

PARTY BUILDER

F O R M E M B E R S O N L Y

VOLUME II - NUMBER 4 October 21, 1947

PROGRAM OF ACTION FOR THE PARTY Submitted to the National Active Workers Conference November 8-9, 1947	1
REPORT ON THE PROGRAM OF ACTION	7
REPORT TO NEW YORK MEMBERSHIP OF SWP PLENUM HELD IN AUGUST 1947	22
ON "STATEMENT ON UNITY WITH THE SWP AND THE EXTRAORDINARY PARTY CONVENTION:"	
IN SUPPORT OF THE PC STATEMENT ON UNITY - By Paxton (Cleveland)	26
FOR KEEPING THE JOINT AGREEMENT AGAINST THE TREND OF THE PC STATEMENT ON UNITY - BY Hauser Hauser, Campbell, Decker (Cleveland).	26

W
O
R
K
E
R
S
P
A
R
T
Y

Fifteen

10 CENTS

278

PROGRAM OF ACTION FOR THE PARTY

(Submitted to the National Active Workers Conference - November 8-9, 1947.)

* * *

The Program of Action for the Party for the next period, in particular, is conceived as the necessary and realistic means not only of bringing the program of the Party to the widest possible sections of the working class but of building the Party by direct recruitment. It is in this sense that the Program of Action must be carried out by the Party as a whole. Every activity engaged in by Party members must be dominated and repeatedly tested by these criteria: the recruitment of new members to the Party; the increase in circulation of the Party press; the internal consolidation of the Party. With these aims in mind the following Program of Action is set forth.

- - -

I. The Party Must Be in the Mass Organizations in Order to Direct Them into Mass Activity along Lines of Our Program.

- (a) A systematic and intensive drive shall be conducted by the National Office and the Executive Committee of all Party branches to have at least 75 per cent of the Party membership affiliated with and active in mass non-party organizations by the middle of next year. All workers, including non-workers who can be sent into industry, shall join unions; all other Party members shall be assigned to join the indicated and most favorable veterans organization, Negro organization, students organization, professional organization, consumers group, tenants league, etc. Membership and activity in a union shall not necessarily exclude membership and activity in an additional mass organization.
- (b) Principal concentration points for the Party's activities in the unions shall be: United Automobile Workers of America, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, United Rubber Workers. Secondary concentration points shall be the maritime unions, with increased emphasis on the National Maritime Union, and needle trades unions in the centers of that industry.
- (c) Special attention shall be given to an attempt to extend the contacts with the mining industry which the Party has just begun to establish. Under the supervision of the National Office, (1) the West Virginia organization shall be consolidated and extended to nearby mining camps; (2) the initial plans to establish a Party branch in Pittsburgh shall be systematically followed up with the aim not only of consolidating a branch in that city but of extending its influence in the surrounding mining area; (3) the three Ohio branches shall have the special task of seeking and organizing contacts for the Party in the Southern Ohio mining area; (4) the Chicago branch shall have the special task of investigating the possibilities of

establishing or reviving contacts in the Springfield and Southern Illinois mining area; (5) the Party press shall devote more attention to miners and problems of the mining industry and union in order to facilitate this work.

