

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

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## PRE-CONVENTION DISCUSSION MATERIAL

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## PC RESOLUTION ON THE WALLACE CANDIDACY

(Adopted by the February 1948 Plenum of the National Committee)

1. The Political Committee at its meeting on December 30 characterized the Wallace third-party movement as a capitalist splinter party unworthy of critical support by the revolutionary workers. As an alternative to the Wallace party, and as an immediate tactical proposal at this stage of the 1948 Presidential campaign, the PC put forward the demand for a United Labor Conference of all international and local unions in Washington, D.C. to launch an independent Labor Party which would run its own candidates. The purpose of this proposal was to counterpose, at least in propaganda form, the idea of independent working class political action to the Popular Front adventure of the Wallace-Stalinist cohorts. This proposal is also designed as a step in the propagandistic preparation for the nomination of our own presidential candidate at a later stage.

2. In subsequent correspondence several NC members have posed the possibility of the SWP giving critical support to the Wallace third party, entering the movement, and working from within to reshape it along genuine Labor Party lines. This proposal is presented as a tactical maneuver to utilize the possibilities afforded by the Wallace movement to switch the workers attracted to it onto the Labor Party track.

3. In determining the attitude of the Marxist party toward a political formation like the Wallace movement, it would be incorrect to proceed from purely or mainly tactical considerations -- and even these mainly local in scope -- or guesses on the possibilities of exploiting it to good advantage. That is the wrong end from which to begin. This new political current must first of all be approached from the standpoint of class principle.

4. How did the Wallace third party come into existence? What forces are behind it? What is its class character? What role does it play in the political life of the country today? The answers to these fundamental questions will enable us to define our position toward the Wallace movement, to appraise its prospects and most probable course of development, and to devise appropriate tactical moves in the party's dealings with it.

5. The Wallace party emerges as a consummation of the fight, primarily over foreign policy, waged within the Democratic Party since Roosevelt's death and the end of the war. This has been and remains a purely tactical fight rigidly restricted within the principled framework of capitalist class politics. The class character of the Wallace party, as a capitalist splinter party, is not altered either by its petty bourgeois composition or by the penetration of its apparatus by Stalinists and fellow-travelers. Objectively, the Wallace party expresses the interests and outlook

of those elements among the ruling class who believe it expedient to conciliate the labor movement at home and the Kremlin abroad. Their stamp is placed upon the movement by Wallace, the millionaire publisher, self-proclaimed defender of capitalism and "Americanism." This ex-Secretary of Agriculture and Vice-President under Roosevelt and Secretary of Commerce under Truman holds the reins of the movement in his own hands.

6. Neither is the character of the Wallace movement altered by the fact that the monopolists are at present united in opposing it. Big Business today, drunk with power and bent on world domination, is opposed to any policy of conciliation either in domestic or foreign affairs. Wallace cannot hope for any sizeable support from decisive capitalist circles at the present time. But under different circumstances, at a later stage of the development of the capitalist crisis, they could easily turn to him, as they once turned to Roosevelt, as a means of heading off an independent class movement of the workers.

7. Wallace's third-party program and propaganda are cleverly designed as an anti-war, pro-labor, liberal alternative to the Truman party of war, depression, and assaults on labor's rights and civil liberties. That is why it evokes a response among workers and Negroes who take its phrases and promises at face value and cherish illusions about the progressiveness of Wallace. But this fairly wide mass sympathy for Wallace is by no means a sufficient reason for us to participate in his party or to give it a critical endorsement, for it does not alter the fundamental character of the movement nor impart to it a labor party character. Roosevelt and other bourgeois demagogues have had far greater allegiance from organized labor without meriting or receiving the slightest endorsement from the revolutionary vanguard.

8. What is the real relationship of forces within the Wallace camp? The liberal bourgeois politician Wallace personally dominates and directs the party, setting its tone and formulating its policy. He is subject to control by no one. The Stalinists, concerned solely with their pressure campaign for a compromise agreement between Washington and the Kremlin, obediently follow in his footsteps while the organized labor movement is conspicuously absent. Actually, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois liberals are in command, the Stalinists serve as their lieutenants, and the ranks trail along. The unions have no ways and means of exercising control over Wallace, his party, or his program. Under these circumstances millions of votes garnered by Wallace can enhance his personal influence and prestige, increase his bargaining power in negotiations with the Democratic leaders, and give him all the greater independence from the labor movement.

9. A genuine mass political party of labor cannot be built in this country without the participation and support of the unions. The established economic organs of the working class provide the only serious and solid foundations for the independent political activity and organization of American labor. Thus the indispensable

minimum requirement for giving critical support to a third-party movement is that it be based upon a significant section of organized labor and subject to its control and pressure.

10. The Wallace party does not emerge as a political expression, however inadequate and perverted, of the unions. It arises out of the failure of the union bureaucrats to provide a new political path for the workers. It cannot be regarded as an aid to independent political labor organization but as a spurious "progressive" substitute for a Labor Party. Wallace has moved in to fill the vacuum left by the absence of a genuine Labor Party and to capitalize upon the widespread revulsion against the Democrats and Republicans and the desire for a new political road.

11. Apart from its relations with the union movement, the Wallace formation has not even as yet completely detached itself from the Democratic Party. Wallace has announced plans to back liberal Democrats and progressive Republicans in 1948. He has left the door open to make peace with the Democratic high command after the 1948 campaign, and possibly before, and lead his "Gideon's band" back into that cesspool. The destiny of the movement hangs upon this single individual and his ambitions.

12. Those inclined to accept the tactic of jumping into this movement should pause before this possibility. What the revolutionists now appear to forfeit by their principled opposition to the Wallace venture can equally well be turned to advantage in the event of its collapse and capitulation to the Democratic Party.

13. The general argument is advanced that since the success of any third party depends upon labor support, the Wallace movement must inevitably gravitate in that direction. If, therefore, the militants plunge into this movement with full force, it will be possible to switch it from its present wrong course over onto the Labor Party track.

14. The premise of this reasoning is false. There have been, and there will very likely be, numerous different kinds of split-offs from the two-party system: bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, Stalinist, etc. Each one of these movements must be independently appraised in order to determine its political nature and our attitude and tactics toward it.

15. The relationship of forces and the constitution of the Wallace movement makes it extremely dubious that the intervention of our small party would effect any noticeable change in its course or character. In fact, we would be nothing but another knot in the tail of Wallace's kite, providing a left cover for his Popular Front demagogy.

16. But because of its primarily non-working class character, we could not support the Wallace movement, even if the relationship of forces were more favorable. The principal function of this

capitalist splinter party is to deceive the workers with demagogy against Big Business rule and to take command of the anti-war and anti-imperialist struggle of the masses in order to sell it out sooner or later.

17. Despite attempts to belittle the Wallace movement, it will undoubtedly attract considerable popular support and it seriously imperils Truman's re-election. Moreover, the Wallace candidacy not only damages the presidential prospects of the Democrats but delivers a blow to the two-party system. That is the most favorable factor to its credit from the standpoint of political progress. This break with the Democratic Party helps to shatter the hold of the two-party setup upon the workers and to unsettle the whole political situation, setting new political trends and ideas in motion and raising more sharply the question of labor's independent role in politics. This heightening of political conflict can be utilized to blast away at the servility of the labor bureaucrats to the Democratic machine, to advance the need for the Labor Party -- and to expose the deficiencies of the Wallace-Stalinist adventure as a substitute for a labor party and an answer to labor's political problems.

18. But these objective consequences flowing from the emergence of the Wallace movement cannot provide justification for its support. Such a decision must be based upon an analysis and estimate of the essential nature of this third party at its present stage of development. It is these fundamental considerations which dictate the following attitude toward Wallace's third party.

a. Principled opposition to this political adventure headed by an ambitious capitalist politician and backed by the Stalinists with the aim of channeling anti-war sentiment, exploiting the discontent with the capitalist regime, and making a deal with his former Democratic associates at home and a deal with the Kremlin on the field of foreign affairs.

b. Sharp exposure of its fake "peace" program, its subservience to imperialism, its reformist panaceas, and false methods of struggle against war and capitalist domination. Instead of joining the Wallace party or giving it critical support, we must counterpose our working class program and methods of struggle against the war danger and capitalist evils to the Wallace phrasemongers and Stalinist sell-out artists. At the same time, in our criticism of the Wallace movement, it is important to acknowledge the validity of many of its arguments against the present bi-partisan government and its policies. These constitute a common bond between us and the rank and file supporters of this movement and differentiate our condemnation of Wallace from the utterly reactionary opposition of the labor bureaucrats.

c. The union militants must combat both the Wallace-Stalinist third party and the policy of the AFL and CIO bureaucrats in

supporting the old-line capitalist parties and candidates. They must continue to fight for the formation of a genuine party of labor, based upon and controlled by the unions.

January 13, 1948

(Note: The vote on this resolution at the February 1948 Plenum follows:

NC members: for, 22; against, 1; abstaining, 4.  
Consultative vote: for, 5; against, 0;  
abstaining, 3.)

ELECTION POLICY IN 1948

By James P. Cannon

(Report to the February Plenum of the National Committee)

The approach of the 1948 national elections confronts the party with the necessity of making a decision on election policy. The new developments -- particularly the emergence of the Wallace party -- created some differences of opinion in our ranks. These differences must be discussed and clarified. I think we can best arrive at a correct decision on our election policy for 1948 if we re-state the fundamental considerations that have guided us in respect to the whole question of working class political action, and deduce our conclusions from this re-statement.

We proceed from a principle line. The basic aim of our principle line is to assist the development of independent political action by the workers and turn it towards a revolutionary culmination.

We are not the only tendency in the labor movement holding the view that the participation of the workers, as an independent force in politics, is advisable and necessary. There are two basic conceptions about the question of independent working class politics which is concretized broadly in this country in the proposal for the formation of an independent labor party.

There is the reformist conception that a labor party, by its very nature, must necessarily be a reformist party, and that reformism is a necessary and inevitable stage of the development of a working class political movement. Against that is the Marxist conception that a reformist stage of working class politics is not necessary and not preferable; we do not advocate that the workers pass through a stage of reformism on the road to revolutionary Marxist politics.

What we do advocate is the revolutionary party of the working class which formulates the program of its historical interests. And this line of ours -- the advocacy of revolutionary Marxist working class politics -- never changes. It persists through all stages of development of the movement. When and if the development of the workers along the lines of political action takes a different turn, a reformist detour, we never accept that as correct, but we adopt a tactical attitude toward it. We never lose ourselves in a reformist political movement of the workers and satisfy ourselves with it.

In adopting a tactical attitude ("critical support") toward a labor party, even though it may begin with a reformist program, our aim always remains the same; that is, to advance the revolutionary program of the working class and to build the revolutionary party.

In the early years of the crisis of the Thirties the nature and tempo of the prospective development of the working class in the political sense remained undetermined. As we viewed the question then, there were two possibilities: (1) There might be a stormy development of labor radicalism that would find its expression in the growth of a mass revolutionary workers' party; or (2) the development might take place at a slower tempo, through a program of social reformism. But in any case Trotsky did not hesitate to predict that a mass workers' party was in the making; would be one of the fruits of the great crisis of the Thirties which for the first time shook up the American working class and impelled it toward political thought and action.

The Lovestoneites, at that time, jubilantly seized upon Trotsky's prediction as a confirmation of their theory; they equated a labor party with a reformist party, and they quoted Trotsky's prognosis as a vindication of their theory that this was an inevitable development. Trotsky objected to this interpretation. That does not necessarily follow, he said. It remains to be seen, he contended, whether the mass party of the workers, which comes out of the crisis, will be a revolutionary or reformist party at its inception. And he insisted that it was our task to advocate a revolutionary workers' party and oppose the conception of a reformist workers' party.

