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POLITICAL RESOLUTION

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POLITICAL RESOLUTION

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I.

U.S. IMPERIALISM PREPARES FOR WAR

The period since the outbreak of the Korean war in June 1950 marks a decisive turning point in the evolution of American imperialism. It has crystallized all the political and economic processes set into motion at the conclusion of World War II and especially since the inauguration of the "cold war." In that time American imperialism has erupted on the international arena as the open, aggressive center and driving force of world counter-revolution.

Preparations for war against the USSR, Eastern Europe and China have been accelerated in all spheres: appropriations for the war budget have been substantially increased, an ever larger sector of national production is being committed to the war economy, strategic raw materials are being cornered and stockpiled in an American monopoly in tremendous quantities. Unremitting pressure, in total disregard of economic consequences, has been brought to bear on the so-called "Atlantic Community" to hasten their rearmament and the constitution of a Western European Army with a revised German Wehrmacht the central force. By reducing the "rations" of Western Europe on the world market, by diverting a large part of financial aid from economic to military purposes, by virtually banning East-West trade, U.S. imperialism has deepened the crisis in Western European countries, at the same time increasing their dependent position to the point of satellite status. The reluctance of the European bourgeoisie to follow the reckless war plans of the State Department has its counter-part in their utter impotence to resist or to initiate any independent policy.

In the Far East, the Middle East and North Africa the U.S. has become the chief bulwark of counter-revolution against the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. The former policy of supplanting the old Empires by demagogically courting independence movements and by minimum grants of economic aid has been drastically revised. With the emergence of the New China, the military and social relationship of forces in the Orient has been completely altered, leaving no other alternative for the U.S. than to base itself on the remnants of colonial rule, the native feudal-reactionary forces and its own military power. This policy is most clearly expressed in the Japanese Peace Treaty which aims to reconstitute Japan as the central base for the war against China and the developing colonial revolutions.

U.S. imperialism is not merely buttressing the remnants of the British and French Empires, but by subordinating their military forces to its command or by making them completely dependent on American aid and equipment, it is preparing its own eventual emergence as the dominant power in those areas. The same process is at work in the Middle East and North Africa where economic rivalry has been temporarily muted in the common struggle against the colonial revolutions and by the building of powerful military bases in North Africa and by the constant pressure for the creation of a Middle East Command as the springboard for an attack against Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and as the chief force for counter-revolution in that area. Combining the struggle against the colonial revolutions with its preparations for war against

the Soviet Union, the U.S. drives the colonial peoples into a common bloc of anti-imperialist resistance and paves the way for a cataclysmic explosion of imperialist rule on a world scale.

The full consequences of its aggression in Korea was not clearly apparent to American ruling circles until MacArthur's defeat in the winter of 1950. These events precipitated "The Great Debate" and decided two vital questions over the character and scope of the Third World War. All previous conceptions that Asia could temporarily be ignored or by-passed in favor of a uniquely Atlantic strategy were exploded by China's entry into the war on the side of the North Koreans. Truman and Acheson merely added the program of the Pacific "isolationists" to their own. MacArthur's victory in principle -- that a war with China was unavoidable -- was the main cause for his demise since U.S. imperialism had to pause for far more elaborate military preparations before it could embark on such a gigantic project. "Two fronts" -- the entire world -- was obviously to be the battleground for the Third World War.

At the same time the Korean war completely compromised the strategy pursued by the State Department since the inception of the "cold war" as embodied in the Kennan plan of "containment" and "calculated risk" and in the Truman Doctrine. The uninterrupted development of colonial uprisings excludes the possibility of imperialism coping with these developments one at a time except at the cost of an unceasing drain in men and material as has been demonstrated by the colonial wars in Indochina and Malaya and is now further being corroborated by the Korean experience. Only one alternative, the most difficult one, remains before U.S. imperialism: a direct assault on the USSR itself which directly or indirectly regardless of the aims of the Kremlin constitutes a source of strength to the revolutionary movements on the periphery of world power.

A significant aspect of the "Great Debate" was the position taken by that tendency in the ranks of the American bourgeoisie represented by Herbert Hoover. It emphasized the impossibility of victory in a global conflict against colonial revolutions in the East and without reliable allies in Europe. It could envisage no other outcome of the conflict than world chaos, the exhaustion of America's resources and its impoverishment. Its proposal to withdraw within the "safe" confines of the American hemisphere signified its readiness to abandon the world ambitions of U.S. imperialism. But the result of such a policy could be nothing else than the strangulation of the American economy in its own national confines and the consequent eruption of gigantic class battles.

Even though similar moods of doubt and hesitation, produced by the enormity of the scope of the world counter-revolutionary war facing U.S. imperialism, exist in other ruling class circles, the Hoover position is still premature and rather fore-shadows one variant for the future of the American bourgeoisie when it is overwhelmed with defeats and with insurmountable contradictions in the world and at home.

For the present, the "Great Debate" has been terminated by a consolidation of bourgeois opinion around a perspective of global conflict. More and more, differences have narrowed down to time-tables, to the scope and effects of the war plans being elaborated in the Pentagon.

II.

CONTRADICTIONS OF THE WAR ECONOMY

The tempo of the war drive is now governed by two primary factors: the development of the class struggle in Europe, Asia and Africa on the one hand and the contradictions of the American economy on the other. However, the schedule of the war drive is more closely determined by the workings of the American capitalist economic machine than by any other factor.