- (d) Every Party or SYL member who is a veteran shall unconditionally join a veterans organization. A maximum degree of activity shall be required from every member except those who are engaged in other activities of greater importance. Principal concentration point shall be the AVC, with exceptions made in favor of the VFW or the Labor Posts of the American Legion only in those cases where the latter afford more favorable opportunities.
- (e) Every Party or SYL member who is a Negro, or a non-Negro active in Party work among Negroes, shall unconditionally join a Negro organization. Principal concentration point shall be the NAACP, with exceptions made in favor of other Negro organizations, especially local organizations, only in those cases where the latter afford more favorable opportunities.
- (f) Those Party members who cannot join any of the above organizations shall be prevailed upon to join an organization of their profession, if they are professional workers, or in all other cases, consumers groups, women's auxiliaries of unions or veterans organizations, tenants leagues, Parent-Teachers Associations, etc.
- (g) Students, especially G.I. students, shall concentrate on work on the campus, except in those cases where the comrade is willing and able to enter industry and engage in trade union activity. Party and SYL members on the campus shall form non-party students organizations under their own direction only in those cases where a non-party students' organization, which offers a favorable field of activity, does not already exist.
- (h) The executive committees of the Party branches shall direct the affiliation of Party members with non-Party mass organizations, in closest consultation with the Party member involved. Wherever possible, Party fractions shall be set up in every mass organization, with the inclusion of close Party sympathizers. The Party fractions shall select a responsible officer. The branch executive committee as a whole shall have the direct and immediate supervision of the work of all the Party fractions and shall be politically responsible for them. Fractions in national organizations shall be under the general supervision of the corresponding national department of the Party (Trade Union Department, Veterans Department, Secretariat).
- (i) The National Trade Union Department shall be immediately reconstituted and activated, with special attention to the main concentration points in the trade unions, and empowered to issue regularly bulletins of information and direction.

11. The Main Political Campaigns of the Party in the Next Period.

- (a) Propaganda and agitation for the formation of a national independent Labor Party, based on the trade unions and other mass organizations, and for the formation of local labor parties or united labor tickets, as against support of the bourgeois parties or of a pure and simple "third party" candidate, shall continue to be the main political campaign of the Party, with every step taken to intensify the campaign during the big election year of 1948. The pamphlet on the Labor Party must be issued immediately for the widest possible circulation, to be supplemented later in 1948 by other literature on the same subject. The ground work must be laid immediately for our members and sympathizers proposing the adoption by mass organizations of resolutions in favor of a Labor Party or for the mass signing of petitions in favor of a Labor Party. In favorable situations, attempts must be made to call city-wide conferences of mass organizations to consider the formation of a local Labor Party or a United Labor Ticket for the 1948 elections.
- (b) In view of the practical demonstrations of the feasibility of the Party's direct participation in election campaigns with its own candidates, preparations must be begun with the aim of putting forward local Workers Party candidates in the 1948 elections in such cities as New York, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Buffalo, Oakland, Philadelphia and Cleveland. Candidates of our own in these cities shall be our minimum objective for 1948. Branches in such cities as Newark, Akron, Baltimore and Seattle shall also investigate the possibility of organizing campaigns with their own candidates. The National Office, in addition to the pamphlet on the Labor Party, shall prepare a National Election Platform for publication no later than June 1, 1948, to be supplemented later by additional popular election literature issued nationally and by local election literature in those cities where the Party has its own candidates. All election campaigning shall be under the direct supervision of a National Election Campaign Committee to be set up by the Political Committee in consultation with the branches which will be mainly active in the elections.
- (c) In view of the fact that the rent and housing problems will continue to be as acute if not more acute in the next period, the Party must integrate into its regular activity consistent and planned work against rent increases, evictions and for a housing program. Party branches must seize upon every opportunity that presents itself for this work. The existence of numerous organizations devoted to these problems makes it unnecessary in most cases for the Party to attempt to organize movements under its own name for this campaign. It can and must be conducted by the Party, with its own program and its own literature through the medium of the existing organizations in most cases. The pamphlet on the rent problem must be utilized to the maximum. The National Office shall issue an additional popular

pamphlet on the Party program for dealing with the housing problem.

- (c) In view of the increasing concern among the masses over the war danger, the Party must increase many-fold its attention to this question and devote a much greater amount of its time and energy, in the form of articles in the press, public forums, meetings and anti-imperialist demonstrations, to bringing its views on this question before the widest possible public. The National Office shall issue a pamphlet setting forth the Party's views on the question of the war danger.

III. The Party Must Immediately Make Up for the Glaring Defects in the Field of Popular Literature.

The failure of the Party and particularly of the National Office in the publication of popular literature is so great that it must command the first attention of the National Office. The National Office shall therefore immediately issue the manuscript on the Negro question as a pamphlet, to be followed up by pamphlets setting forth the Party position on the most vital questions, namely, the need for a Labor Party; the nature of the Stalinist parties; the danger of a Third World War; the question of Stalinist Russia; and in addition the literature proposed above for the 1948 national elections.

