party. Our constant slogan was "Into the Factory." The trade union resolution of the 1941 convention read: "It must be emphasized that the political success of our Party, in the shops and unions...will result only from previous shop and union leadership. A party not rooted in the factories will have slight chance of assuming political leadership of the proletariat...the whole party must have this orientation...All, the entire Party work and organization must be reoriented to the end that the main focal point becomes the factory, the shop and the union...This is not solely the task of the Trade Union Department. It is just as much the task of the Education Department and the Finance Department."

This resolution closes with the provision that "each member of the Party not in a factory must be interviewed to discover his or her reason for not taking a factory job." "Each branch should select a factory for the distribution of Labor Action..." We must ask ourselves what has happened to this orientation of 1941? There are more factories to work in now than then and millions more workers to distribute LABOR ACTION to.

The trade union resolution of the March 1941 plenum said: "The Party member is above all, the political teacher of the worker. Advancing the political understanding of the workers is the paramount function of the revolutionary. This must not be subordinated to the ...trade union function...In all our work in the unions and in the factory the Party must be conscious of the urgent need for recruitment. This is the supreme test of the soundness of our politics and our tactics. Recruitment is the final judge of the effectiveness of our political propaganda and agitation."

In the written trade union report of Comrade Wilson to the March 1942 plenum we read: "I can state the whole point I want to make in bluntest fashion, by saying, that no Party member is worth a damn unless he has recruited a fellow worker within a year of his being in a plant!... After Pearl Harbor...our people proceeded with greatest caution in advancing their political program. But the tendency over-reached itself...the average militant worker is far more radical...than our own people. All that we ask is that our friends at least catch up with the advanced workers."

The resolution of the Third Convention, 1944, said: "It is especially necessary and urgent that the Party push forward in the factories with the program of socialism...Members of the fraction must become known to selected workers in each plant as Party members and revolutionaries...the aim of the fraction must be the creation not merely of 'progressive groups' but of revolutionary cells in the shops composed of new recruits to the Party from among the indigenous factory workers...Every fraction member should be put to the iron test of his value in the factory being based solely on the pro-

gress made in acquiring political leadership and in recruiting. To have any other test is to make of the fraction a mere aggregation of job holders at attractive wages, dodgers, or mere money contributors to the Party."

The resolution of the 1945 Active Workers Conference: "The Tasks of the Party in the Trade Unions" was a special resolution to take care of the theoretical and political indoctrination of the Party in a more extensive way than we attempted before or since in any trade union resolution. This resolution did not deal at all with the situation in the unions but solely with the aims and program of the Party for the unions. The resolution opened as follows: "The central aim of the Party in the unions is to establish its influence, leadership and prestige as a revolutionary socialist party: to impel the working class to organize militant struggle around a program of economic demands, to orient the unions to independent political action; and by our activity, our loyalty, our inspiration and teaching to build the road over which increasing numbers of militant proletarians find their way into the Party.... We cannot do our trade union work in the old way...the WP member is not a 'pure and simple' trade unionist. He is not merely a trade union organizer even while functioning formally in such a post... the Party member must have a...deeper conception of the trade union and its possibilities than the bureaucracy or the membership... To have a 'line' for the unions and not to use it or to become bogged down in trade union routine to the detriment of 'political work' along the lines indicated by the Party is to fall into an insidious form of 'Gomperism'...The practical activity of our trade unionists must be based consciously on the political line of the WP. All that has been said in the report of Comrade S is particularly applicable at this point...To be homogeneous in an ideological, political and organizational sense, or to become so in the course of common activity together, is the necessary prerequisite for effective trade union work...In order to carry on our work effectively as revolutionary socialist politicians in the unions it is necessary that the WP be the most outspoken proponent of inner union democracy...The Party must be prepared...from the standpoint of theory and experience... Ignorance, even though articulate and lack of experience, even though joined to good intentions, are not the proper credentials for leadership of the working class...Following this conference we must in fact carry through a campaign around our LP slogan...In view of the tremendous victory of the LPGB in the recent elections, our LP slogan takes on the utmost significance for the U.S."