Two tendencies have been running a race in the American economy since the end of the Second World War. The first is the tendency toward a relapse into the unresolved depression of the Thirties and the second is the tendency toward a war economy.

The last great depression of American capitalism, temporarily submerged by the war of 1941-46, was briefly held in check after the war by the pent-up consumer demand which emerged from the war backed by some consumer savings and veterans' demobilization pay, etc. By 1949, despite the fact that the government was diverting a four or five times greater percentage of the total national produce to war production than prior to the war, the depression had begun to reassert itself quite strongly. The economy was on a toboggan slide, and unemployment climbed rapidly to almost six percent of the working class. With the Korean war and the vast increase in the portion of national production going to the war machine, with the revival of government deficit spending which purchased a portion of the nation's goods that could not be disposed of through normal consumer channels, the equilibrium was again temporarily restored.

The sickness of the American economy is inflamed and aggravated by the enormous productivity of the working class operating the most productive machine in the history of mankind. The war economy is therefore the very worst remedy possible. It drives production and productivity ever upward at an accelerated pace, aggravating the sickness beyond description while affording a brief extension of feverish life to the economy.

With every injection of the war-economy stimulant, the needs of the capitalist economy grow greater. In 1949 business went into a nosedive despite the fact that between seven and ten percent of the national product was war goods sold on the immensely profitable government market. After Korea, the stimulant was almost doubled, with possibly fifteen percent going for war. This worked well for awhile, but at the present time we see strong "deflationary tendencies" once again, despite the fact that the dosage is rising all the time, with a goal of about one-fourth of the national product for war set for the next year.

Not is this all. The flourishing imperialist nations of the pre-World War I epoch, of which Great Britain was the prime example, found their temporary basis for capitalist stability in foreign trade and

investment. This possibility is closed to United States capitalism. Both foreign trade and investment have formed a constantly declining portion of the total U.S. economy since the Twenties. At the present time, chances of the exploitation of foreign lands are being closed off to capitalism at an unprecedented rate and in an unprecedented manner: by the sweep of the colonial and proletarian revolutionary movements.

Thus we have the picture of a single capitalist nation equipped with a productive machine greater than that possessed by the entire capitalist world in its prosperous heyday, confined to a far smaller capitalist world which is everywhere in a state of crisis, and largely excluded from the colonial world by a wall of revolutionary fire. This is a picture of doom for United States capitalism.

The equilibrium of American capitalism at the present time, based as it is upon a breakneck race between crisis and war economy, is an equilibrium of dynamic components. The unprecedented growth of production in a narrowing world and domestic market is counter-balanced by the unprecedented growth of the peacetime war budget. It is clear that the slightest relaxation of the war drive conjures up the immediate spectre of depression and collapse in the sole remaining bastion of world capitalism. This depression, the capitalist class well knows, would be all the more explosive for having been artificially repressed over a period of years by means which only aggravate the crisis tendencies. It is quite obvious therefore that the capitalist class will move heaven and earth to plunge the nation into war before the explosion of the American economy.

It must be kept in mind, however, that the present equilibrium of U.S. economy, loaded with explosives though its basis may be, is an equilibrium nevertheless. It provides full employment for the American workers on an unprecedented scale, and has continued to provide a large outpouring of consumers' goods for the people, even though this flow is beginning to diminish. In contrast with the workers and peasants of almost all the rest of the world, the working people of this country continue to live in an island of plenty surrounded by a sea of misery. Since the workers will be impelled on the road of struggle only by important changes in their material status, it is clear that the American social crisis waits upon the destruction of the present explosive equilibrium by either war or crisis.

That is not to say that the coming period will not witness important economic struggles. Depressions in specific industries, mostly of the consumers' goods variety, can cause sharp clashes. Moreover, the working class, since the outbreak of the Korean war, has been subjected to a considerable erosion of living standards, which are being reduced by rising prices and rising taxes. This erosion will grow worse as an ever larger sector of production is devoted to war purposes, and will increase the social tensions.

But the great social struggles will come only with the rupture of the present precarious balance. Until that comes, the turning point between social compromise and social explosion cannot be expected.

III.

LABOR AND THE WAR DRIVE

Although on occasion they utter criticisms of the worst excesses of capitalist reaction the union officialdom continues to give wholehearted support to the bi-partisan foreign policy of the "anti-communist" drive of U.S. imperialism. They lined up solidly behind U.S. intervention in Korea. They are the main factor preventing labor from taking its rightful place as the leader of the people in resisting the war plans of imperialism and blocking the drive toward a police state. This bureaucracy serves as the main social and political agency among the masses in reinforcing the trends toward reaction and paralyzing the fight against the warmakers.

Of course the labor bureaucrats cannot suppress all manifestations of hostility to capitalist militarization. But the prime source of the workers' resistance does not spring from class conscious opposition to imperialism or its war program but from their resentment against its inescapable economic effects. The high cost of living, boosted taxes and rents, with all the consequent undermining of real wages and living standards, goad the workers into resistance. Discontent is aroused by the unemployment resulting from the switch to arms production, as in auto, and by the restriction of construction, as among the building trades. The workers are further angered by the fantastic profits of the corporations and the ineffectiveness of price and profit controls in the face of the attempted wage freeze.