IV. The Youth Organization Must Be Built Up as the Right Arm of the Party and as a Permanent Reservoir of New Strength.

In view not only of the need of a revolutionary socialist youth organization but of the fact that it has been demonstrated that such an organization can be built, the Party throughout the country, must devote its most serious and systematic efforts toward helping in the building of groups of the Socialist Youth League where they do not yet exist and in strengthening such groups where they do exist.

- (a) Young members of Party branches must be assigned specifically to the work of initiating and building up a unit of the SYL. Where such units exist, an able and experienced leading member of the Party must be assigned as Party representative to the youth unit to assist it in every possible way. Wherever necessary the branches of the Party shall unhesitatingly give financial assistance to the youth unit in organizing and promoting its activities.
- (b) Special attention shall be devoted to two fields of youth organization which are immediately fruitful for recruiting to the SYL. One is the Socialist Party YPSL, where a great deal of disaffection is developing against the course of the SP leadership in unification with the Social Democratic Federation. The other is the AYD, where concrete experience has already shown the possibilities of recruitment for us among members who can be won away from Stalinist influence and domination.

V. The Political and Theoretical Level of the Entire Party Membership Must Be Raised to New Heights So That Every Member Is an Educated Member and So That the Party Cadre is Strengthened to the Maximum.

- (a) The National Education Department must be immediately reconstituted out of able and responsible comrades. It shall be required to organize the educational work of the Party from top to bottom, and to conduct it in a systematic and planful manner. The Department must resume the publication of basic bulletins (the "Blue Books"). It must also charge itself with the issuance of research and propaganda material for the information and guidance of all Party members. It must also charge itself with the issuance of outlines for discussion and branch educational work on the most important topical political questions. In general, the educational work of the Party must be organized in such a way that an end is put to the entirely haphazard, decentralized and disorganized educational work that is conducted in the Party at present.
- (b) Under the guidance of the Department, all branches shall devote three branch meetings in the months of November and December to an educational review of the principal political documents of the last Party convention and of the Active Workers Conference, so that all Party members are thoroughly familiarized with the standpoint of the Party on the most important questions.
- (c) The Department shall immediately consider the possibility of organizing three regional training schools with the specific purpose of strengthening the Party cadre, elevating the political and theoretical level of the Party as a whole, and preparing those who attend the schools for more active and able participation in Party building work. Specifically, the Department is to consider an Eastern School to cover New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Buffalo, Baltimore, Reading and Newark; a Mid-Western School to cover Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Akron, Cleveland, Youngstown and West Virginia; a Western School to cover the California and Seattle organizations. Should such schools be possible, the Department is instructed to prepare outlines for the school classes in advance. It is further recommended that each school last for two weeks and that each school be in direct charge of a member of the Political Committee especially assigned for that purpose.

VI. Party Organization, Party Tours.

- (a) The efforts to establish solid branches of the Party in West Virginia and in Pittsburgh are to be maintained until brought to a successful conclusion.
- (b) Efforts shall be made to provide or to maintain full-time or part-time organizers in the Party branches of West Virginia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Seattle.

- (c) A Pacific Coast speaking tour shall be organized with Max Shachtman as speaker for the months of December and January.
- (d) A speaking tour, covering all the cities from the Atlantic Coast to the Mid-West, shall be organized with Emanuel Garrett as speaker for the months of December and January.
- (e) An organizational tour, covering all the cities in the country where a Party branch exists, shall be organized with Nathan Gould for the months of January, February and March, 1948, primarily for organizational purposes and on the basis of remaining the main cities for a substantial period of time during which all organizational problems of the branches shall be considered in greatest detail.

VII. An Organizing and Sustaining Fund Must Be Raised.

In order to assure the carrying out of the program and the general work of the Party, to assure the organizational and publications activity of the Party, to maintain the press and the working staff of the Party, and to discharge our international obligations, a Three Months Organizing and Sustaining Fund Campaign shall be organized beginning on December 1, 1947, with the aim of raising the sum of \$_____ through the efforts of the Party branches, the National Office and all friends and sympathizers of the Party.