The crisis produced everything that was demanded and expected of it by the Marxist, if not in the exact form predicted and at the tempo expected and hoped for. The crisis unquestionably produced the CIO; that is, it prepared all the conditions for the tumultuous development of the industrial union movement with the beginning of the upturn of the production cycle. The CIO was not a traditional trade union movement, as known in America -- based on the crafts with their conservatism and special interests -- but a broad class movement based on the factory workers, the basic proletariat. It was a semi-political movement with profound revolutionary implications. Looked at correctly, we could say the CIO, from the moment it began to assume mass form, was an incipient labor party in itself.

### The Labor Party Movement

The rate at which the CIO developed, in relation to the numerical growth of the revolutionary workers' party, produced a tremendous disproportion between the size and scope of the movement of the Marxist vanguard and that of the awakening mass. The CIO grew stormily and embraced millions, whereas the Marxist party advanced slowly, inch by inch, recruiting members one by one. It was this disproportion between the rate of development of the revolutionary party, represented by the Trotskyist cadre, and the semi-political movement of the masses, represented by the CIO, that dictated for us a change in tactics on the question of a labor party in 1938, on the advice of the Old Man. We had to adjust our tactics to the realities of the situation.



The labor party, as Trotsky conceived it in our conversations with him in 1938, in its incipient stage, was taking shape before our eyes in the form of the CIO and its political action committees, etc. We had to recognize this. In order to avoid the isolation of the revolutionary vanguard from the living mass movement, we had to penetrate into its political manifestations, its political action committees, etc. The aim of our participation was and is to accelerate the political development of the CIO and fight for our program within it.

We do not and we never did support the "labor party" unconditionally. We will not do so in the future. We support it "critically." That, I think, should be emphasized at this juncture in our explanations to the party. Our fundamental aim is not in any way changed by the tactical maneuver represented by our critical support of a prospective labor party, or labor ticket, whose program remains yet undecided. Our fundamental aim at all times is to advance our own program and to build a revolutionary party. These fundamental considerations, which are truisms for all of us, should be restated as an introduction to the consideration of the new variants that have made their appearance in the American political scene.

The labor party movement is much stronger than its formal expression. The invincible strength of the movement for a labor party in America derives in the first place from the objective necessity for such a development. It is expressed by the constant spread of the sentiment in the ranks of the workers -- particularly in the more advanced section of the trade union movement, the CIO. This movement, the real movement, progresses steadily and rapidly. But the actual formation of a labor party, the formal organization, as we know, is retarded by the tremendous conservatism and timidity of the bureaucracy at the top.

This anomaly -- the tremendous lag between the objective prerequisites and the sentiment in the ranks for a labor party, on the one side, and the thwarting of its organizational expression by the combined bureaucracy on the other -- presents a danger to our party. The danger is that we may get impatient; that our fear of isolation may color our judgment in concrete situations, and impel us to seek shortcuts to a labor party, or some wretched substitute for it, over the head of the official trade union movement; that we should run after any bourgeois demagogue who exploits the radical sentiment of the workers which is denied expression in legitimate forms for the moment by the official policy of the bureaucracy. That is a danger.

Such folly could have only one outcome. The end result would be for us to compromise and injure the movement for an independent labor party based on the unions. We would discredit ourselves. And worst of all, we could perhaps sow demoralization and disorientation in our own ranks. That is the most dangerous thing of all. The necessary condition for our effective participation in the political mass movement of the workers is that our own ranks be in order;

that our members understand what they are doing, and regulate their tactical maneuvers always by subordinating them to principled considerations. Our ranks need no exercises in wild goose chases. They need, rather, education and hardening in the fight against bourgeois demagogy and Stalinist treachery.

### The Aims of the Discussion

The Wallace movement, which has made its appearance early in the 1948 elections, presents to the party the first serious test of its immunity to these dangers I have mentioned. The discussion which has arisen over this episode -- that's what the Wallace movement is, in my opinion, not a great historical movement but an episode in the distorted development of the working class of America towards independent political action -- our discussion should serve a deeper purpose than simply that of making a decision on our election policy for 1948. It should serve to clarify the party and prepare it for the future. The discussion presents a good opportunity for us. Over half of our members are new. They have never had the benefit of the past experience and discussion of the labor party question. They still require education in the fundamental principles which govern our political tactics. And it is barely possible that some of our old members need a little re-education on these points.

Let us restate our basic premises: When we speak of developing the independent political action of the workers, our fundamental aim is to build the revolutionary party of the workers because that alone correctly and truly expresses working class independence. Our labor party policy is not a principle at all but a tactic designed to serve this larger principle, designed to advance class consciousness and provide an arena and a means of expanding and developing the revolutionary party and popularizing its program.

I mentioned before the well-known fact that our support of a labor party, leaving its program undetermined for the moment, is not unconditional. It is critical. Under the heading of our labor party policy we have certain minimum demands. There are two. One, we demand that the unions launch their own independent party under their own control. That is the first demand. Second, we propose that this party adopt our revolutionary transition program. But even under those conditions we will maintain our own party with its full program.

So we are not fanatical labor partyites at all. There are very serious limitations and conditions that we put when we say we want and will support a labor party. Now, what will we accept, at the present stage of developments, as a minimum condition for our critical support of a labor party -- or labor ticket? The minimum condition is that the party must be really based on the unions and dependent upon them, and at least ultimately subject to their control as to program and candidates. Under that condition, as a rule, and

as things stand now, we will give critical support to the candidates in the election, even though the party does not in its first appearance accept a program that we advocate for it.

Under that limited minimum condition -- that it really represent the unions engaging in independent political action, and not some variation of bourgeois political action supported by the workers, we will give critical support to the candidates in the election. But we heavily emphasize the critical nature of our support, and we don't obligate ourselves in advance to give that in every case. It usually depends on the relationship of forces. You can easily conceive of a situation where our strength would be such, or the conditions or the issue would be such, that we find it more advisable to run a candidate of our own against a candidate even of a "genuine" labor party.

### Struggle Against the Bureaucracy

We must not forget that our labor party policy is a method of struggle against the trade union bureaucracy in all its sections, the so-called progressives as well as the reactionaries, the Stalinists as well as the red-baiters. This struggle against the bureaucracy, and all sections of it, will never cease or be mitigated until the whole gang is replaced by revolutionary militants. At times we shift emphasis from one side of our policy to the other. That does not change our basic line; it only makes it all the more important to keep the basic line in mind and regulate the tactical applications of our policy by it. Tactics must always serve the basic line, and never become a substitute for it.

For several years our agitation has put more emphasis on the demand for the formation of an independent labor party than on the program of such a party. But this way of presenting the question of the labor party is valid and applicable only for a given stage of development. We are not bound to it for all time. At the present stage in the struggle, when the whole bureaucracy without any exception, from the hidebound reactionaries of the AFL to the Stalinists, are blocking the development of independent political action in an organized form, our emphasis is placed most effectively upon the single demand: "Form an independent labor party and put up independent labor candidates." This concentration on this single slogan, under present conditions, is the most effective way to advance the cause of class independence in struggle against the bureaucracy.

But if and when this slogan is realized, if, under the pressure of conditions and the sentiment of the workers, a labor party based on the unions is formed, or is about to be formed -- there can be no relaxation at all in our struggle against the bureaucracy. We will then simply shift our emphasis from the question of forming a party to the question of the program of the party. We will turn on the treacherous bureaucracy, with no less hostility, with the demand that the program of this party be not simply a refurbished version of bourgeois politics but a program of independent working class

politics, and that means a revolutionary program. Our labor party policy does not contemplate a reconciliation with the bureaucracy at any time.

### Local Labor Party Experiments

We have gone through some experiments since we adopted our labor party policy in 1938, and have made a number of local experiments in the application of the policy. These experiments are by no means to be taken as holy writ, as "the law and the prophets." They should be subjected, from time to time, to objective analysis and dissection as to whether we have been entirely correct or not in each case. No binding and irrevocable precedents have been established by our tactics in these local situations. In each of these cases we have concentrated on the primary task of getting the unions into independent political action regardless of what the program might be at the moment. And, in determining our attitude, we have usually put the substance ahead of the form.

In New York we supported Alfange, the Tammany hack on the ALP ticket. In Detroit we supported Frankenstein on a labor ticket which had an admixture of questionable politicians in it. We supported the Oakland Citizens' Ticket sponsored by the trade unions. In these cases we thought the preponderant substance was that of independent labor politics, although there were many flaws to be seen. We considered them hairline cases. There was not complete agreement in our ranks on any of these questions. In each case a decision could easily have been made one way or the other and good arguments found for it.

The majority of the party leadership, in considering these hairline cases, decided to give any incipient labor party movement the benefit of the doubt. They were not the pure and genuine labor party formations which we have envisaged and demanded, but the main substance of them seemed to be that. We decided to give the incipient movement the benefit of the doubt.

But as I said, these local experiments must not be taken to mean too much. In the Alfange case in New York, we gave a little bit. Perhaps a little more in the Frankenstein case. While Frankenstein was, in the essence of the matter, a candidate of the CIO unions, he was also a member of the Democratic Party and the Democratic local machine was mixed up in the thing. The Oakland affair was kind of a hodge podge movement with a preponderant labor base. We gave a little there with the idea that a good vote for the Citizens' Ticket would stimulate the movement for independent political action.

But to give a little is one thing; to give too much is another; and to give everything -- that's something else. In our labor party agitation we have said, in effect: "We demand a genuine

labor party based on the unions and controlled by them, with a revolutionary transitional program. But we will accept for the time, and critically support, a labor party launched by the unions, leaving the question of program open for debate within the party." But we must not jump from that strictly limited concession and, in our haste and impatience, work ourselves into a position where we appear to say: "We demand a genuine labor party, but we will settle for anything we can get."

That's the position we can move into if we get too ambitious to run ahead of the formal development of the movement itself and the official participation of the labor movement; if, failing to find a labor party or reasonable facsimile of same, we run around and grab anything we can get that looks like it may or might, someday, somehow, become a labor party. That would be a sure way to ruin the SWP. And it seems to me that the proposal to support the Wallace movement boils down to that kind of a formula -- we will take anything we can get.

### The Nature of the Wallace Party

The Wallace party must be opposed and denounced by every class criterion. In the first place it is programmatically completely bourgeois, as all the comrades have recognized. Its differences with the Republican and Democratic parties are purely tactical. There is not a trace of a principled difference anywhere. And by principle difference, of course, I mean a class difference.

A reasonable argument could be made for the support of Wallace's movement in any circle of American capitalism. The fundamental issue that he is raising is the question of policy towards the Soviet Union. Wallace's policy can be just as much a preparation for war as the Truman-Marshall program. Just as much. It is a matter of opinion as to which is the most effective way of preparing war against the Soviet Union -- whether by an outward effort to reach agreement by concessions in order to prepare better and put the onus of responsibility on the Soviet Union before the fight starts, or by the rough and tumble "get tough" policy of Truman and Marshall. At any rate it is a tactical difference within the camp of the bourgeoisie.

It would be very, very bad and demoralizing if we would allow for a moment the anti-war demagogy of Wallace to be taken by any member of our party as something preferable to the blatant aggressiveness of Truman and Marshall. That would be nothing less than the preparation of the minds of the party members for "lesser evil" politics -- based on the theory that one kind of capitalist tactics in the expansion of American imperialism is preferable to another, and that the workers should intervene to support one against the other.

If I read the documents correctly, the argument is made by the Chicago comrades that the capitalists do not support Wallace and therefore it is not a capitalist party. I think it is quite correct that all, or nearly all, of the monopoly capitalists at the present moment oppose Wallace. That is not decisive at all as to the class character of the party. The class character of the party is not determined by the class that supports the party at the moment but rather by the class that the party supports. In other words, by its program. That is the decisive line.

When Marx and Engels, practically standing alone, wrote the Communist Manifesto 100 years ago they announced that they represented the working class of the entire planet. And they did, even though the workers were not yet aware of it. What kind of a party is the SWP, if we put the criterion: "What sections of the working class support it at the present time?" No doubt Wallace can muster a much larger section of the working class at the moment than we can. Truman, with the help of the labor bureaucracy, can get even more. Yet we maintain that we are a working class party. We go further and say we are the only working class party because we are the only one that represents its historical interests in its program. The fascists have to hustle a long time before they get much support from monopoly capital. That doesn't change their nature. That doesn't change their class character as a capitalist agency.