All these conditions stimulate the spirit of resistance against the assaults upon the working and living standards and prepare outbreaks of industrial struggles.

The number of workers participating in strikes last year was the smallest in the postwar period, and in several important places there were even majority votes against taking strike action. This reflects in part the dawning realization that wage and other key demands are settled through Washington and not simply by a direct test of strength between the employers and the union.

Amid this general decline in strike activity, new and fresh layers of workers have nevertheless been impelled into struggle. Several important wildcat stoppages have taken place against worsened conditions and in some cases against the union bureaucracy, like the strikes of the N.Y. longshoremen, in auto, in steel and elsewhere. This defensive struggle has extended deep into the white-collar workers, who, like the AFL Prudential insurance agents, have undertaken militant union actions. Significantly, these white-collar workers have from the start adopted techniques of the class struggle, practiced and popularized by the industrial workers, and have applied them to good effect.

In these struggles the unions have to contend not only with the corporations but with the government agencies behind them. All the burning economic questions of wages, prices, employment, go to Washing-

ton and are decided by federal agents. Under these circumstances the problems of government intervention in union affairs and the class nature of this government have become paramount in the life of the labor movement. Lewis and a certain section of the AFL bureaucracy seek to escape from government by echoing the proposals of capitalist "free enterprise" to abolish "all controls." And this at a time when it's becoming ever more clear that either the government will completely control labor or labor must control the government and determine its policies.

The critical state of labor's relations with the government was high-lighted in February 1951 by organized labor's withdrawal from the Wage Stabilization setup. This break confronted the labor bureaucrats with a fateful decision. Either they had to go forward to a definitive rupture with Truman and the capitalist political machines and take the road of class struggle, or they had to crawl back into servile collaboration with the capitalist administration, in return for vague promises.

Ever since the organization of the CIO, American labor has grappled with the political alternative of staying captive to the twin parties of capitalism or of entering upon a new road of independent political action and organization. During the Second World War, the labor bureaucracy was forced to clash time and again with the government wage boards, in an effort to satisfy the wage demands of the union ranks. Each time -- even in the case of the miners -- the conflict was resolved with the government's granting secondary wage concessions to the workers, with the labor bureaucracy thereupon rushing back to re-cement the class-collaborationist alliance. The recent ULPC's walkout from the Wage Stabilization Board was the latest of this type of break, with the conflict resolved, as heretofore, by the capitalist government tossing a few concessions to the workers, in return for maintaining its close grip on the labor movement as a whole. When these concessions relating to living standards will no longer be made, the clashes will become more protracted and embittered, and the class struggle in America will take on new sustained and far-reaching forms.

Despite their complaints, the closer the great decision comes, the more hesitant and fearful these bureaucrats are to cut loose from the Truman administration. Because this involves not only a deep break with their own past but the sacrifice of material advantages they derive from class collaboration. And above all because they fear to set into motion forces which they are not sure of controlling. For the time being no organized Left Wing moving toward independent political action exists in the unions. Meanwhile none of the basic grievances which generated the friction and rift with Truman in 1951 have been disposed of. This problem is raised by the 1952 presidential campaign which poses again the entire question of labor's role in American politics.

Thus far the revulsion against the old two-party system has expressed itself in negative ways: by the indifference of the workers to the appeals from the CIO-PAC and the weakness of AFL's Labor League for Political Action; by the workers' refusal to register and vote; by widespread criticism of the present course, echoed even in top circles where now and then lip-service is given to the need for independent political action -- sometime in the indefinite future.

But the drive toward militarism, the worsening of living conditions, the attacks on democratic rights and the denials of civil rights to the

Negroes, government intervention, the insolence of Big Business, the growing recognition of the identity of the Demo-Republican parties and programs, are provoking protests in the mass, sowing seeds of discontent, stirring a ferment among the workers and preparing the premises for a major regroupment in American politics. All the broadening, deepening, basic causes arousing unrest continue to operate on the background of this unresolved political crisis of American labor. This dictates that the militants multiply their efforts in the unions to help clarify the gathering political ferment and further any moves toward progressive breaks away from traditional collaborationist policies and in the direction of independent political action by labor.

IV.

THE CAUSES OF LABOR CONSERVATISM AND THE PREMISES FOR A NEW RADICALIZATION

The class struggle in the United States is today in a state of quiescence. How long will the present passivity endure and what will bring about a deepgoing change in the situation? In order to answer these questions on the outlook of the class struggle, it is first essential to understand the main cause for current conditions.

The American people have passed through 11 years of virtually uninterrupted prosperity and relatively full employment, however artificially induced. In this respect they have been part beneficiaries of the world-wide preponderance, exploitation and victorious wars of U.S. imperialism. These basic material factors have set their seal upon the consciousness and outlook of the American masses and are responsible for their acceptance of the capitalist system and its ideas. This is also the prime source of routinism, conservatism and lack of class consciousness discernible among the workers, especially the better-paid.

These material circumstances have aided American rulers to put over their "anti-Communist" propaganda; have enabled the labor bureaucracy to tighten their hold on the unions and eased their efforts to quarantine the socialist vanguard in the labor movement; and held back the workers from clarifying their class thinking and establishing independent political organizations on a par with workers elsewhere in the world.