Political Committee

October 17, 1947.

REPORT ON THE PROGRAM OF ACTION*
DECEMBER 1, 1947 - JUNE 1, 1948

* * *

Introduction

The Program of Action bases itself upon the two main political resolutions before the National Committee Plenum and the Active Workers Conference: the "Statement on Unity with the SWP and the Extraordinary Party Convention" and "The Tasks of the Party in the Present Situation." Tracing the history of the fight for unity from its beginnings almost two years ago, through the second unity phase beginning in February of 1947, the "Statement on Unity" characterizes the recent effort as "a failure" and examines the causes for this failure.

The second resolution ("The Tasks of the Party in the Present Situation") treats with the objective scene, particularly in the United States, and with the state in which the Party finds itself both in relation to the situation itself and in its capacity to deal with that situation. Envisaging a period of economic and social struggles with a resultant heightening of the consciousness of the American working class, the resolution foresees a trend, however elementary and halting, toward a break with the established capitalist political parties. Attending this anticipated break with bourgeois politics and spurred by the impasse of the economic fight of the unions is the inexorable drive to independent political action and the first early signs of the political organization of the American proletariat as a class. Bearing in mind our numerical weakness, the resolution dwells upon the internal weaknesses of the Party and indicates generally corrective measures to strengthen, and positive measures to better qualify our party to meet the tasks of the coming period. The purpose of the Program of Action is to implement the political resolutions; that is, to direct the Party to such concrete measures as will at one and the same time, assure the Party's maximum participation in these struggles and prepare the Party for its increasingly important future tasks by expanding and tempering the combative capacities of the Party.

A: Unity and the SWP

For all practical purposes the "unity" between the WP and the SWP is at an end. Cannon and Stein made this fact clear in their speeches to the Political Committee of the SWP (April 3, 1947) and the fact was underlined with finality by the Johnson split. To speak of an end to the unity now, after two efforts during which the Cannonites torpedoed both (one by "omission," the other by commission), is not to speak of it in the tentative terms of a temporary bog-down in negotiation which can be resumed in three months or a year. The unity is at an end, at least until "...an awakened and reoriented membership, aided by a reoriented international movement imposes a radical change in the reactionary pro-Stalinist 'Russian line' of the Socialist Workers Party and, correspondingly, deposes

* See pages 1-6, inclusive.

the bureaucratic regime which is responsible for keeping this millstone around the neck of the Socialist Workers Party."

The presence of this fact entails a sharp and decisive turn in the orientation of the Party from preoccupation with internal, factional and semi-factional matters which, of necessity, characterized our existence for the last seven months. Lacking the prospect of unification, perpetuation of this internal and ingrown existence would be a mistake bearing paralyzing consequences for the Party. A sharp and decisive turn toward the development and the building of the Party on every level of its political and organizational life is mandatory.

It would be sheer self-deception to underestimate, to gloss over, to minimize in any way, the effect which the unity development and our consequent absorption with those problems corollary to it, has had upon the progress of party organization. The energies of the Party were deflected from its program of Party building, and the incentive of the drive which we had so painstakingly built up between June, 1946 and February, 1947, came to an abrupt end-coincident with the reopening of the unity perspective. This was, for the most part, unavoidable. Yet it would be utterly narrow and false - the subordination of politics to organization - to make an appraisal of the unity fight in these terms. Had a healthy unity, advocated by our party; despite (and because of) its misgivings, to exhaust every legitimate means to realize it -- whatever the immediate and temporary effect upon the Party's organizational progress. An organizational set-back incident to a correct political policy can and will be recouped. A false political line in the interest of some immediate organizational gain, can only disorient the Party and yield a gain that is purely fragmentary and illusory.