The class character of the party is determined first by its program; secondly by its actual policy in practice; and thirdly by its composition and control. The Wallace party is bourgeois on all these counts; by its program, its policy and practice, its composition and its control. The contention that the party is controlled by the Stalinists and the Stalinist unions, in my opinion is radically false. That's the deceptive appearance of things. This accusation is made in the anti-Wallace press, and is screamingly emphasized by the Stalinophobes. If I am not mistaken, some references of that kind have slipped into The Militant. I believe some of our comrades who are advocating critical support of Wallace share this view. In my opinion it is completely false.

The control of the Wallace movement rests in the hands of Wallace and those he supports. He determines the candidates and he determines the program. To talk about getting into the movement to change its program and get another candidate -- that's absurd! The program and the candidate are presented to you in a finished package: Wallace for President, and Wallace's program. He made a speech in Cincinnati where he took up the challenge. He said: "Yes, I accept the support of the Communists, but when they come into our movement they don't come in to support their program -- they support our program." He was quite right.

Of course, you have only to look around to see that the bulk of Wallace's organized support at the moment is Stalinist -- the Stalinist party, Stalinist-dominated unions, Stalinist front organizations, etc. But these Stalinist unions in the Wallace movement

function as supporting organizations and not as controlling powers. They roughly play the same role toward Wallace's wrapped-up, pre-determined program as the PAC and the Political Committee of the AFL will play in the Truman movement. The essence of the matter is the same. The candidate is not decided by the PAC or by the AFL committee. The candidate is already decided. It is going to be Truman, or some other Truman. The program and policy are decided. The political committees of the AFL and the CIO are merely supporting organizations for the Democratic Party. They represent far more workers than the Stalinists in the Wallace camp, but that still doesn't make the Democratic Party a labor party.

The same is true about the Wallace movement. Get into the Wallace movement and change its program and candidate? Even from a practical point of view it seems to be completely utopian. The whole movement is organized on the basis of the candidacy of Wallace and his program. To join the formation and holler for a different program, a different man -- this seems to contradict the whole premise of the movement. They would say to you: "If you're not a Wallace man, why do you join the Wallace movement?" It would be a very difficult question to answer.

The Wallace movement has another ugly side to it. It appears as a one-man Messiah movement. He is the head of a "Gideon's Army" throwing the bible at his adversaries. That, it seems to me, is the worst kind of substitute for independent political action by the workers' own organizations. Wallace's Messiah movement is a diversion and an obstacle in the way of a labor party. Support for it cannot be considered for a moment. On the contrary, it must be exposed and fought.

Instead of worrying about the Stalinists rehabilitating themselves by jumping on the Wallace bandwagon, we should open up an attack against the Stalinists for another betrayal of the working class movement. They are just as much betrayers of the labor movement as the chiefs of the CIO and AFL. They are sacrificing the class interests of the workers and their instinctive movement for an independent party of their own, to serve the conjunctural aims of Kremlin diplomacy, which coincide for the moment with the Wallace program.

#### Prospective Political Developments

I read in one of the documents from Chicago an assertion to this effect that by some process the Wallace movement can, or must, or will develop into a genuine labor party. This is predicated on

the theory that, under the conditions of monopoly capitalism, a third party must be either a labor party or a fascist party. This contention seems to me purely arbitrary. Why must it be so? Many variations are possible under conditions of the crisis of American monopoly capitalism. All you have to do is to look at the example of France.

France was stabilized for years, if not decades, in the pattern of certain traditional parties, the outstanding one being the Radical Socialist Party with its demagogic appeal to the petty bourgeoisie and its practice of serving the interests of French imperialism. This party was good enough for "normal" times. But under the stress of the war and the defeat and the crisis that followed the war, this party was smashed to smithereens. And a set of new bourgeois political formations arose, "democratic" as well as pre-fascist.

Why can't that happen in America? The traditional two-party system in the United States has been very well suited for normal times. The ruling capitalists couldn't ask for anything better than this system which absorbs shocks and grievances by shifting people from one bourgeois party to another. But that system can blow up in time of crisis. The aggravation of the crisis which we all see ahead can shake up the whole American political situation, so that the old two-party system will no longer suffice to serve the needs of the American bourgeoisie.

The Democratic Party is a badly shaken organism already. The whole structure can fly apart in times of crisis. It is quite evident now that the AFL-CIO scheme to deliver the labor vote once more to the Democratic Party is meeting strong resistance, even if this resistance is more passive than active. That seems to be one of the undisputable factors of the present political situation. The AFL and CIO chiefs may raise five, ten or even fifteen million dollars for the election campaign. But there is no confidence among them that they can get out the labor vote for Truman as they did for Roosevelt.

The less it becomes possible to mobilize the workers' votes for one or the other of these two old bourgeois parties, the more impelling and powerful will become the urge of the workers to found a party of their own or to seek a substitute for it. That mood of the workers will create a condition wherein American capitalism will objectively require a pseudo-radical party to divert the workers from a party of their own. This development, in my opinion, will most likely precede the development of a mass fascist party. America will most likely see a new radical bourgeois reform party, before the development of American fascism on a mass scale.

That is what really happened in the Thirties, in a peculiarly distorted form. Roosevelt revamped the Democratic party to serve the role of a pseudo-radical, "almost" workers' party. By that he choked off entirely, for the period, the development toward an independent labor party. The Roosevelt "New Deal" became a sort of



American substitute for the social program of the old social-democracy. Is a repetition of that performance likely within the framework of the Democratic Party? I doubt that very much. I think there can be only one Roosevelt episode. The whole trend since his death has been in the other direction.

Next time, the role played by Roosevelt -- which was a role of salvation for American capitalism -- will most likely require a new party. In the essence of the matter that is what Wallace's party is. Wallace is the, as yet, unacknowledged, candidate for the role of diverting the workers' movement for independent political action into the channel of bourgeois politics dressed up with radical demagoguery which costs nothing. That is what we have to say, and that's what we have to fight -- vigorously and openly, and with no qualifications at all. We have to be 100% anti-Wallaceites. We have to stir up the workers against this imposter, and explain to them that they will never get a party of their own by accepting substitutes.

#### Our Task in 1948

The arguments presented by the comrades for joining the Wallace movement and giving critical support to the Wallace candidacy are unfounded. I recognize, as does everyone else, that their proposal is prompted by an ambition to avoid isolation, to penetrate deeper into the mass movement and to gain something for our party and its program. We all recognize that. But from the point of view of principle, as well as practical possibilities, their arguments cannot be sustained.

Likewise, the argument that some comrades in the trade unions want to get into the new party in the expectation that they will find an arena for revolutionary work there. Such sentiments have to be taken very seriously, but to our way of thinking they are not, in themselves, an adequate reason for the party to decide to join the Wallace movement. The best Trotskyist trade unionists are sometimes mistaken, and they are certainly mistaken in this instance.

There is both a positive and a negative side to many of the first reactions from comrades deeply involved in the trade union movement. The fear of isolation, the ambition to get deeper into the mass movement -- this is surely a positive quality. But the tendency of trade union comrades to adapt themselves a little more and more, and a little too much, to the current level of the mass movement -- a tendency ever present in trade union work, with all its daily pressures -- is negative. It requires from the political leadership of the party not acquiescence, but correction. The task of the political leaders of the party is to stand somewhat above the factors which are secondary, local and transitory; to see the problem as a whole and decide from fundamental considerations.

The problem for us in 1948 is a serious one. If we decline to support the Wallace movement and don't run our own candidate, our criticism will not be very effective. We would appear to have nothing to offer. To run our own candidate is a task of tremendous scope for a party of our size. It will require the most extraordinary efforts to get on the ballot in enough states to make a showing. On the other hand, if we surmount these difficulties, which I think we can; if we nominate our own candidates for President and Vice-President, and other offices in the states -- we have a good chance to lift the party up a stage higher and put it on the map politically on a national scale.

We are confronted with the necessity to decide the question, and not turn back from the decision. If we nominate our own candidates as against Wallace, as against all others, we also have an excellent opportunity to carry on the most effective kind of education in the party as to the real meaning of class politics. From all these considerations we should reaffirm the resolution of our August Plenum and decide firmly, that at all costs and at whatever effort and sacrifice may be required, we are going to have our own Presidential candidates in 1948.

SUMMARY SPEECH ON ELECTION POLICY

(February Plenum)

By James P. Cannon

The differences which have arisen cannot be taken lightly. For sometime I have felt that our rather one-sided emphasis on the necessity of forming a labor party, without at the moment stressing too much the program and our fight against the bureaucracy, may have given rise to some illusions and conciliationism in the ranks of the party, particularly among the newer members, as to labor partyism and labor reformism. It seemed timely to take the occasion of our election campaign to clarify and straighten out such possible misunderstandings. But, anticipating a more or less easy struggle against a conciliationist understanding of the labor party movement, we run head on into a dispute over bourgeois third partyism. That is a far more serious matter. Some of the arguments we have heard must arouse the greatest disquiet as to what is going on in the ranks of the party, in their thinking.

Bourgeois Parties Are Not Our Arena

It would be explained this way, that some comrades have unthinkingly made a "shift" from our fundamental line. The slogan: "Build An Independent Labor Party"! is a slogan for the class mobilization of the workers. In some incomprehensible way this seems to have been transformed in the minds of some comrades as a mere demand to break the two-party system of the capitalists. This is not the same thing at all. It means merely a bourgeois party shake-up and not a class alignment.

Now, a break-up of the two-party parliamentary system in America is undoubtedly a good thing. It destroys the fetish of the trade union bureaucracy to the effect that it is impossible to operate on the political field outside the traditional pattern. Splits in the two old bourgeois parties are bound to shake up the labor bureaucracy, loosen things up and create a more favorable situation for agitation for the formation of a labor party. But this break-up of the two-party system and splits in the bourgeois parties come about under the pressure of social crisis. These are not our tasks. Bourgeois parties are not the arena for our operation. Our specific task is the class mobilization of the workers against not only the two old parties, but any other capitalist parties which might appear.

If it is contended that this can be done by joining the Wallace movement and supporting Wallace, you have to recognize what are the conditions for an effective participation in the Wallace party.

Condition No. 1 is that you have to support Wallace's candidacy for president. That's the condition. It is absolutely futile to say you will go in to fight against Wallace's candidacy. This is not a movement to organize a new party and then debate as to who will be the candidate and what will be the platform. The candidate is already selected, and his platform is already announced.

Here is an advertisement in today's New York Times, which in one phrase characterizes the whole movement. They are asking for money to support Wallace's candidacy. There is a picture of Wallace. It is signed by the "National Wallace for President Committee," Elmer Benson, Chairman. This advertisement epitomizes the whole movement. How can anyone talk of going in there to fight Wallace, when his weapons are surrendered at the very moment of joining? One can only go in there to support Wallace for president. The "National Wallace for President Committee" makes this very clear in its advertisement.

You are a little bit mistaken when you speak about the "hybrid" nature of the Wallace party. I grant you that in the composition of the forces in the movement there is a certain heterogeneity. But the basic character of the Wallace party is fixed, for this election at least. I'll come again to the question of its future possibilities. For this election its character is fixed. It is a Wallace program. There is nothing "hybrid" about that.

The opposing comrades admit that we would have to pay a price to work inside the Wallace party. The admission price is just simply this: Get in there and rustle votes for Wallace for president. If you won't pay that price you cannot get in. You have no grounds even to haggle, because it is a Wallace for President movement. That is a price we cannot pay, because it is a price of principle. It is against our principles to solicit votes for bourgeois candidates under any circumstances. It vitiates the whole concept of independent working class political action.