This does not mean that the big events and experiences of the post-war period have passed without effect upon the American people. The impact of militarization especially has already begun to produce certain shifts in the moods and minds of some parts of the population. The more critical among them are carefully observing the powers above them, and are less duped and confused by their lies. They are interested in such fundamental problems of world and national affairs as war and peace, the colonial uprisings, the USSR and government policy.

The whole course of American imperialism abroad mingled with the aggravation of their personal and class problems is leading the working people to view the great issues of our society in a broader way. Until recently, to consider problems in global terms was the mark of a radical; today attention to world problems is becoming an every day matter. However retarded or confused its first manifestations are, this serves to overcome the traditional provincialism of the workers and makes them more accessible to socialist ideas and education.

Owing to the manifold and unceasing discrimination against them, the Negroes often sense more quickly and react to new trends in American society. The repressions against the colored people have not lessened, but they have started to acquire some new forms. Lynching is being replaced by bombings of Negro homes, legal murders and other methods of Jim-Crow terrors.

At the same time, thanks to their experiences and improved organization over the past decade, the Negroes are better able to react promptly and militantly against such outrages. This new stage in the Negro struggle has been most clearly reflected in the Harry Moore case. The conservative NAACP leadership has gone so far as to call for a national one-day work stoppage to protest Moore's murder and the inaction of the authorities. Shifts of this type are important not only to gauge the advancement of the Negro movement for equality but because the Negroes, who are most subject and sensitive to the injustices of capitalist society, are able to anticipate parallel shifts in other segments of the population.

The present generation of youth, who are being drafted and face universal military training, keenly feel the lack of security in their lives. Their restlessness has yet to be translated into organized thinking, actions or movements, and on the whole the youth remains as yet non-political. But they bear the full burdens of militarism and are its first victims. This mounting discontent among the youth should help the more courageous among them to make their way toward socialist views.

Twenty million women are already at work in American economy, and millions more will be brought into industry as the war program unfolds. At the same time the economic consequences of militarization weigh most heavily upon the housewives and the war casualties upon the wives and mothers. The bitter protests against keeping the boys in Korea is a foretaste of the vigorous role American women will play in the struggle against the rise of militarism in America.

All these influences are at work beneath the surface helping to prepare the next turn in the situation. However, it must be recognized that they have far from matured to the point of introducing a decisive change in the relation of class forces. The symptoms of discontent which flare up in the unions subside after a time and remain episodic. There is no wide-scale anti-war movement among the masses.

There must be a big shakeup in the whole situation before the psychology of the workers passes from conservatism to new struggles and radicalism. So long as the capitalist rulers can maintain and expand their arms program without wrecking the present high living standards, no decisive change can be expected.

However, it is out of the consequences of the arms program that the forces will be set into motion to undermine the stability of class relations. If the combination of guns and butter reinforces the present passivity, the inescapable necessity to reduce or remove the butter to pay for the guns will jolt it. Rich and productive as it is, American economy cannot provide both guns and butter for a prolonged period.

The economic consequences of the militarization and its inflation will hit the working masses ever harder. Their reaction against these blows at their living conditions will most likely be first and most forcibly manifested in stirrings and outbursts of struggles in and by the unions. These struggles will run up against fierce hostility, resistance and repression from the capitalist regime. The government will try to stifle these struggles by proceeding against the rights of the unions and the struggles will count many victims. Mounting attacks upon the labor organizations and refusal to satisfy their elementary demands will lead the workers to link their struggles with the general movement to defend civil rights.

Thus the renewal of labor radicalism is most likely to begin from the resistance of the workers to the economic and political consequences of the war program at home.

The class struggle could also be spurred by the outbreak of a political crisis in the country arising from serious difficulties and reverses of the U.S. imperialists in the application of their diplomatic and military plans to dominate the world. The repercussions after the Korean reverses afforded a preview of this kind of development. The spectacle of the colonial revolutions and especially the growing opposition of the British and Western European workers to the war-plans of Washington would serve to sharpen criticism and questioning among the organized workers regarding foreign policy.

V.

PERSPECTIVES OF A NEW RADICALIZATION

What political forms will the next big leftward swing of labor take and who will lead it? It is not excluded that under the influence of cataclysmic events provoked by the war drive or the war itself, the new radicalization can leap over the heads of the union bureaucracy and assume open revolutionary forms in which Stalinism, Trotskyism and some type of left social democracy compete for the direct leadership of the mass movement as a whole. This, however, is the least likely course of development. More probably the workers will seek to transform and utilize the instruments of mass power already in existence, i.e., the unions, into the agency of their struggle against the monopolies, the war machine and the state. While such a development will in all likelihood take such organic forms as the creation of a mass labor party headed by a section of the labor bureaucracy, the conditions of the rise of such a party amidst war, defeats, economic catastrophe preclude any slow development on the early British model. From the outset, as in the days of the formation of the CIO, the likelihood is that the radicals will play a decisive role in the ranks and that the first stages will be marked by a struggle between the various tendencies on the left, particularly the Stalinists and ourselves for leadership of the large cadres of advanced and revolutionary worker militants who will move quicker and further in their political development than the masses as a whole.