The past period, and particularly the struggle for unification, has demonstrated the distinctiveness of our program and of our tendency within the working class movement. If nothing else, it has illumined the depth and breadth of the theoretical and political divergencies which separate us even from our closest political opponents. The Party has emerged with its position and its role more clearly defined. Thus has the period of internal and factional life attending the unity negotiations, and which cost us heavily in the narrow and immediate sense of party building, prepared us better for the tasks which we must face as the scientific Marxist tendency in the International. To that degree has it clarified the enormous responsibility with which the Party is shouldered. It impresses upon the Party the need to wage an unremitting political struggle against reformism and Stalinism and against those groups and parties which revolve in the orbit of these reactionary tendencies. It impresses upon the Party the need to educate and train its cadres, to build and tighten its fractions, to broaden its base within the mass movement, to develop its press, its branches, its organization; and to use every means at its disposal to educate and to lead greater and greater numbers of workers. It impresses upon the party the imperative need of preparing itself for that leadership which it alone can provide in the present period.

While the Party must turn its face toward Party building and must devote its major energies to this task, it would be a mistake to turn its back to the SWP except in the sense in which the two *been consummated, it would have immeasurably strengthened the American and the international Trotskyist movement. Unity was desirable and hence it was necessary for the party,

parties are travelling in different directions. The coming period will witness a sharpening of the political struggle between the two parties, and this struggle, far from being counter to our perspective of "building outwardly," is in the very nature of a Party building perspective.

Fearing the consequences of an exposure of their ranks to our ideas which the unity and even collaboration promised, the leadership of the SWP from the beginning sought to insulate their membership from us. With the realization that a "unity" of capitulation was impossible, they moved immediately to suspend whatever inadequate and fragmentary collaboration had been verably conceived. But this was too late. Individuals and even groups of the SWP membership have been impressed with our program as they have been awakened to the bureaucratic sterility of the SWP. There exists in the SWP a minority faction whose orientation is clearly in our direction. It is the duty of the Party to seek the adherence of this minority to our Party.

In various sections of the country individual and small groups of SWP members have manifested interest in our party and have shown definite sympathy for our views and organization. These individuals and isolated groups have for one reason or another remained outside the formal bounds of the SWP minority, and have made direct contact with our local branches. It is interesting that in most cases these SWP members sought us out. Once the monolithic shell of the SWP had cracked (however slightly) and its members were exposed to our ideas, it was inevitable that sections of the SWP would respond favorably and develop in our direction. That this has actually transpired is not surprising, but the "accidental" form of contact would indicate that there must be in the SWP untouched possibilities requiring attention by our Party, especially by our local units.

Political assaults upon the program and tactics of the SWP, inevitable in the next period, will mature latent opposition to the line of the SWP among its members, not only on the broad political issues which now divide us and which have come to the fore in the course of the unity developments, but more specifically in fields of tactical application of policy. This is already evidenced in the dispute in the SWP over tactics in the UAW. Such differences in tactics (even assuming that in the initial period there is no serious relation between it and the broader aspects of program - Stalinism, etc.) may very well develop along the lines of the political implications inherent in the tactical questions.

This tendency growing out of the unity experience must be dwelt upon by the Party as the logical culmination of that struggle. Thus, while the Party turns outward in its orientation it does not overlook the necessity of waging a political struggle against the SWP, nor the possibilities of recruitment of their militants to our Party. The Party, in fact, recognizes this as an integral part of its perspective of party building.

B. Strengthening the Party for the Tasks Ahead.

The Party visualizes a period of defensive struggles and counter-offensive attacks on the part of the American working class. Against the Taft Hartley Act, and for the security of the hard-won rights of

labor; against price and rent increases, and for a rise in the real wage and standard of living of the workers; against race discrimination and the encroachments upon civil rights, and for security of the organized institutions of the working class; against capitalist parties and politics, and for an independent labor party. These are the primary issues concerning the working class. These are the issues which will galvanize them into action.

The Party can carry out its "party building" perspective; that is, it can live, grow and develop only with and as part of these actions; or it can stagnate and warp and disintegrate outside them. The Party can prepare itself for its historic task only insofar as its program and its distinctive qualities as a party are put into play through the physical intervention of the bearers and the educated champions of this program, the party units and the party members. If the number of these bearers is as yet small, the situation before us now makes it possible for these numbers to increase and eventually to swell. The Party must, from the plane on which it now stands and with the limitation of its forces and resources, move to place itself in that position which will break our present isolation and which will eventually afford us the leadership in the struggle for socialism. This is not only possible, it is imperative for the Party and for the class.