It is wrong to assume that the Wallace party has a great future -- that it is certain or nearly certain to become the future labor party. And it is doubly wrong to say, "This is the last chance to get in," or something approximately of that sort. A mass labor party in the United States, by its very nature, couldn't be a closed corporation. Even if we grant the assumption -- and that is granting far too much -- that in its further evolution the Wallace party will develop into a labor party, we can join, leave, or rejoin the party at any time we see fit, provided we have real forces in the unions. Hillman, chief founder of the New York ALP, fell out with the party in the 1942 state election. The Amalgamated withdrew and supported the Democratic candidate against Alfange, the ALP candidate. Then, sometime later, Hillman returned to the ALP and became the head of the party. This presented no difficulties to Hillman because he wielded the power of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

Influence in mass parties is not determined by how long you have been there, but how much force you have. If we are in the

unions and have forces there, we will be a power in any labor party formation that arises, the moment we join it, roughly in proportion to the strength of our forces in the unions and the general propagandistic power of our press.

### A Split-off from the Labor Movement

We can't be isolated if we are in the unions. That is where the mass of the workers are today; they are not in the Wallace movement. This simple fact deserves some consideration by the comrades who are concerned about isolation. The Wallace movement is not only a split-off from the Democratic Party in the political sense. In the labor sense, it represents a split-off from the American labor movement as it is constituted today. The argument that we have to get into the Wallace movement in order to be with the masses runs into a contradiction. The real mass movement, the official labor movement, is not there. The mass of the workers are against Truman, or at least indifferent to him, but they will not join the Wallace movement over the head of the unions. They see it as a split-off; only the Stalinist-controlled unions -- and they are a small minority -- line up in the Wallace camp.

Some of the comrades here, and I sensed something of the same sentiment in Los Angeles, are enamoured with the idea of getting closer to the Stalinist workers and influencing them. That is all right as far as it goes, but it would be very foolish for us to put all our eggs in that one basket. The Stalinists represent a very small sector of the American labor movement. When the labor party movement really gets under way in this country it isn't going to be a Stalinist movement; it is going to be composed of this great mass of American workers who are standing aside from the Wallace movement, even though not sympathetic to Truman. They want to move officially through their unions, which are not Stalinist unions now and will not be tomorrow.

Comrade Clarke reminded me that in the Thirties the only really militant and aggressive force fighting for industrial unionism was the Trade Union Unity League of the Stalinists. They hollered for it while the AFL bureaucrats remained stagnant and resistant to every idea, every current. Under the pressure of the developing crisis, when the masses really began to move, the industrial movement started right out of the official AFL and by-passed entirely the split-off movement of the Stalinists. Something similar can safely be predicted on the political field.

### The Experience of 1924

We had an experience in 1924 in this country of a third party headed by Senator LaFollette, which was quite different from the

Wallace movement in this respect -- that it had a much broader base of support in the labor movement. Instead of merely one small sector of the trade union movement supporting it, as is the case with the Wallace party, LaFollette's party was supported officially by the AFL and by the Railroad Brotherhoods, and even by the Socialist Party, which gave up its traditional independence. The Communist Party ran its own candidates and for the first time put itself on the national political map. The Socialist Party traded its independence for the privilege of going along with this bourgeois movement supported by the workers. They broke for the first time their traditional principle of no combinations with bourgeois parties and no support of bourgeois parties. That was an important stage in the degeneration of the American Socialist Party. They gave a finger to the LaFollette movement; eventually the bulk of the Social Democrats gave their whole hand to Roosevelt.

This election will probably demonstrate the incapacity of the trade union bureaucracy, even though it is completely united, except for the Stalinist splinter wing, to mobilize the trade union votes for Truman. From present indications, Wallace will get four or five million votes, possibly more. Millions of workers, trade unionists, won't vote for either Wallace or Truman -- they will stay home. It will be demonstrated that the labor bureaucracy can no longer corral the labor votes for the Democratic Party. The market value of the Democratic Party will sharply decline. The ruling capitalists are not satisfied merely to have reactionaries in power. They want some political mechanism to control working class votes, especially now that the workers are organized. Out of that new situation may come a new split in the Democratic Party, and the development of a new bourgeois party, more "radical" and more attractive to the masses.

It can be the Wallace party, or another. Is there anything about Wallace that is too terrible for American capitalism to contemplate? It all depends upon how hard they are pressed, how deep is the crisis. The Wallace program today is no more radical than the Roosevelt program of the Thirties, which rendered great service to American capitalism. We should not accept the theory that this party must, or almost must, become a labor party.

### Impending Developments

In the terrible crisis that is impending in America there are possibilities for all kinds of political manifestations, from the most revolutionary to the most reactionary. We must not get mixed up in bourgeois politics of any kind. We must not let our party become involved in any kind of substitute for genuine working class action. All of the activities of our party must be compressed within the framework of the class line. We must have in view the perspective of the terrific social crisis that is impending, when things will move at such terrific speed that some of the comrades who are

impatient today may be left behind. We must foresee the possibilities of a rapid radicalization of the American working class, which will almost overnight confront us with a genuine class movement on the political field, ten or one hundred times more powerful in its sweep and scope than this movement of Wallace and the Stalinists.

The industrial union movement arose out of an objective need in 1933-34. By 1938 -- four or five years -- a great transformation of the position of the factory workers of America had taken place -- from atomization to organization. Why shouldn't we expect that the political development of the American workers will find its formal organization and expression perhaps even more rapidly, and in a shorter time and on a broader scale? That is what we should count on and look forward to, and accept no substitute in the meantime.

The party must be vaccinated against illusions and a certain conciliation toward bourgeois third partyism. By conciliation I don't mean, of course, that any comrades renounce our class politics. But in their eagerness to get into something, to avoid isolation, they seem willing to support a poor substitute and give it all the benefits of all the doubts. We ought to make a firm decision on the Wallace question. Then we should proceed from there to utilize the party discussion, prior to the convention, to clear up the illusions and conciliationism toward labor party reformism; and to make more precise our explanations of what we mean by critical support of a prospective labor party, what its limitations are, and what our attitude toward it is.

We have to make it clear to our members that our labor party slogan is by no means a substitute or acceptance of less than we have demanded in our full program, but a weapon of revolutionary agitation. And we have to put the full content of our program into this election campaign. We have to explain over and over again that the whole aim of the labor party slogan is to develop a class line of politics. That is the most important thing to make clear. It is far better to lose a little opportunity here and there for a tactical experiment, than to engender any confusion in the minds of the party members as to what we are really aiming at.

### Lessons from the Bolsheviks

The Bolsheviks, who were our teachers, were very adept at maneuvers. But as Trotsky explained in his great work -- The Criticism of the Draft Program -- the Bolsheviks didn't begin with maneuvers; they began with intransigence, with granite hardness, and educated their cadres so that they grew up to the ability to carry out maneuvers without losing themselves in them. This great work of Trotsky's was directed against the Stalinists, who had taken out of Leninism its maneuverist tactic at the expense of principled firmness. But the Bolsheviks never tried to solve fundamental problems -- that is to say, problems of class antagonisms -- by means of

maneuvers. That cannot be done. We know where these maneuvers of the Stalinists, which violated class principles, finally landed them.

The maneuvers of the Bolsheviks were always within class lines. I don't know of any effort made by the Bolsheviks to maneuver within the parties of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary their whole tactical line, maneuverist as it was, was to make a sharp cleavage between the working class organizations and those of the bourgeoisie. What was the meaning of the great slogan, "All Power to the Soviets?" What was the meaning of the slogan, "Down with the Ten Capitalist Ministers?" Or, later, Trotsky's slogan for France: "A Blum-Cachin Government!" And still later the slogan: "A CP-SP-CGT Government!" They were all class slogans designed to split the workers' parties entirely away from all collaboration with bourgeois politicians.

What was the meaning of Trotsky's irreconcilable struggle against the people's front combinations? Here in one "people's front" was the whole working class of France -- the Stalinists, the Socialists, the trade unions, and they included even the anarcho-syndicalists, plus the bourgeois party of the "Radical Socialists." Trotsky said, "All very fine except for one spoonful of tar that spoils the whole barrel of honey. The bourgeois party. Break with them and make a united front of workers' organizations." He took the same position on Spain. What does all this rich instruction mean for us, translated into American terms? The very least it means is this: If our teachers opposed any collaboration with any section of the bourgeoisie even for single actions, they would most certainly reject such collaboration in a common party.

Here, as in Europe, the Stalinist policy is not the workers' united front, and not a labor party in the sense that we understand it, to develop the independent class action of the workers. It is people's front combinations for pressure on the bourgeoisie for momentary concessions to the Soviet bureaucracy at the expense of the class interests of the workers. We have to fight that and by no means join it or take such a position where we could be considered as giving partial support. We are against bourgeois parties from A to Z.

I understand some comrades were not satisfied with the explanation I made in my presentation as to what a bourgeois party is and how the class character of a party is determined. I said, it is not determined by the class which supports the party at the moment, but rather by the class which the party supports; that is to say, by its program. That is the basic meaning of a political program, the support of one class rule or another. The class character of a party is also determined by its actual practice. We would not take the formal program of any party by itself, separated from its daily policy and practice, as the sole criterion. Another factor to be considered is the composition of a party. A bourgeois party of the classical type is easily recognized because it has all



three of those qualities -- it is bourgeois in program, in practice, and in composition.

### The British Labor Party

But then the question is raised -- the fact that the question is raised shows some confusion on the question of the labor party -- comrades ask: "Well, what is the British Labor Party?" If we judge it by composition alone, we must say it is a "workers' party", for it is squarely based on the trade union movement of Great Britain. But this designation "workers' party" must be put in quotation marks as soon as we examine the program and practice of the party. To be sure, the formal program and the holiday speeches of the leaders mutter something about socialism, but in practice the British Labor Party is the governing party of British imperialism. It is the strongest pillar holding up this shaky edifice. That makes it a bourgeois party in the essence of the matter, doesn't it? And, since 1914, haven't we always considered the social democratic parties of Europe as bourgeois parties? And haven't we characterized Stalinism as an agency of world imperialism?

Our fundamental attitude towards such parties is the same as our attitude toward a bourgeois party of the classical type -- that is an attitude of irreconcilable opposition. But the composition of such parties gives them a certain distinctive character which enables, and even requires, us to make a different tactical approach to them. If they are composed of workers, and even more, if they are based on the trade unions and subject to their control, we offer to make a united front with them for a concrete struggle against the capitalists, or even join them under certain conditions, with the aim of promoting our program of "class against class." We try to make them an arena for revolutionary agitation. We try to push them into class actions against the bourgeoisie. But we do not paint them up as genuine organs of the working class in the political sense. That would be a great mistake. It is especially important for us to keep these considerations clearly in mind with the perspective of an American labor party.

If there is one thing that is fairly certain, it is that the trade unions in this country will be obliged to go into politics on their own account, and most likely they will first experiment with a labor party. We may be confronted, in the first stage of this great development, with the attempt to form a labor party of the British type. It is by no means excluded that the present bureaucracy, or another, more adept at demagoguery but no less conservative in practice, could form and head such a party at its inception.

If our members are led to think that a labor party per se is the goal of our endeavors, then our party can easily lapse into reformism and lose its reason for existence. No, we must define our attitude precisely in advance of such a possible development

and permit no misunderstanding. We would oppose such a "bourgeois workers' party" as ruthlessly as any other bourgeois party, but our tactical approach would be different. We would most likely join such a party -- if we have strength in the unions they couldn't keep us out -- and under certain conditions we would give its candidates critical support in the elections. But "critical support" of a reformist labor party must be correctly understood. It does not mean reconciliation with reformism. Critical support means opposition. It does not mean support with criticism in quotation marks, but rather criticism with support in quotation marks.

It would be a good thing to read over again Lenin's advice to the British communists back in 1920. He explained that they ought to support the labor party candidates for Parliament. But he said, "Support them in the same way that a rope supports a hanged man. Support them in order to force them to take office so that the masses will learn by experience the futility and treachery of their program, and get through with them." It was not solidarity with the labor reformists but hostility which dictated the tactic that Lenin recommended. I think his advice still holds good. The labor party is not our party and will not be our party unless it adopts our program. Otherwise it is an arena in which we work for our program.