The prospective role of the Stalinists in the new leftward upsurge cannot be expected to parallel the role they played in the radicalization of the Thirties which culminated in the rise of the CIO. Their past record, the greater skill and power of the new bureaucracy, the

conditions of the war will tend to circumscribe Stalinist influence and make them one group of many in the left wing instead of the dominant force they were in the Thirties.

Much, indeed in the final analysis, all, depends on what our party is able to do in the situation as it unfolds, and no less what it can accomplish in the preparatory stage immediately ahead. If our party maintains a clear and consistent course of independent struggle over the next period, and succeeds in taking advantage of all opportunities for strengthening its forces and positions, it can have an excellent chance of emerging at the head of the decisive core of the newly radicalized workers, or at least as the most formidable opponent of all the other contenders.

This perspective is fortified when we compare the ways in which our party and its rivals are meeting the severe tests of the current reaction.

The combination of prosperity and high employment with the fierce reaction stemming from the war-drive has exerted terrific pressures upon all parties of the left, and even bourgeois-liberal groups. In this harsh environment our movement, along with the others, has undergone losses, experienced victimizations, and found itself forced to make retreats. These are by no means ended.

What is more significant, however, is that our party has stood up far better in this difficult situation than any other minority party, group or tendency. With correct policies based upon a realistic appraisal of the existing situation and its trends and a firm stand on principled positions against all pressures, we have been able to hold losses to a minimum, and have continued to recruit new people. Here and there our cadres have made gains which can provide valuable footholds when the next wave of radicalization comes.

The growing withdrawal of other parties from the electoral arena makes it easier for the SWP to present itself as the sole, authentic representative of socialism and the most uncompromising opponent of the capitalist parties. In a number of places our party is emerging as the sole voice of socialist struggle against the war and the witch-hunt and runs the only anti-capitalist and anti-war candidates in elections.

This was outstanding in the recent Council elections in New York City where for the first time in this key center we were the only socialist party on the ballot. The moribund Socialist Party, which with rare exceptions, has given up its own campaigns, supported the victorious "independent" capitalist candidate Halley -- with the Shachtmanites tagging along. Although the vote received was small, our New York Local conducted the most vigorous, extensive and successful of its election campaigns.

The work of our party has been and continues to be fundamentally directed toward influencing, winning and recruiting leftward moving militants among the organized workers -- especially in the CIO -- who owe no allegiance to any radical party. This is our main field of work. The Communist Party is our opponent in this field. Wherever we encounter the Stalinists in the mass movement our tactic is to challenge

and combat their ideas and influence with our own program as part of our struggle for the leadership of the American workers' vanguard.

Our chief opponent in the struggle for the allegiance of the radical-minded workers in the electoral field today is the Progressive Party, which includes the Stalinists as its dominant force. It is the only other party which places its main propaganda emphasis on opposition to the war plans of American imperialism and to the witch-hunt. As such, despite its bourgeois-liberal program, it continues to provide a point of attraction for present and awakening groups of radical workers and students who, despite limited numbers, constitute a large part of the existing organized anti-war movement.

The relationship of forces between the SWP and the PP is more favorable today than in 1948 when the PP was a broad mass movement headed by popular political figures, supported by all the Stalinist controlled unions then still largely intact, and was sufficiently representative of mass discontent with the two old parties to force Truman to swing sharply to the left in the midst of the campaign in order to win the election.

A combination of many factors have reduced the size and effectiveness of the PP. Outstanding among these was the desertion of Wallace, Taylor and other prominent bourgeois politicians and ex-New Dealers, the intimidating effects of the witch-hunt on the labor and Negro movement. Shorn of its bourgeois allies, who put the stamp of a popular front coalition on the party in its heyday, the PP survives today as an alliance between independent radicals, petty-bourgeois politicians and intellectuals on the one side and the Stalinists on the other who play the dominant role providing most of the cadres and active manpower.

This change in the character of the party has removed it from the arena of direct competition with the big capitalist parties and placed it in the camp of radical left-wing politics. In the absence of possibilities of electoral victories as the result of combinations with the major parties, the tendency both toward a more independent role and toward a more radical program becomes more pronounced in the ranks of the party. The program of "progressive capitalism," which presupposes bourgeois allies, is more and more divorced from the realities of the present situation and creates dissatisfaction in the ranks and conflict with the petty-bourgeois and Stalinist leadership.

Our attitude toward the Progressive Party must be determined by the following considerations: That it is the sole electoral organization of importance in the anti-imperialist camp besides ourselves; that it still groups around itself a considerable number of radical workers and students; that the coalition policy of the leadership is in contradiction with the desires and aspirations of a part of its membership and following.

In fighting the PP for the support of the radical workers our propaganda tactics must be devised toward exposing the fundamental fallacy of its basic program while demonstrating by example how a realistic anti-war struggle is conducted. On the other hand, a carefully formulated program of fraction work where warranted by the situation and not in conflict with the needs of our election campaign, united front proposals on specific issues relating to democratic rights, the struggle

against war and the Negro question, can help raise the socialist political level of the rank and file and widen the differentiation between them and the Stalinist-liberal leadership. We must not allow Stalinist domination over these radical-minded workers and students to go unchallenged.