The principal obstacle to the projected reorientation of the Party is the lack of a cadre in the sense in which this was defined in our convention resolution. Only those who saw the "cadre" as a maneuver against Johnson can think that the cadre problem has been resolved, or that its need has departed with the departure of Johnson. But the cadre was never conceived as a faction corps against Johnson. Rather was it conceived as the political and militant spearhead of the Party driving along the paths of the class struggle, equipped for this responsibility by its understanding and staunch support of the Party program. The defection of Johnson neither eliminates nor reduces the cogency of the need. It only frees us from an all too one-sided form of cadre training; from a disproportionate emphasis upon the inner party role of the cadre. It provides the opportunity for proportion and balance in the training of the cadre.

A cadre is composed of educated and trained Marxists who understand, agree with, and defend the program of the Party. But it is not merely that. Just as activism devoid of the guiding direction of a program, can only dissipate energy, so abstract knowledge, however advanced, which is an end in itself, becomes sterile pedantry, which paralyzes action and therefore distorts political thought as well as policy. The cadre is not merely qualified by its formal knowledge of Marxism, its familiarity and facility with the program of the Party, nor by a dispassionate acceptance of the program, of Marxism and of Socialism. The acceptance of Marxism, as the "science of the class struggle," dictates a passionate and selfless devotion to the science, and the struggle. Nothing which borders upon or affects that struggle is a matter of indifference to the revolutionary socialist. Hence, the cadre member fuses thought and action; knowledge and feeling; theory and struggle. These are indivisible. He places himself at the disposal of the movement and puts the interests of the movement above all else. Because Marxism is the science of class struggle, its organization is a combative organization which is inseparable from the struggle. The cadre mem-

ber is therefore trained not only in classes, by reading and studying, by discussion, debate and polemic, but also and at the same time by his contact with the working class and his participation on any plane which the objective conditions afford, in the struggles of that class. In this manner he qualifies himself as a cadre member. Through this means he not only strengthens and builds the Party, but contributes to the theory and the politics of the Party.

From its inception, theory has been the forte of our Party as it has been traditionally of the Trotskyist movement. A decline of interest in scientific and theoretical problems and in political thinking, nourished by the state of the movement and exacerbated by the irreparable loss of Comrade Trotsky is painfully evident in the Trotskyist movement today. The Workers Party has resisted and is one of the few outstanding exceptions to this trend. In the United States at least, the Workers Party is the sole organization which lays claim to being a Marxist party, which has sustained a serious and vital concern with the theories of Marxism and which regards the theoretical and political training of its membership as primary. In this phenomenon of our development lies a great reservoir of strength as it provides an appreciation and a grasp of the historical process so indispensable to the conduct of revolutionary action. Inasmuch, however, as this knowledge of theory is not complemented by and allied with revolutionary actions it has tended in some sections of the Party to become academic (where its value has not become entirely vitiated) and has acted as a break upon theoretical development itself. Witness, for example, our inability to elevate the level of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL to that of a real theoretical organ, a journal of scientific Marxism; or, on another plane, our serious lag in the development of a second line leadership (i.e. comrades who are both politically qualified and who are ready to place their qualifications at the disposal of the Party).

The objective political scene, coupled with the not unrelated isolation of the Party, have acted as a break upon the development of the cadre; that is, upon the development of theory (revolutionary perspectives) and upon politics in action. The defeats of the working class have created an atmosphere of diffidence and despondency, have stimulated a rejection of the social solution to the problems of humanity, that is, the abandonment of revolutionary politics. Our isolation, our lack of contact with the mass, has made the Party and its membership vulnerable to this general trend, as it has promoted a feeling of impotence, possible only in the context of our isolation. In this atmosphere all too often cynicism rather than Marxism is imparted to our new recruits, who are indoctrinated with that virulent apathy so ready at hand for all who see no relationship between revolutionary theory and revolutionary work, i.e. for those who regard theory as a luxury item for parlor display.