And if we take such a critical and hostile attitude toward a "genuine" reformist labor party, one based on the unions and controlled by the unions, what attitude should we take towards this Wallace-Stalinist set-up? That is not the beginning, or the promise, or even the pretense of being a labor party. There is no ground to give it any kind of support, "critical" or otherwise.

### The Danger of Disorientation

The comrades have emphasized that they do not advocate the politics of the "lesser evil," and I do not mean to say that they do. But that is the possible implication of their position. And what is only implied in the position of party leaders can be taken literally and exaggerated by the party ranks. That is what we are worried about. The carefully guarded formulations of the Chicago leaders can be "freely translated" to authorize such concessions for participation in this movement, that party members can lose their bearings and a Wallaceite wing can make its appearance in the Socialist Workers Party. I would consider that the greatest disgrace -- and the greatest loss. All the little temporary advantages you might gain by supporting the Wallace formation would weigh like a feather in the scale against the loss of a few score of new members who, instead of becoming Bolsheviks, are turned into confused Wallaceites. There is the danger of disorienting our ranks by maneuvering around with this movement.

It has been argued here that "we must go through the experiences with the workers." That is a very good formula, provided you do not make it universal. We go with the workers only through those experiences which have a class nature. We go with them through the experiences of strikes, even though we may think a given strike untimely. We may even go with the workers through the experience of putting a reformist labor party in office, provided it is a real labor party and subject to certain pressures of the workers, in order that they may learn from their experience that reformism is not the correct program for the working class.

But we do not go through the experience of class collaboration with the workers. There we draw the line. We did not go through the experience of the workers when they supported the imperialist war. We drew back when they went through the experience of people's fronts in Europe. We stood on the side and we told them they were wrong. We did not compromise ourselves. If another man takes poison, you do not have to join him in the experiment. Just tell him it is no good. But don't offer to prove it by your personal example.

Is the Wallace movement the future labor party? I believe this is the core of the Chicago contention. They consider it, if not the inevitable development, at least the most probable. If I have correctly understood them, that is a fair statement of their position. This assumption is arbitrary and unfounded. Of the numerous variants of development that can be conceived of, this is the most unlikely. Let us consider a number of other, and more likely, possibilities.

#### Possible Future Developments

Supposing we join this outfit, and give up the idea of putting up our own presidential candidate, what will we do if Wallace makes a deal with the Democratic Party and decides not to run after all? We have heard the answer: "We will go ahead in spite of Wallace." I would like to see a Wallace party without Wallace in the 1948 elections. It would be a sick looking thing. It could not exist. It would fade and disappear. If Wallace were to say tomorrow, "I am through with this whole business", the "third party" would collapse like a pricked balloon and nobody could blow it up again.

What would we do in such an event -- look around for another Wallace? It will be a sad day for us if our party members get it into their heads they can run after any demagogue who talks radical and promises to cure all evils, and forget that our task is the class struggle that cannot be transcended by any maneuvers. Maneuvers at the best can only be subordinate and auxiliary to the hard slugging for a principal line.

Anybody who thinks Wallace is incapable of making a deal with the Democratic Party, should be reminded that he still has one foot

in that camp. He has stated and reiterated that his demand is the reformation of the Democratic Party, and he repeated it the other day as he got off the plane in New York. He said again that he will not go back to the Democratic Party unless it becomes a "peace party" and unless Truman gives up the idea of peacetime conscription.

It is not likely that they will succeed in making an agreement in time for the elections in 1948. But it is possible. As for Wallace's big point -- military conscription -- opposition to that is not the monopoly of Wallace and the Stalinists. Taft is against conscription at the present time. Hanson Baldwin, military expert of the New York Times, has written extensively against the program of universal military training on practical grounds. McArthur is reported to be against it too. When you see how really narrow is the tactical difference between Wallace and the Democrats and how modest are the demands which he makes on the Democratic Party, you should not exclude the possibility of a deal and the bursting of the whole bubble which seems so attractive to you at the moment.

A second possible variant: The Wallace party can get a resounding defeat in the election. Truman can make some more radical concessions to the trade union bureaucracy for purposes of the election. Relationships with the Soviet Union may undergo a change in such a way as to scare off the fellow travelers who support the third party now. The vote can be reduced to a very small one and the party end in dissimulation, like the LaFollette movement in 1924.

A third variant: The party can get a big vote. The situation can change in the other direction. Truman can still further antagonize and alienate the trade unionists. More votes for Wallace. If prices of grain and wheat drop, the farmer is going to look for someone to vote for. So Wallace might get such a big vote as would attract to him more of the Democratic Party politicians who want to leave the sinking ship. It is reported that Senator Taylor, who has been on the fence, has just about made up his mind to accept nomination for vice-president. Many others might flock over to Wallace and it might develop into a bigger party. Why must we assume that it will become a labor party in that case? It will become more and more a Wallace party. It may develop as a full-blown radical bourgeois party with enough support and votes to control a bloc in Congress and demand a place in the administration.

#### Prospects of a Truman-Stalin Deal

Another fourth possible variant. Suppose Stalin makes a deal with Truman between now and election day. The Stalinists now supporting Wallace would immediately decide that it would be wrong after all to "split the progressive forces of the Democratic Party," and call for a people's front for Truman. Is that excluded? I do not predict it, but it is certainly not excluded. These things have happened before.

There are powerful forces in the bourgeois world speaking in favor of such a temporary arrangement with Stalin. They are not less imperialistic or anti-Soviet. They have a difference over method and tempo. David Lawrence, an influential journalistic spokesman of big capital, who writes for the ultra-conservative New York Sun, advocates a deal with Stalin. For months Walter Lippman has been arguing in the New York Herald-Tribune for some kind of arrangement. Stalin badly needs it, and has already put out feelers, according to many reports. Churchill's threat to throw the atom bomb was coupled with the proposal: call Stalin to a secret meeting and offer him a deal, or else. Suppose such a deal is made before the election. What happens to the Wallace party?

The fifth variant: The labor bureaucrats fail to mobilize the unions for Truman. The policy of supporting the Democratic Party -- which can't win anyway -- is discredited. Follows a tremendous impulse from below, reflecting itself in a mass demand for an independent labor party of the workers. Will the bureaucrats fight to the last ditch against the sentiment for a labor party? Some may, but not all. If the sentiment of the masses becomes so strong, under the double pressure of the rescinding defeat of Truman and the acceleration of the economic crisis, which always stimulates the political activity of the workers because they feel themselves stymied on the economic field, what is to prevent a big section of the official bureaucracy from plumping then for a labor party? The launching of such a party by the official labor movement, or a large section of it, would cut the ground from under Wallace's labor support.

A sixth variant -- splits in both bourgeois parties. Where is it written that the Republican Party is united forever? If the crisis is deep enough it can produce a rift in the GOP, a general shake-up of the whole parliamentary system, and a new party merging the so-called progressive Republicans and New Deal Democrats, etc., while the Tory wing of the Republican Party unites with the Southern Bourbons in another set-up.

I have mentioned six variants, which are all possible. I am not predicting any one of them. My purpose is to show how narrow and unfounded is the assumption of the Chicago comrades, who see only one line of development, and that in my opinion the least likely of all -- the evolution of the Wallace party into a labor party based on the unions.

### Local Tactical Experiments

Now I come to the question of tactics toward local segments of the Wallace movement, which occupied the attention of some comrades here. I was sorry to hear it, because it is rather pointless to talk about tactics when you are confronted with differences on the fundamental problem. If we settle the fundamental line, not

only here but in the party ranks, the tactical application should present no difficulties. The more firmly we settle the principle question, the more scope we can allow ourselves for tactics. Tactics are nothing but finger work. If your arm is broken, your fingers are not worth much.

The party must be educated and re-educated on the meaning of class politics, which excludes any support of any bourgeois candidate, and requires even the most critical attitude toward a labor party when we are supporting it. The task is to advance the revolutionary program and build the revolutionary party under all conditions. When that is clearly understood and firmly settled, then we can take up local tactical questions and easily dispose of them.

Can the party fractions work in some local units of the Wallace movement? Why not? I think it's entirely permissible, on the condition that this is understood as guerrilla warfare which must serve and not hinder the main campaigns. We will have to consider the possibilities concretely in each case. All around the country these local formations differ somewhat from the national party, which is cut and dried as to candidate and program. We have to consider that, and I think the Political Committee will be sufficiently alert to take advantage of any opportunities to fish around in local movements, especially those which have not yet settled their general character, providing the basic line is laid down and understood by all. That is the necessary condition for fruitful tactical work.

We must allow nothing to blur the main line, or to divert the energy of our comrades from our own campaign. We have to bear in mind that we are going out for the first time in a national election campaign with a very small membership and very little money. It will really require a heroic expenditure of effort and energy to carry it through. We must not put our irons in too many fires. We must not lose sight of the main thing. This is far more important than local tactical maneuvers. The campaign for our own presidential candidates is a thousand times more important than any tactical successes we might have on a local scale. If we can carry this presidential campaign through, it can mean the establishment of the Socialist Workers Party on the national political scene.

We have sanctioned an extensive tactical experiment in the Independent Progressive Party of California (IPPC). Although the Political Committee adopted a motion condemning the Wallace movement nationally, we told the California comrades that we did not consider their work in the IPPC inconsistent with our national policy, provided they conducted their work in such a way as to prepare a break on the issue of the Wallace candidacy.

Our comrades decided to go into this movement before it had adopted its program and determined its candidate, to counter-pose to the Stalinist people's front line, the line of a completely independent labor party with independent labor candidates. In our opinion this tactical experiment on a local scale is permissible if they

understand that it cannot be kept up after the program and the candidates are selected. We must recognize also that the direction of this IPP movement in California is not to the left, but to the right. That will be crowned by their endorsement of Wallace. By that single action the IPP of California, up to now nominally independent, will be formally absorbed into the national Wallace movement. We will have to take our stand accordingly. So the work in the IPPC out there has to have a time limit put to it.

It can't be repeated too often -- the Wallace movement has nothing amorphous about it so far as the candidate and the program is concerned. It is a fixed package. It is a Wallace party and a Wallace program.

### The Main Line Must Be Clear

Some comrades have spoken in favor of running our own candidates and working in the local units of the Wallace party too. It is a mistake to think we can decide that at a Plenum. Let the Plenum lay down a clear, definite line, the main line, and then let us take up these subordinate questions concretely where the opportunity exists. Fraction work in the local units of the Wallace movement does not contravene the general line provided it does not interfere with it or become a substitute for it. It is a practical question as to whether we can afford it, whether we have sufficient forces for the double task. There's the rub. It is also a question in each case whether the comrades involved are steeled and educated enough to carry out a tactic like that and not get lost.

Our main line in The Militant must be sharpened, the line on the Wallace movement and on the Stalinists. Every trace of ambiguity or conciliationism has to be eliminated. We have to attack the Wallace movement and expose it for what it is. We must denounce the Stalinists for once more betraying the independent class party of the workers and selling it out to bourgeois politicians, in the hope of exerting a little pressure in Washington in the interest of Kremlin diplomacy. That is the best approach to the Stalinist workers. Not the slightest trace of conciliationism toward perfidious Stalinism! Our heaviest weapon right there is an attack on this Stalinist policy as an American adaptation of people's frontism. When you meet the Stalinists in the unions -- or wherever you meet them -- attack the treacherous policy of the CP.

The problem of problems before us today is to find a means of arousing the party members for the fullest concentration on the Presidential campaign. After twenty years of struggle as a Trotskyist nucleus, we have reached that point where we resolutely decide to put our own presidential candidates in the field. That is the clear word the party must hear from the Plenum. The convention must be, above everything else, the mobilization of the party for our own election campaign.

THE WALLACE THIRD PARTY MOVEMENT  
(Resolution submitted by the Chicago N.C. members)

With the launching of the Wallace Third Party movement our party is face to face with its most momentous political question of recent times. The attitude that we take to this question can and will be of the most vital importance to our future growth and development. It is therefore necessary to examine carefully and thoroughly what this new movement signifies.

First in order is an understanding of its relationship to the conditions under which it arises.