As to the Stalinist Party itself: three significant differences characterize the CP today as compared with the past:

1. Under relentless hammering from the bourgeoisie and the labor bureaucracy, and as a result of their own crimes and betrayals, the forces and activities of the Communist Party have constantly declined. The virtually illegalized CP has been driven underground to a very large extent. Its forces largely function behind the cover and through the channels of their various peace fronts and mobilizations, the Civil Rights Congress, the Progressive Party, etc.

However, it should be noted that these blows come all from the right, from official reaction. The Stalinists have not been supplanted in the unions and mass organizations by more radical opponents in the midst of rising class activity but by conservative, reactionary elements in a period of ebb-tide of the class struggle. This tends to mitigate the moral effect of the blows received, to veil the war-time betrayals of Stalinism and may possibly gain them some broader sympathy as the witch-hunt extends to broader layers of the labor and liberal movement.

2. For almost five years the Stalinists have been thrust into a position of opposition to U.S. imperialism and to the official labor bureaucracy. Except for the brief interlude of their alliance with Wallace they have been completely cut off from all allies in that camp. This has not come about because of any policy or design on their part but as a result of the evolution of the American and world situation. Important changes have occurred as a result in the outlook and composition of the CP membership and its immediate periphery. Petty bourgeois, careerist and opportunist types who swarmed around the CP during the palmy days of Roosevelt and the war have abandoned it in droves. What remains of the whittled-down party are a large cadre of corrupted functionaries, old case-hardened Stalinists, and others who are prepared to suffer the full consequences of the repression, who completely identify themselves with the camp of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China and who tend to become more and more revolutionary in their outlook and conceptions than at any time since the ultra-leftist "Third Period."

3. The changed position of the CP in relation to official bourgeois society and the altered conceptions of the rank and file as to the tasks of the party clashes directly with the unchanging orientation of the Stalinist leadership. Under the tutelage of the Kremlin and because of their own conservative, opportunistic background, the bureaucrats continue to pursue the same type of peoples' front, class collaborationist policy they did in the Thirties and the Forties, adapted now to the various "peace" campaigns launched from Moscow. In fact they are more prepared to abandon independent class politics, to support bourgeois politicians on the flimsiest grounds than are some of their petty-bourgeois allies in and around the Progressive Party. The anachronism of this policy is not only that it produces no results and that the isolation of the CP worsens but that with each failure the

Stalinist leaders shout louder for a "progressive coalition" and condemn those who want to "go it alone." The utter lack of realism, not to speak of lack of success of the policy of their leadership creates serious moods of discontent, questioning and restiveness among the rank and file. The "Browderism" of the present leadership becomes more frustrating than the policy of Browder himself who actually had powerful bourgeois and union allies. The moods of discontent are further aggravated by the fact that the sources of authority in the party, because of the jailings and its illegal condition, are no longer clearly discernible or established in the eyes of the membership.

These conditions properly utilized place us in a favorable position to undermine the influence of the CP leadership among their rank and file, to divert some of their new recruits in our direction and even to win adherents from them directly.

In the forthcoming presidential election campaign, as in all our public activity, we have the opportunity to demonstrate on the broad arena of working class politics how revolutionary socialists conduct the struggle against the threatened war against the USSR, Eastern Europe, China and the revolutionary workers' movements. This propaganda, put directly, positively in all its revolutionary implications will have a strong impact on the Stalinist ranks who cannot fail to notice the real Leninism as contrasted with the spurious variety peddled by their own leadership. The conditions will thus be created for a polemic with Stalinism before a Stalinist audience which can only yield favorable results.

An important question in regard to our attitude to the Stalinists, and not only the Stalinists, is that of the proposal for a Five-Power Peace Conference. To the Kremlin bureaucracy this slogan is aimed at reestablishing international class collaboration for which it is prepared to sacrifice working class and colonial revolutionary movements. For the Stalinist bureaucrats here it becomes a device to reinstate some form of Peoples Front. But for those outside their ranks it is a form of expressing discontent with the policies of the State Department and for the Stalinist rank and file it signifies a means of opposition and exposure of the aggressive drive of U.S. imperialism to war. Our press must explain both aspects of this question.

While we mercilessly expose and denounce the treacherous aims of Kremlin diplomacy, we cannot oppose the proposal for a Five-Power conference any more than we can advocate it. What we must insist upon is that there can be no effective struggle for peace without the independent mobilization of the masses against imperialism. Wherever the proposal for a Five-Power conference is made in any workers' organization we should amend it with our demand for a referendum on war, for the withdrawal of the troops, the recognition of China, etc. Such a tactic will deprive the Stalinists of their spurious charge that we reject practical measures short of socialism in the struggle against war. At the same time it will give the anti-war movement more radical class forms which is precisely what the Stalinists wish to avoid in their aim of establishing a "broad coalition" for peace.

Our tactics toward the Stalinist ranks will gain in effectiveness by combining the propagandist methods already described with a consistent policy of loyally supporting them against repression and of press-

ing them for united actions in defense of democratic rights. Such a position places the Stalinist leaders in an impossible situation. They cannot admit that Trotskyists can have a principled class position on the witch-hunt and they cannot permit the proximity of our membership with theirs. Yet it has been clearly demonstrated that they cannot oppose our participation in such actions without exposing themselves as unscrupulous factionalists, endangering their remaining non-party support and creating dissatisfaction in their own ranks.