Taking cognizance of this mood, the Party recognizes that in proportion to its existence, to that degree have we failed to develop a Party cadre. For the cadre member is equipped by his understanding of Marxist theory and by his revolutionary esprit to resist the ravages of political demoralization in times of adversity. To the "philosophy" of apathetic resignation he demonstrates by the historic process the doom of society by capitalism or the doom of capitalism by a socialist revolution. To the paralysis of diffidence he counters the Marxist analysis of the destructibility of capital-

ism, and the imperative necessity for speeding that destruction by means of the resolute devotion to and intensification of the struggle. It is precisely in such periods of adversity that the share of the burdant which a revolutionist must shoulder is increased. He clings tenaciously to his convictions and repudiates and dissipates apathy by the fight to raise the class consciousness of the masses in order to rescue the working class, and through it all civilization, from the otherwise inescapable destruction which capitalism offers as its alternative to the Socialist organization of society.

The development of the Party, its preparation for the big class battles which the American working class will confront, is indissolubly linked with the development of the cadre. The cadre in its turn must be tempered and steeled through participation in the current and impending struggles through which it will reach theoretical and political maturity. Toward this end the Party places stress upon three broad phases of activity:

- I. The theoretical and political preparation of the membership, coupled with
- II. Active participation in the class struggle upon the given plane afforded the Party, which is inseparable from
- III. Breaking the isolation of the Party.

These three components of the development of the Party and its cadre are complementary, and each component is fructified by the other two. To fail in one is to fail in all. It will be achieved as a totality or not at all.

I. The Theoretical and Political Preparation

See Program of Action, Point V (page 5).

Pamphlets - see Program of Action, Point III (page 4).

II. Participation in the Struggle

III. Breaking the Party's Isolation

The present isolation of the Party will be broken by the program which we advocate and the ideas which we advance. We know not from history alone, it has also been confirmed by our own limited experiences, that the timely presentation of a correct slogan has galvanized into action workers, tens and hundreds of times the number of the small group which has advocated it. Such ideas, however, cannot be handed down from above. Their realistic inspiration stems from an intimate familiarity with the conditions and problems and from an appreciation of the level of consciousness of the working class. The success of application depends not only upon the skill with which these slogans and ideas are conceived and advocated, but also, and in a very decisive sense, application is the problem of the position of vantage from which these slogans are presented.

This point of vantage CANNOT be some summit, high above and far removed from the scene of battle. At best such a position offers the important but limited advantages of observation. As often

as now (especially given the absence of direct contact between the heights and the field) the real picture is distorted, and always the messages from the heights are lost in the realities of the struggle. Finally, the actual participants in that struggle have neither time, nor the desire, to seek advice, however wise, from well meaning sympathizers whose only contact with the struggle is visual. The observer on the lofty heights may see the battle, but he cannot influence it, he cannot direct it. Above all, it is necessary to reiterate again and again, the battle is fought and lead upon the field.

The Party must begin by recognizing the stubborn fact that astute judgments, refined into well ordered prognosis of the course of events, however important in themselves, are not adequate. The right to be heard and the right to direct are PRIVILEGES which must be earned and which can be earned only through an earnest and a selfless attachment to, and an active participation in, the day to day struggle. This is an axiom for any struggle involving hardships and risks, and in which the participants are free to elect their own leadership. It is not here a question of "going among the people" in the spirit of self-debasement, nor of merely setting an example. Simply and coldly, it is a question of attaining that strategic position which will enable the Party to be tempered, to learn, to teach and to lead. The Party and the Party membership must enter the struggle at that point where the Party can grow by exercising the greatest influence, given our present size.