American capitalism is today the world's counter-revolutionary force. It has assumed single handed the role of restoring and rehabilitating capitalism on a world scale. It has taken upon itself the task of damming up against any extension of the October Revolution.

To this end American capitalism proclaimed the Truman Doctrine. Right now it is engaged in devising the concrete implementation of this doctrine -- the Marshall Plan. And to this same end it is now also actively preparing for atomic war against the Soviet Union.

But American capitalism with its constantly growing disproportions between the forces of production and the forces of consumption at home finds itself up against the paralysis of world economy and the limitations of the world market as a result of which it is headed toward an economic crisis.

One of the elements of the coming crisis is already manifest in the inflationary rise of prices and the corresponding reduction in the workers standard of living. And, as a part of the American capitalist drive to conquer the world, including its preparations for World War III, we witness the consolidation of reaction, the red-baiting drive, and the first concerted attack on organized labor, as exemplified in the Taft-Hartley Act.

In the minds of advanced workers both capitalist parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, have become indistinguishable, through their bi-partisan alliance, in the pursuance of imperialist objectives, as well as in the attacks upon labor. They see the failure of both in regards to measures against the inflation and the coming crisis, and neither has any real appeal to these advanced workers.

In the face of the reactionary onslaught the whole labor movement has been forced temporarily on the defensive. Its leadership has remained content with the role of attempting to tie the unions closer to the capitalist political state. The top leaders have accepted for themselves the function of petty but active stockholders in the imperialist enterprise. But the more they cling to their policy of tie-up with the capitalist political state the wider grows the gap between them and the rank-and-file. And now this highest form of class collaboration appears to have about reached its climax which also marks the beginning of its end. From



now on this relationship between the capitalist political state and the labor movement will turn ever more directly toward a head-on collision.

In other words, the growing class antagonisms will very soon turn the tide of labor retreat toward new offensive battles; in the first instance to increase wages to catch up with the rising cost of living, in the second instance to repel the attacks upon the unions, and in the third instance for independent political expression and action by labor.

In this situation the Wallace Third Party movement has made its appearance. It is the first concrete, although distorted, manifestation of contradictions engendered by the American imperialist aims, its war drive, and the growing antagonisms flowing therefrom.

But it is precisely in the context of these conditions that the position taken by this movement and its program enunciated so far must be evaluated. Moreover, and what is more important, it is the forces set into motion by these conditions that determine its most immediate development as well as its future perspective.

Does the Wallace movement signify the emergence of a third capitalist party? Had it emerged during the period of rising capitalism, when differences of sectional or group interests could and did result in new political alliances or formations within the upper social strata, such a designation would seem valid. But during the period of capitalist decline the tendency within the ruling class is toward political consolidation. In the United States capitalism has never been as united as now, and is in no need whatever of a new political party. In its classic sense a third capitalist party could be conceived of only in the emergence of the pro-fascist or fascist party. And so, the tendency would be not toward more capitalist parties, but rather their replacement by one party. Similarly, with the rise of a labor party we shall most likely witness a merger of the two capitalist parties into one,

Rather than emerging from the need of the capitalist class for a third capitalist party, the Wallace party emerges as a result of the growing antagonisms of the American class struggle which are impelling the workers toward independent political action. Against this background, the rift of the bourgeois liberal politician Wallace with the Democratic Party coinciding with the Stalinist left turn, has resulted in the launching of a new political party. Wallace and the Stalinists seek to capitalize on the growing politicization of the workers for their own interests.

The leftward moving workers, unable to find expression on the direct road of a labor party, will unquestionably move to this bypath. More than likely, all labor party tendencies, rather than finding expression in a new and genuine labor party, will be swept into the Third Party orbit. When the bureaucrats are eventually

dynamited out of the two old parties, they too will turn to this movement. An independent labor party, in direct opposition to the Wallace movement, is very unlikely in the next period.

Does the Wallace Third Party movement have a base in the capitalist class? None that is now visible, and none is to be expected. It does not appear as a result of a split within the capitalist class, and even the original New Dealers are absent. Who dominates this projected third party? The capitalist class, or any section thereof? The answer to this question is likewise no. Outside of Wallace himself, it will be nearest to correct to say that at this stage it is dominated and directed in a large measure by the Stalinists and their fellow travellers.

The program for this third party so far enunciated must, of course, be characterized as visionary, petty bourgeois liberal. It does not offer a solution to labor's political problems, least of all to the problems of war and imperialist conquest. Only the Marxist program offers a solution. The Wallace proposed substitute to place faith in the United Nations is spurious and in essence as reactionary as is his concept of "progressive" reform of capitalism. But the emphasis in this program on denunciation of the bi-partisan war policy, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, military conscription and monopoly capitalist rule; together with its demand for wage increases to come out of exorbitant profits, to hold down and roll back prices by curbing profiteering, for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, and for abolition of Jim Crow, lends it strength. It reflects the pressure of working class hatred of these evils of capitalist rule: and it will set in motion working class forces that will go far beyond Wallace and the Stalinists.

This new movement must therefore be characterized as a third party arising as a by-product of the class struggle rather than its direct expression, arising, nevertheless, as a result of working class pressure to find a way out of the capitalist two party system. From its inception it clashes with the dominant bi-partisan policy of war and imperialist conquest pursued by both old capitalist parties. Similarly it signifies a breakdown of the traditional and exclusive two party system.

In a very direct sense such a third party, appearing at a time which inaugurates a transition in American labor political expression and action, and whose future course will be determined by that transition; such a party corresponds to the retarded political development of the working class at the present moment.

It is in this sense that the question: who supports the Wallace movement not only serves to further determine its character, but also rises to greater significance.

Among organizations its most immediate supporters are, the Progressive Citizens of America, largely a petty bourgeois aggregation; the New York A.L.P. and the California I.P.P., both based upon the local trade unions; the national unions controlled by,

or strongly influenced by, the Stalinists. In addition it is evident from the outset that the Wallace movement will receive large scale working class support, especially from its more advanced strata, and including numerous local unions and lower union officials throughout the country. It will receive pretty well universal support from the Negro population.

Compared to the previous political adherence of those workers this is a progressive step of the greatest significance and of rich promise for the future. At the same time they put a certain working class stamp on this movement. Obviously these various factors exclude the one-sided estimate of a third capitalist party. Nor is its character determined by Wallace. He is a capitalist, and he admits it. The movement rallying around his candidacy is something else. Either it is predominantly working class in character or it will disappear.

It is especially the fear of the union top leaders of the direction in which this movement will of necessity develop that prompts their reactionary hostility toward it. However, their alternative of support to a reactionary Truman administration may impede, but will not succeed in preventing the tide toward the Wallace movement.

In the next stage this general development must inevitably be expressed in independent labor political action -- a labor party.

What relation will this Wallace movement then have to the labor party?

It can advance and grow only to the extent that it receives working class support. Conversely, the workers, the unions, who do give support will endeavor to utilize it as a medium to satisfy their demands. That relationship will be evident already during the Presidential election campaign. Through it the workers will become more politically assertive.

After the elections, regardless of who occupies the White House premises, the bi-partisan political instrument of Wall Street will continue to pursue its imperialist aims. It will continue its efforts to curb labor. It will thereby increase the pressure for a labor party. Whenever the economic crisis intervenes this pressure will multiply.

It is reasonable to assume that with large scale working class support, and local union support, the pressure for a distinct labor party should become manifest especially within the Wallace movement. And it is not at all unlikely that, because of pressure of working class needs as well as its dependence on working class support, this third party may become transformed into a labor party.

Historically there is no guarantee that a labor party will arise in its full blown and pure form from its inception. Just as

likely is, as we now witness, an initial beginning in the form of a third party composed of frustrated politicians, petty bourgeois liberals, and the advanced sections of the working class. But the direction of this party will be determined essentially by the working class support it receives. By the pressure of coming events, the working class will assert its leadership even through the initial avenue of a distorted labor party.

The logic of such developments would hardly permit the genuine labor party in its eventual emergence to by-pass this Wallace movement. Rather it would emerge from within it or in conjunction with it. By this same logic the Wallace third party would occupy the position of a transitional stage to the genuine labor party.

These are the important considerations upon which our party should base its decision to give critical support to the Wallace candidacy for the purpose of entering into active participation in this new movement.

Obviously we will enter into such active participation under our own party banner, keeping our own party organization intact, functioning within the third party movement, and especially through the trade unions, apply our transitional program, and help to press this movement leftward to a genuine labor party, always with the prime objective in mind of building and strengthening our own revolutionary party.

In making this decision we are not confronted with a question of principle. It is purely a question of tactical and strategical considerations.

What otherwise would be our position in relation to this third party movement? To refuse to give critical support and to abstain from active participation within it would leave us only one choice insofar as the Presidential elections are concerned. We could enter our own candidates, as it appears, only in a small number of states. But with a third party such as this, having a substantial working class base, also appearing in the elections, we shall be reduced to appeal to our own members and close sympathizers. We shall have missed an opportunity to move forward in close collaboration with the most advanced section of the working class. After the elections we shall still face the same problem, but most likely in a more acute form.

To counterpose a call to labor leaders to convene a conference of labor to select labor's candidates is as futile as it is sterile. The top labor leaders, as well as the social democrats of the New York Liberal Party variety, are just now losing no time in efforts to carry their reactionary edicts against the third party movement into action through the state, city and local union bodies in an effort to stem the tide and to keep the whole labor movement politically chained to the capitalist political party system. In this situation it should be obvious that whatever response our call upon the labor leaders would evoke amongst the

advanced workers will most likely be translated by them into support for the Wallace Third Party movement. These workers do not face the choice of this movement against a labor party; but of this movement as against the equally reactionary and equally hostile Republican and Democratic parties.

The slogan of a genuine labor party posed directly against the Wallace Third Party movement will seem to these advanced workers entirely abstract when having before them something concrete which they will accept as a step in that direction.

For us to refuse critical support and to abstain from active participation in this third party movement will tend to strengthen the initial Stalinist advantage within it, and leave serious dangers of increasing their influence in the labor movement generally. Similarly, greater are the dangers of the advanced workers falling prey to illusions in Wallace and his petty bourgeois program.

Our party also feels the weight of the present tide of capitalist reaction. Together with the recession in mass struggle, we have experienced a certain temporary isolation. In such a situation it is our task to find the avenues whereby we can help set workers into motion, and above all to approach advanced workers who are already in motion in a leftward direction. The latter has become a fact in the Wallace Third Party movement. In the historical setting in which it appears lies the possibility of its becoming a means to help the American working class advance, although by such a circuitous route, to independent political action.

For our entry into active participation the field is wide open. Outside of the specific organizations mentioned the movement is still to take on organized form. This third party still remains to be built in the various states and cities.

Our entry into active participation in this movement would help also to provide for us a broader arena for the assembling of progressive forces within the unions in the struggle against the reactionary bureaucracy. The issues of this movement, when posed properly by our forces, would serve to raise the struggle to a higher and to a more distinctly political level. It can thereby become an effective means to help us in the building of the future left wing.

Arne, Mike and Manny

January 21, 1948

(Note: At the February Plenum this resolution was withdrawn from voting by the authors for reconsideration of certain questions involved.)

WHAT IS THE WALLACE THIRD PARTY MOVEMENT?  
by the Chicago N.C. Members

The Political Committee Statement on the Wallace Candidacy raises some fundamental questions: "How did the Wallace third party come into existence? What forces are behind it? What is its class character? What role does it play in the political life of the country today?"

Having posed these questions the PC arrives at the very simple conclusion that this third party movement is a "capitalist splinter party," and that: "The destiny of this movement hangs upon this single individual (Wallace) and his ambitions."

Considering this question from the standpoint of formal logic such an analysis may seem adequate. However, an application of the dialectic method will prove this analysis both faulty and false.

We agree that "This new political current must first of all be approached from the standpoint of class principle." In fact, we will insist on such an approach throughout. We accept the criterion that is implied in the fundamental questions raised in the statement. But, when we approach these questions from the all-inclusive and dynamic view of the socio-political forces at work, we arrive at different answers.