Regardless of immediate gains, the long-range aim of this tactic is to break down the hostility the Stalinist leaders have erected against Trotskyism. Once this barrier of slander and suspicion is removed and Stalinist workers can judge with some objectivity between the policies of the two parties, our political program will more than compensate for our inferior numbers in the struggle for the allegiance of the advanced workers. This tactic is a necessary supplement to our main course of struggling for influence and leadership over the principal body of trade union militants and politically unorganized workers.

* * *

The Communist Party, however, is not the dominant force in the American workers' movement as it is in France, Italy and some parts of Asia nor is it likely to rise to that position in the next wave of radicalization. The great bulk of the American working class still remain politically unorganized and attached to the capitalist parties and our main strategic orientation in this country flows from that fact. The raising of the workers from trade union to political class consciousness, the transformation of their great industrial power into independent class political action remains the principal political orientation and strategy of the party. Given the small specific gravity of our party on the American scene no other course can have significance to the trade union militants who begin to think in terms of challenging the formidable power of the monopolies and the state.

The slogan of the labor party is not only the most realistic way to approach the worker at his present level of consciousness but it must become the principal plank in the program of any left wing that arises to challenge the trade union bureaucracy. Every social problem in the United States turns directly on the disparity between the great power of the organized labor movement and its political impotence. Not the least of these is the Negro problem whose solution is dependent on a firm alliance with the working class movement. But this alliance cannot be really effected until labor breaks with the capitalist parties and enters the political arena in its own name.

In effect, all of our present activities are predicated on the formation of a labor party in the next upsurge of the American workers. ~~Work in the unions~~, mass organization and electoral activity aims at the creation of experienced cadres of revolutionists who can take the helm of the left wing of the labor party when it comes into being, and at the popularization of the SWP and its program so it can make its impact on the new party from the outset. Even if, in the outside case, the labor party does not come into being, and the mass upsurge takes another form, our advocacy of the slogan would still have been one of the principal means of building the SWP just as agitation for industrial unionism was one of the chief means of building of all radical parties prior to the formation of the CIO.

The fact that labor party sentiment is now at low ebb does not mean that workers are today more inclined to socialist ideas. On the contrary they can be reached with socialist ideas only if these are linked to the labor party as the organization formula for moving masses into motion against inflation, the witch-hunt and the war.

Unless the 1952 election becomes a contest between Taft and a Democratic-labor candidate -- between "reaction and labor" -- the labor party slogan, given the complete helplessness of the union movement in face of Eisenhower, will be far more effective than in previous elections and will tend to turn trade union militants in our direction.

The perspective guiding our party must flow from the maximum of the possibilities inherent in the general situation, not the minimum. We intend to challenge and engage in direct combat all rivals for the leadership of the advanced workers. Our job now is to prepare the most favorable position even under the present unfavorable circumstances to achieve this goal when the new rise in the class struggle comes. This outlook must inspire and guide the tasks set for the party in 1952.

VI.

TASKS OF THE SWP IN 1952

1. The central task of our party in 1952 is its presidential campaign. Participation in the elections under the party's banner must take precedence over all other activities and the party's entire work from now until November must be geared into this campaign. Maximum efforts must be made to place national candidates on the ballot and, where this is beyond realization, to run candidates for lesser office to present our national program to the voters.

A general pattern for this campaign was drawn in 1948 and has been applied in our electoral work since then. Our party and its candidates must come forward as the spokesmen for revolutionary socialism in opposition to capitalism and its war program, and all its political parties and supporters. We do not simply champion socialism as "a good thing" in the abstract but present our class standpoint in connection with all the burning issues of the day. The most important of these is the fight against imperialist war and its capitalist instigators.

Our fight against the war is based on the specific character of the impending conflict and should seek to avoid the mere repetition of such truisms that the contradictions of capitalism are the chief cause of wars, etc. What we must demonstrate in our propaganda is that precisely because of these contradictions U.S. imperialism is driven to prepare a war to carry out its world counter-revolutionary plans, which requires the destruction of nationalized property relations in the USSR and Eastern Europe, the strangling of revolutionary China and the stemming of the tide of colonial revolutions. The experience of the Marshall Plan, the dismal collapse of Chiang Kai-shek, the failure of the strategy of containment show that there is no other way for capitalism to avoid being overwhelmed by the mighty tide of world revolutionary developments than by a murderous onslaught of atom bomb terror and of direct military intervention against the insurgent peoples in vast areas of the world.

1. We must demonstrate that U.S. imperialism is clearly the aggressor in this conflict. This is factually apparent in the actual operations of the State Department and the Pentagon -- in Europe and in Asia, in the drive for German rearmament and in the Japanese Peace Treaty, in America's conduct in the Korean "cease fire" negotiations as in the creation of a North Atlantic Army and the construction of a ring of military bases encircling the USSR.

The destruction of capitalist property relationships and the abolition of capitalist rule is historically progressive. The reactionary nature of the Soviet bureaucracy flows not from any acts of "aggression" it may commit against capitalist states but from the contrary, that it impedes or betrays the struggle for the extension of the revolution.

What is involved here is a question of leadership in a historically progressive cause and movement. It is obvious therefore that American workers must first come to accept that "cause" as progressive before they can intelligently concern themselves with the problems of leadership and program in that movement. It is only by presenting our ideas with this emphasis and in this sequence that we can counteract the psychology implanted in the American workers of accepting American imperialism as the "lesser evil" in the coming conflict.