The trade union resolution of the 1946 Convention said: "We cannot talk about our perspectives in the trade unions...until we face frankly the situation in which the Party finds itself today. With the close of the war the trade union work of the Party was all but disestablished...the Party found itself out of the factory and out of the active life of the unions...If the Party is to grow and prosper it must not substitute other types of activity for the factory and the union...The most excellent political and trade union resolutions cannot be a substitute for the living experience of participation in the life and organized activities of the real working class...The main problem for us today is the organizational problem of getting the Party back into industry, back into the unions... The Party cannot afford to and must not tolerate in its ranks, fol-

lowing the convention, those who refuse to accept the factory and trade union orientation of the Party...For the WP new 'proletarianization of the Party' must mean the recruitment of genuine proletarians to the Party...The convention must tell the National Committee that the preparation for carrying through these provisions must begin with the National Committee itself."

In a resolution: "The Present Tasks of the Party in the Unions" written by the National Labor Secretary for the 1947 Active Workers Conference the following appeared: "Before we can discuss, in any fruitful way, the tasks of the Party in the unions, we must pose the question of increasing the Party membership in the factory and the unions...we must begin with the assumption that every able-bodied member, male and female must take a job in the factory... Every member excused by a Branch from factory occupation should be reported to the PC or its designated body, for review and final decision...We must reverse the trend out of the factory which set in after the war was ended." "...the Marxist revolutionary militant has another role to play; a distinctly propaganda role. He must propagate the Party political line and the doctrines of socialism among the workers. It is the latter function that the WP must give its attention to now and the latter role that the WP member must assume in ever-increasing degree in the factory and the union...It does mean, however, increasing boldness in the presentation of the concepts of socialism and the definite political views and program of the Party...The aim and goal of our political propaganda for the coming months must be the indoctrination of a small group of workers with our political ideas and the Party program...The Party program, "The Fight for Socialism" is a basic piece of literature to use in our propaganda activity...The struggle against the bureaucracy in the union must be a positive struggle...to win the ranks to a new program; the program of socialism, the program of the Party. This means in practice, that the bulk of the time of the Party member in the union must be consumed by activity in the lower ranks of the union..."

This resolution was rejected by the National Committee just before the 1947 Active Workers Conference.

The excerpts given demonstrate that the Party has not been without guidance in literary form. A separate resolution was adopted on the Stalinist question and the attitude of the Party on the conflict between Stalinists and the "American" trade union bureaucracy. There was a separate resolution on the PAC following the 1946 elections. Every question, without exception, before the labor movement is dealt with in extant trade union and political resolutions. The Party has enough trade union resolutions. What is needed is more trade unionists, more inclination of the present trade unionists to carry out the provisions of former resolutions and a Party leadership with the will, the courage and the ability to enforce decisions after they have been arrived at.

Heretofore our outstanding struggle in the unions has been against the Stalinists. We are generally known as the leading political adversaries of the Stalinists. While it is necessary to continue this campaign it is also necessary to give more attention to differentiating ourselves from the native trade union bureaucracy. There are three main reasons for this. (1) The Stalinists are not the active danger in the labor movement which they formerly were. (2) It is necessary not only to point out the character of the Murray-Green-Reuther-Lewis opposition to the Stalinists but to expose more adequately that the attitude of the union top leadership is an integral part of their collaboration with the capitalist ruling class. (3) It is important to emphasize that in the U.S. particularly it is the capitalist-imperialists who are the main enemy. We have the task now of continuing our exposure of the Stalinists but also to display adequately our differences with the bureaucracy.

Not only are we in political disagreement with the Stalinists and the bureaucracy, the Party member must also bear in mind that we also have political differences with the rank and file. They do not accept our political program but the program of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie. This creates a situation requiring on the part of the Party member; patience, a firm grasp of the Party program and great skill in presenting it.

The practical platform of each party trade unionist and of the Party fractions can have the following points: (1) The struggle for internal union democracy. This can be given a very concrete form. (2) A campaign to put the anti-Stalinist drive on a correct and progressive base. (3) A campaign to increase the activity of the union for the Civil Rights Program. (4) A campaign of political education and propaganda. This campaign should be aimed at the exposure of bourgeois politics, U.S. imperialism. The capstone of this propaganda should be the demand for the formation of the labor party.

This is a modest program of union activity which the Party can engage in actively. The Party is equipped for this activity. If carried out, tangible results will come to the Party. The trade union movement is at a higher level than ever before. It is a part of the responsibility of the WP to convert at least a small part of this new political awakening into full class conscious political understanding.

E. R. MCKINNEY

2309