How did the Wallace third party come into existence? The statement says that it "emerged as a consummation of the fight, primarily over foreign policy, waged within the Democratic Party since Roosevelt's death and the end of the war." This is a very partial answer; and for us it is the least important aspect of how this party came into existence.

We think it is necessary here to take into account the inter-relations of this movement and the existing economic and political conditions under which it arises. We must consider also its mutual and reciprocal relations with existing social forces and the changes within the latter.

This very "fight" within the Democratic Party was a pale reflection of all the contradictions and antagonisms engendered by the pursuance of American imperialist aims, the war drive, and the anti-labor drive. Similarly it reflected elements of the coming crisis which are impelling workers to seek a new political road outside of the two-party system. Without this impulsion, without this pressure, this "fight" might easily have remained within the Democratic Party. With this pressure the result became the beginnings of a new party, the beginnings of a new movement. From its inception it helps to shatter the hold of the two-party system upon the workers and it opens the road to independent labor political action.

For Wallace this may have been a "purely tactical fight rigidly restricted within the principled framework of capitalist class politics." Henceforth, however, this fight will continue, and it will intensify, on a new basis with new momentum. It will be carried forward by a new movement in which working class elements will actively intervene. This creates the possibility that the fight will also transcend the principled framework of capitalist class politics.

What forces are behind this new movement? Calling it a capitalist splinter party cannot produce a non-existent split in the capitalist class and hence that term loses all validity. In fact the whole of the capitalist class is solidly united behind the bipartisan imperialist policy, and united against the third party. Carried along in this unity is the majority of the middle class, trailed by the labor leaders who thus serve in the capacity of political police of capitalism.

Obviously there are no capitalist forces behind this new movement. But, says the PC statement, it expresses objectively "the interests and outlook of those elements among the ruling class who believe it expedient to conciliate the labor movement at home and the Kremlin abroad." Where can such elements be found within the ruling class? Oh yes, continues the statement: "Their stamp is placed upon the movement by Wallace." Yet, even as far as he is concerned, let us remember that yesterday's formula cannot apply today. The position of Wallace as the cabinet member or vice-president cannot be the same as the position of Wallace at the head of a third party opposing both old parties. He broke with the Democratic Party. Now he will have to appeal not merely to his fellow Democrats, but to the workers, and appeal to them over the heads of the trade union bureaucrats.

Any objective examination of this new movement will verify the fact that the forces actually behind it at this stage of development are: The Progressive Citizens of America, largely petty bourgeois professionals; parties based on the local unions such as the New York ALP and the California IPP together with the Stalinists (still a working class party), with the latter integrating through these organizations mentioned. Next there are the Stalinist-dominated unions. In addition we have the leftward moving workers supporting this movement; the labor party tendencies are being swept into its orbit. No doubt we have here a real movement in the making and primarily working class in character.

These are the forces actually behind the movement. Disregarding for the moment the Stalinists, who are motivated by their own considerations, these are the very forces set into motion by economic and political conditions. And the importance of these forces far overshadow the importance of the one individual, Wallace. Essentially these are also the forces that determine the class character of this movement, the presidential candidate notwithstanding. The addition of the Stalinists do not change its class character. It remains primarily working class.

As is the case with all social phenomena, it is our duty to appraise this new movement in its development, in its transition from one stage to another.

It appears itself at a stage of transition in American politics; it is the first step toward political polarization along class lines. The existing labor party tendencies are not yet very clearly defined. They do not yet embrace broad layers of workers. Nevertheless, the advanced workers, the politically awakening workers, are striving definitely in the direction of a new political road. Because of these conditions it is not too surprising that the first step on this new road should be made in a distorted form from the point of view of the labor party.

Unquestionably the movement takes on this form because of the (failure of the) union bureaucrats to provide a new political path for the workers. Could we say that we expected them to do so? However, when we consider the mutual and reciprocal relations of the advanced workers moving leftward, moving away from the two-party system, and the reactionary union leadership striving might and main to keep the working class chained to this system, we will observe this new movement, as it should be observed, in its development and change.

The advanced workers here move leftward in support of the third party; and they do so in defiance of the bureaucrats. The new party itself arises in defiance of the edicts issued by the latter. It arises in a clash with the bi-partisan government and it strikes a blow at the two-party system. From these factors flow the powerful internal dynamics of this movement. These internal dynamics thus correspond to the transition stage in which this movement appears. And this will also have an important bearing on the role this movement will actually play in the political life of the country today.

In the class struggle everything is real and flows from its own inner logic. Workers set into motion by the third party movement will insist on making it real. They will insist on making it an instrument of struggle for their own class needs. With such an impulsion the movement will grow, i.e., working class growth. With this growth the movement will change in composition. This will produce also a change of position in relation to capitalism, the change toward a distinct party of labor.

The PC statement contends that capitalism at a later stage of development of its crisis may easily turn to Wallace as a means of heading off an independent class movement of the workers. It contends that a large vote garnered by Wallace would increase his independence from the labor movement, as well as increase his bargaining power with the Democratic high command, so as to enable him to lead his "Gideon's band" back into that cesspool. Such an estimate is built entirely around the Wallace personality, ignoring even the actual relationship of his present day position. Moreover, and what is far more important, it ignores entirely the dynamics of the forces set into motion around the third party movement. It ignores entirely the interrelations and interactions between these forces and the developing economic and political conditions. Precisely as the capitalist crisis develops the working class forces will rally in increasing numbers to this movement. They will strengthen its working class base alongside of exerting their pressure in advancing toward control and leadership of it.

Therefore, instead of dismissing this movement as a "capitalist splinter party," as a "spurious 'progressive' substitute for a labor party;" instead of employing the static concept that its destiny "hangs upon this single individual (Wallace) and his ambitions;" instead of this it is our duty to appraise this movement as a transitional step on the road to independent political action by the American working class.

It is precisely these transitional stages which have a decisive importance from the point of view of political strategy.



Here we witness the reciprocal action of objective and subjective factors. The conjuncture of objective conditions has set new political ideas and trends into motion. The direction of their further development toward working class independent political action is unmistakable. Our political strategy must proceed from a correct and timely analysis to active intervention in this development.

Arne  
Mike  
Manny

February 10, 1948

STATEMENT TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

After reconsideration of the proposal made in our original resolution on The Wallace Third Party Movement, for our party to give critical support to the Wallace candidacy, we have come to the following conclusion:

We recognize the dangers involved in such critical support. In fact it could lead to difficulties of a principled character, especially at the present level of development of this movement which is still in its embryonic stage. On the one hand it could militate against the necessity to combat Wallace and similar types of bourgeois politicians. On the other hand it could give rise to opportunist illusions within our own ranks. Therefore we withdraw this proposal.

Originally this proposal was motivated on our part purely on the grounds of the necessity for our active intervention in this movement in order to help steer it toward a genuine labor party, as well as to counter-act both the Wallace and the Stalinist influence within it. We considered critical support an unavoidable price to pay for such intervention. It was not then, and it is not now, our opinion that critical support should be given automatically by our party even to what might be termed regular labor candidates. On the contrary, we think that the major consideration to make a decision for critical support for such candidates must in all cases be based primarily on the degree to which working class forces are set into motion in the direction of independent political action. And when we give critical support we should place particular emphasis on its very conditional nature. Support, as Lenin said, "in the same way as a rope supports the hanged."

We do not agree with the Political Committee estimate of the Wallace third party movement as a "capitalist splinter party," which precludes any idea of revolutionists intervening actively within it. We still hold to our estimate of this movement and its future possibilities as originally submitted, and we expect that when concrete verification becomes manifest in actual life, this whole question will be posed for further consideration by our party. Meanwhile we may lose valuable time; but that seems a necessary price to pay considering the conflicting views at present of the character of the Wallace third party movement.

Arne and Manny

March 14, 1948

STATEMENT TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

At the conclusion of the plenum discussion, the authors of the "Chicago" resolution announced that they were withdrawing their resolution in order to reconsider the entire question, and that a statement would be made at a later date. Since we do not at the present time have agreement among ourselves, it is necessary to submit separate statements.

I have personally rejected the proposition of critical support to the Wallace movement entirely and support the general line of the PC resolution. It is my opinion that our proposal was based on a false appraisal of the class character of this movement, which was strongly influenced by our desire to enter and participate in it.

The proposition that no third "liberal" capitalist party is possible in America is too rigid, and therefore incorrect. It is true that no viable, stable liberal bourgeois party is possible, since a prolonged stage of reforms and concessions is not in the cards for American capitalism. However, it does not follow from this correct general analysis that no episodic formation of this type is possible.

The proposition that the class character of a party is determined by the class from which it derives its chief support at any given time, is likewise incorrect. The problem is not as simple as that. Program, practice, composition, control, origin, tradition, attitude of the respective classes all play their part in establishing the class character of parties, and no one factor by itself can serve as an adequate gage for all parties at all times.

We conceived of the labor party as a means of transforming the union movement into a political instrument of the working class, thus raising the class consciousness and independence of the proletariat to a higher stage. The working class character of such a party would be assured by its domination and control by (its virtual identity with) the unions, which are class instruments of the proletariat.

The Wallace party is not a party of and by the unions, but on the contrary, is a class collaborationist substitute of the people's front variety whose chief mission is to prevent the independent class mobilization of the workers on the political arena (even if the bourgeoisie do not yet appreciate this great service). Its capitalist nature is determined by its program, origin and control which is vested in the bourgeois politicians with the willing assistance of the Stalinists. Its role therefore is strictly reactionary and it must be fought by our party with the greatest vigor. Its people's front character may dictate a certain flexibility in our tactics, but does not alter our fundamental opposition to it.

It is now quite clear that the third party development has brought to the surface weaknesses in our party of a conciliatory character, which manifested themselves in our national committee. Perhaps the chief virtue of the Wallace movement is that it has made possible and necessary a thoroughgoing discussion which will serve to clarify our principled approach to politics as well as our tactical methods. Given the fundamental unity of the party, the discussion takes place under the most favorable conditions, assuring an objective and fruitful discussion. We can be fully confident that it will result in the further education and hardening of our ranks.

Mike Bartell

March 20, 1948

RESOLUTION ON WALLACE MOVEMENT

By Burton

1. The Wallace Third Party movement arises against a background of labor ferment expressed politically in growing dissatisfaction with the vise of the two-party system, in which the trade union leadership has kept the organized workers despite the ever more obvious need for independent political action. At its inception it is a split-off from the Democratic Party, to which the labor movement has been tied closely in recent years, and which is being rent assunder under the impact of the increasing social contradictions both at home and on the world arena. In the absence of initiative from the official leadership of organized labor, the avowed capitalist politician Wallace has combined with the Stalinist party to imprint upon this split a character approximating a "People's Front" under specific American conditions.

2. We cannot, therefore, give any support whatever, critical or otherwise, to this movement at this initial stage, while its lack of control by a representative trade union base gives preponderance to its treacherous "people's front" program and thus stamps it as capitalist. We must carry on a thorough educational campaign in the party to make this present character of the movement absolutely clear, to prevent any illusions with regard to it, and to imbue our ranks with the spirit of irreconcilable struggle against this newest manifestation of people's frontism.

3. While bearing in mind this fundamental position with regard to the Third Party movement as it now stands, we cannot consider it as a crystallized party yet. It is still merely an embryo and can be transformed in its further course of development by the mass response it has aroused and will continue to arouse. This mass response is due to the blow that has already been dealt the vicious two-party system of American imperialism and represents a tremendous progressive factor which we cannot afford to ignore in advancing tactically our program of independent political action. We must use the rise of the Third Party movement by our own means to drive deeper the wedge against the two-party system and as a bludgeon against the reactionary trade union bureaucracy, for the development of a third party along a class line, a genuine labor party.

4. These considerations call for our immediate participation, particularly through the trade unions in which we work, in every third party formation that offers the possibility of constructing a mass trade union base to control it. We must enter and deepen our activities in such formations under the slogan: Make the Third Party a Labor Party, a party controlled by the trade unions, with a working class program and working class candidates. Only in

this way can we effectively challenge the Wallace-Stalinist combination, combat their treacherous "people's front" policy, and counterpose our revolutionary program to theirs at the present stage in the experience of the American workers.