2. Our propaganda against the war must take the present level of consciousness of the American people as its point of departure. They are not internationalist in outlook, they do not identify themselves with the struggles of the European workers, let alone of the colonial peoples. They are primarily concerned with preserving and improving their standard of living which they do not see in relationship with world developments and the war. What we must demonstrate is the impossibility of any easy victories or of any victory whatever in such a war; that the U.S. will be virtually isolated without any reliable allies in a conflict of greater scope than any war in the past; that the U.S. will not escape the devastating effects of the coming war as it did in the past; that there will be millions of casualties, the exhaustion of our wealth and resources with the consequent impoverishment of the people, the regimentation of labor, the destruction of all democratic rights, etc. The threat to living standards and democratic rights comes not from "Communist aggression" but from the war plans of U.S. imperialism -- that must be our emphasis.

3. The struggle against the war is integrally connected with all other aspects of our anti-capitalist propaganda. Inflation, the witch-hunt, attacks on labor's living standards flow not merely from the needs of imperialist war in general but from this particular kind of war. Counter-revolutionary aims on the world arena favor and stimulate reaction on all fronts at home, in fact, require it. The prototypes for a land committed to counter-revolution are to be found in Hitler Germany, in Japan and in Czarist Russia. From a political and economic viewpoint -- from the mentality of the militarists as well as from the all-consuming needs of the war machine -- powerful independent trade unions are equally as intolerable in the land of the counter-revolution as are land reforms and the nationalization of property in the countries against which the war is directed.

The issue before the American people is not whether "American democracy" is superior to "Communist totalitarianism" but that the inevitable counterpart of the war against Communism is the destruction of democracy and the imposition of the most vicious forms of capitalist reaction at home. It is McCarthy, not Truman, who is the most faithful domestic representative of the world program of U.S. imperialism and it is the influence of McCarthyism which grows in direct ratio to the proximity of the war while Truman's declines, despite the fact that he has adopted most of McCarthy's program. To accept the anti-Communist war means in effect to abandon any effective struggle against McCarthyism as has already been made quite plain by the impotence of the union officialdom, the liberals and social democrats in face of the witch-hunt. An understanding of the direct link between these two aspects of the same question will serve as the basis of the radicalization of individuals and groups today and of broader masses tomorrow.

We should try to present our full program to the widest audience. Broad participation in the 1952 presidential campaign not only corresponds to our overall conception of the role and prospects of our party in the American class struggle. As part of our campaign for elementary democratic rights, it can serve to protect the party and its members against reaction and assaults upon the free functioning of our movement.

2. Our election campaign should stimulate and aid the work of our members in the trade unions. We must strive to maintain as many ties as possible in the unions and to penetrate more deeply into them. Members should use opportunities afforded by the arms boom to become integrated in the labor movement and non-worker comrades should be encouraged and assisted to enter the factories and stay there.

This activity conforms to our appraisal of the most probable course of development of the class struggle. As the economic consequences of the inflation and war program unfolds and hit the working masses harder, the next wave of radicalization will very likely first and most forcibly manifest itself through stirrings of struggle in the unions. Unless these movements are clarified, guided, and organized by a new Left Wing, they can prove abortive -- and a new Left Wing cannot fulfil its purposes without the participation of our party and its program.

3. The new stage of militancy in the Negro resistance to discrimination and the new techniques of Jim-Crow terror brought to bear against them, have already been noted. Incident upon incident arouses indignation and impels the Negroes into organized protest. Our party should continue and expand its support to all actions against Jim Crow undertaken by the NAACP, in the plants and in the neighborhoods.

In and through these activities our comrades must seek to educate the best militants we meet among the Negro people on the basic causes of the Jim-Crow system and convince them that the full emancipation of the Negro people can be achieved only through the struggle for the socialist revolution. In this way we can enlarge the Negro cadres of our party and help give the Negro people the kind of leadership they need in their daily struggles for food, clothing and shelter and civil rights and their joint struggles with other workers for a better world.

4. The best guarantee of the optimistic fighting morale in the party ranks in times of reaction and stagnation is the world view and

historical perspective derived from Marxism. The party must continue and extend its work of systematic education in Marxism through study courses and other means to heighten the theoretical understanding of our members. The party press and its spokesmen should take advantage of opportunities to challenge the ideological defenders of capitalism as well as to conduct polemics against the falsifications of Marxism coming from the Stalinist, Social Democrats or centrists.

5. A number of branches have made a beginning in work among the youth. Special efforts must be made to reach the younger generation, no matter how slow the progress or meager the initial results. Our party's future largely depends upon its success in attracting radicalized youth and teaching them to understand that the answer to their problems can be found only in socialism. Branches should pay attention to acquiring contacts among the university students so that the most inquiring minds can find a path to our movement.

6. Over the past decade our party has distinguished itself as a defender of civil rights for all. The struggle against the witch-hunt and the moves toward military-police dictatorship has become an ever more important sector in the fight against the war plans of the capitalist rulers. The campaigns initiated or the movement supported by our party in this field such as the Kutcher case, the protection of Negro rights, the challenge of the restrictions on minority parties, etc. must be carried to their conclusion. Branches should remain alert to join whatever important actions against violations of democratic rights occur in their localities.