5. We enter the presidential campaign with our own candidates to put forward propagandistically our full program and to implement agitationaly our work for an independent labor party under these conditions.

February 22, 1948

(Note: The vote on this resolution at the February 1948 Plenum follows:

N.C. members: for, 1; against, 20; abstaining, 6.  
Consultative vote: for, 0; against, 3; abstaining, 5;  
not voting, 1.)

STATEMENT ON WALLACE MOVEMENT

By C. Charles, M. Weiss and M. Tanner

The Wallace movement is a capitalist political tendency, at present resting nearly exclusively on Stalinist dominated unions and their political organs and Stalinist organizations. Most of the existing labor and semi-labor party formations (ALP, Democratic Farmer-Labor Party) in all probability will support the Wallace movement. Besides these organizations, it will group and secure the active support and participation of the more advanced workers generally.

It represents another obstacle to the independent labor party, our major strategical orientation politically, but does so in a fashion quite different than that of the old parties who are branded with the Taft-Hartley Act, lynching and Jim Crowism, strike breaking, the workers' declining standard of living and the drive for war.

Our problem, and the central question for the next period, is how to struggle against the capitalist and Stalinist influence in these formations. Can we do it from outside the Wallace organization? To a degree, but more effectively from within. Our aim should be to elevate the understanding of these important strata of the workers by raising appropriate slogans: union control over the IPPC, ALP, and the other organizations which will be formed, workers' candidates to symbolize this control, and for our transitional labor party program.

To begin such a move by supporting Wallace, the symbol and spokesman for liberal capitalism, would be contrary to our principles and purpose; and must be excluded. Thus our entry and work is made more difficult, particularly during the elections, but once recognizing its importance, not impossible.

For Wallace will not be the sole candidate. There will be candidates from the labor movement and from the Negro and other oppressed peoples whom we should critically support. In our opposition to the one and support to the other we symbolize our stand. In view of this opinion, whatever the merits or demerits of the PC reversal of its line of support of independent candidates of the ALP and like organizations in the concrete case of Isaacson, the congressional candidate of the ALP in the Bronx, it should not be considered a precedent. The active support of union and Negro candidates offers us a field of practical work in the ALP, IPPC, etc., and in this work establishing contact with workers in the residential electoral organizations, which we should also enter. In states where primary laws permit, we should contest with Wallaceites for the nominations, with labor candidates.

In those unions which have endorsed the Wallace formations and candidacy, our party must stand for control of the party by the unions.

But shall we take the initiative in proposing or supporting proposals, that unions at present not affiliated to the IPPC and ALP, etc. join it or endorse its candidates? Where a proper relationship of forces exists, whenever such a proposal is made, we should stand

for such affiliation on the basis of our program regarding control, candidates and program. If the candidates are presented for endorsement, we should endorse only the labor candidates and candidates of oppressed racial groups.

Since we cannot support Wallace, we must present our own presidential candidate. But in so doing we do not avoid the problem. Our presidential campaign will face the Wallace movement as its No. 1 question. It will be a campaign against the Wallace illusion primarily. What shall we tell the workers in the Wallace movement? To abandon the Wallace party, or to struggle within it for union control, a socialist program and exclusion of the supporters of capitalism. The latter will be by far the more effective in achieving our purpose.

Will we succeed? In driving out Wallace? Probably not. But we can succeed in doing valuable work, raising the consciousness of advanced workers, challenging Stalinism, approaching Stalinist workers. Success or failure in driving out Wallace, or what amounts to nearly the same thing, developing a labor party movement out of the Wallace movement by split, the struggle will be worthwhile; the struggle can be a success.

Do we have enough resources to carry out an entry and an election campaign simultaneously? First of all, the election ends in November, and we will then have forces free. We will be able to struggle in the neighborhood committees and the county and congressional committees. With the end of the election the Wallace party probably will face a crisis; to return to the Democratic Party, to congeal as a third capitalist party, or to form a labor party; we will be able to do good work then. But we will be handicapped if we delay. But even if we do not have enough manpower, this does not free us of the obligation of treating the matter properly in our press, in our presidential campaign. If we place the matter correctly as a contest with capitalist politicians for the first contingents of the leftward moving workers, we shall find the people and energy to carry out these complementary tasks: the election campaign and entry.

Everybody will understand that this is not an attempt to treat all tactical variants, often the most difficult aspect of such problems, but to propose a strategical course.

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RESOLUTION ON THE WORKERS PARTY

(Adopted by the February 1948 Plenum of the National Committee)

1. The resolution of the November 1947 Plenum of the Workers Party explicitly repudiating the Joint Statement of February 1947 terminates the question of SWP-WP unity as a realistic possibility. This action is the culmination of a series of outright violations of the spirit and conditions of the unity agreement. It formally acknowledges that the Shachtmanites had already blown up this agreement and reduced it to a scrap of paper.
2. The WP resolution marks the collapse of the second maneuver by the WP leadership to utilize the unity issue as an instrument of struggle against the Trotskyist Movement for revisionist political and organizational ends. The first maneuver was initiated in the summer of 1945 in collusion with the Goldman-Morrow Minority in the SWP. Despite repeated professions of desire for genuine unification, it was soon revealed that the WP leadership was using the unity question as a smokescreen behind which it prepared the subsequent split of the Goldman section of the Minority from the SWP.
3. Consequently, the November 1946 Convention of the SWP rejected "the so-called unity proposal of the Shachtmanites and closed all discussion in the party." The resolution correctly pointed out that the "so-called unity proposal was not put forward with seriousness or good faith. It was a shabby maneuver designed to provoke disruption and split in the ranks of the Socialist Workers Party."
4. The unity question was reopened the following February when the PC of the WP agreed to accept the conditions for participation in the EPC. Their pledge to abide by the decisions of the EPC led to the Joint Statement setting forth the terms of unity between the WP and SWP.
5. While nothing had happened to diminish the deep-going political differences between the two organizations, the National Committee of the SWP reopened the unity question and signed the Joint Statement because it believed that the WP leadership had turned toward the Movement and dropped its splitting maneuvers to seek the consummation of genuine unity.
6. The signing of the Joint Statement, however, led not to closer and more harmonious collaboration between the two organizations as preparation for unity, but to the immediate eruption of sharp factional activity by the WP leadership against the CIC, to attacks upon the Johnson-Forest tendency in the WP, which genuinely wanted unity, and to bitter assaults in their press against the policy and leadership of the SWP. It soon became evident that the Shachtmanite leadership was moving toward its second anti-unity maneuver.
7. The loyal attitude of the Johnson-Forest tendency constituted an important barrier to the plans for internal warfare envisaged by the Shachtmanite leaders upon entering the united party. This strengthened the fears of the WP leadership that their tendency would not long survive as an independent and influential factor in the atmosphere of democratic centralism. On the other hand, the consolidation and growing ascendancy of the orthodox Trotskyist tendency in the

Movement had the effects of further isolating Shachtmanite revisionism politically and providing firm support for the preservation of the Bolshevik concept of the subordination of the minority to the majority in the united party. The violent attacks launched by the WP leadership against the Johnson-Forest tendency were intended to compel this group to subordinate its genuine desire for unity to the factional interests of the Shachtman clique. The simultaneous struggle against the CIC was aimed at the creation of an unprincipled combination of all centrifugal, revisionist and oppositionist elements in the Movement against the orthodox program and Bolshevik organization concepts upheld by the CIC.

8. The failure of this two-pronged attack led the Shachtmanite leadership to abandon its second unity maneuver and repudiate the Joint Statement of the two parties. The disloyal attitude to the unity agreement and to the CIC resulted in the resignation from the WP of the Johnson-Forest tendency and their application for membership in the SWP. The Shachtmanite maneuver proved equally unsuccessful on the world arena where it failed to create any effective combination of divergent elements against the CIC.

9. The resolution of the National Committee of the WP contains a blunt admission of the hostile aims that actuated the WP leadership first to agree -- on paper -- to unity and then to repudiate the agreement in practice. "The lines," they state, "between the two tendencies grow more clear cut and politically irreconcilable." They designate "the objective aim" of the line represented by the SWP leadership and the CIC as "the conversion of the working class and revolutionary movement into a 'left wing' of counter-revolutionary Stalinism. . . . On this score our party has no mere tactical difference with the SWP tendency but a fundamental and politically unbridgeable difference."

10. They favored unification "only because it would have made it more easily possible to overcome, by our joint comradely efforts the stultifying bureaucratic regime now prevalent in the SWP and the radically false theories which animate it. . . ." In other words, unity for the petty-bourgeois Shachtmanite leadership signified only the hope for a more favorable arena to promote the struggle that led them to split the SWP in 1940 and maintain hostility toward our party in the ensuing years. Such a fictitious unity would have obviously and inevitably led to the quick resumption of factional warfare and a new split.

11. The same resolution also declares that the fundamental concern of the WP with regard to the EPC was the mobilization of maximum support for its revisionist program and the creation of a bloc to support this program. It refuses to abide by decisions democratically arrived at; contemptuously rejects the authority of the CIC; and indicates that it will seek another split in the Movement if it remains a minority -- as it undoubtedly will -- in the EPC.

12. It would be pointless to discuss the "incidents" with which the Shachtmanites attempt to justify repudiation of the Unity Agreement. One single fact clearly exposes their hypocritical wailing about "bureaucratic suppression": the integration of the Johnson-Forest tendency into the SWP despite their differences on several

political questions. The comrades of this group entered the SWP on the same terms offered the WP as a whole. They were given representation at least in proportion to their numbers on all leading committees and accorded the democratic privileges of all SWP members. Had the Shachtmanite leadership earnestly desired unity, had they seriously desired to live and cooperate in a party based on democratic centralism, their membership would quickly have discovered that all the complaints about the "bureaucratic regime" were nothing but the expression of petty-bourgeois resistance to the discipline of a Bolshevik combat party.

13. Finally it must be noted that the pressures of American imperialism in its drive for world conquest and war against the Soviet Union are bearing down more heavily than ever upon this group. By turning away from unity the Shachtmanite leaders have made their choice between the revolutionary proletarian tendency represented by the SWP and the motley collection of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, who are in varying stages of capitulation to the powerful capitalist master.

14. Our fundamental appraisal of the political nature of the WP has been set forth in the document entitled, "Revolutionary Marxism or Petty-Bourgeois Revisionism." The recent conduct and course of development of the Shachtmanites have confirmed this analysis. The repudiation of unity with the SWP will tend to drive this tendency still further from revolutionary Marxism.

There is no room in the working class movement for the WP to play any "independent political role." For five years after the split of 1940 the Shachtmanites attempted without success to become an independent factor in the labor movement. The following three years were devoted to a parasitic existence whose main purpose was to split the SWP and thus build their own group. The fiasco of this maneuver dooms the Shachtman group to political sterility. Carried to their logical conclusions, the theories of "retrogressionism" and "bureaucratic collectivism," which depart from class criteria, can lead only to total capitulation to American imperialism.

15. The rejection of the road to unity confronts members of the WP either with the prospect of a revisionist future without perspective or a return to the doctrines of revolutionary Marxism and the Movement. Those who wish to build a genuine revolutionary workers' party in the country along Trotskyist lines have no choice but to quit this bankrupt petty-bourgeois group and join the ranks of the SWP.

(Note: The vote on this resolution at the February 1948 Plenum follows:

N.C. members: for,26; against,0; abstaining,1.

Consultative vote: for,8; against,0; abstaining,1.

Statement by Jerry: "My vote for does not imply any repudiation of the general analysis published by the J-F tendency."

Statement by Forest: "We are both in agreement on the question of the WP committing a crime in breaking off unity. We are likewise in agreement with the present statement of the party insofar as it concerns the present situation. However, in view of the fact that the present statement contains references to the past positions of the party, including its previous rejection of unity, and in view of the fact our analysis of the past, as included in the 'Balance Sheet' differs from it, the clearest way to express this view is through an abstention.")