Our very weakness of numbers imposes upon the Party the need to husband its strength, to practice economy of force, that is, to select central work objectives and to employ our major forces at these points of concentration. Any "losses" suffered by the Party from neglect of this or that unattended field of work will be more than compensated for by the gains accruing in the fields of major effort. This is not an argument against exercising initiative and seizing upon opportunities that are real and can be exploited despite our numerical weakness. Such initiative should not be confused with a policy of dispersion which spreads our meager forces over so many fields as to preclude an effective drive in any one, or with dissipating our forces in a score of ephemeral projects created by accidental opportunity and which produce no lasting results. Far better, as a matter of policy, to concentrate our major forces in two or three carefully selected fields where the impact of the Party can make itself felt, yielding results in recruits and influence, thereby making possible the expansion of our forces.

Just as ultra-left sectarianism is the counter-part of opportunism, so is artificially created "mass work" the counterpart of abstention from activity. The Party cannot substitute its Socialist consciousness for the consciousness of the masses. Neither can it substitute its own activities for those of the masses. There are, to be sure, certain actions in the CHARACTER of mass work in which the Party can and must engage. Local election campaigns, political protest demonstrations, local rent, price and housing actions are among them. But even such actions engaged in by the Party per se must be regarded with a due sense of proportion. The number of such issues are in the first instance limited, and within the issue itself the very range of our activities and our objectives are further limited. For example, the Party as a party may engage in lo-

cal rent or price actions in order to capitalize upon sentiment and in order to initiate the move, given especially the absence of such initiative from the mass economic organizations in the country. But it cannot yet, as a party, organize or lead the mass actions which such issues demand. The Party can, however, with much greater facility and effect, help to set forces better equipped organizationally into motion and through this vehicle assert the program of the Party. This the Party can do by advocating its program from the outside but primarily by the intervention of its members within the mass organizations, among which the unions are first, second and tenth in importance.

Or, again, the Party may conduct a political protest demonstration, and there are in fact many notable examples of such efforts by the Party. But so long as the Party is small and isolated, such actions engaged in by the Party are confined in their accomplishment to the not unimportant expression of public solidarity. If, however, the Party is in a position to influence mass organizations to participate in such actions, the entire character of the action and its immediate objectives can be changed.

Into the Unions and the Mass Organizations

It is therefore clearly indicated that the mass organizations provide the Party in the present state of its existence, the most favorable and the most profitable field for revolutionary work. The work in the mass organizations will fill many needs of the Party and of the individual Party member. Through participation in the work of the mass organization, the Party member is afforded the opportunity to function as a revolutionary socialist in the mass struggles. Within the mass organization he makes contact with, educates and recruits the most militant and the most advanced workers to the Party. The meetings, committees and socials are an ever-available restrum from which he may propagate revolutionary ideas and influence the course of the struggles in which that organization is engaged. In the social community attending the organization, the Party member has the means of breaking out of the ingrown existence, the introspection of the overly confined "party life." But within these organizations the Party member functions not as an individual, but as a Party worker, armed with the program of the Party, guided and directed by an organized Party fraction of which he is a member, and through which the Party seeks (at times and wherever possible with the aid of "parallel" activities on the outside) to influence the development of the organization and the struggle, in a socialist direction. Key, then, to the problem of individual and Party participation in the struggles of the class, to the task of building and developing our cadres, to overcoming the isolation of the Party is the broad perspective summarized in the slogan: "Into the mass organizations of the working class! Every member of the Party a party worker within the mass organizations of the working class!"

Of all these organizations, the largest and most influential and the most homogeneous class organization is the union movement. Hence, it is the most significant, the most preferable field of the work in the favored field of the mass organizations. Here class issues are posed daily; here is the key to working class political action, to mass struggles on the social and political as well as the

economic front; here, therefore, is rapport with socialist ideas, if not always as quickly as elsewhere, certainly more meaningful and more gratifying. Hence, in establishing the mass organizations as the principal arena for the work of the Party, the overwhelming emphasis of preference is placed upon the union movement as the most decisively important of all the mass organizations. In consequence, the Party reiterates and underlines its industrial orientation and calls upon all branches of the Party to continue and, where necessary, to renew with vigor the drive to industrialize the Party. This requires an immediate review of Party membership rolls with a view to assigning all comrades available and suitable for the work, to seek jobs in industry. It likewise calls for the factory and the union as the main recruitment concentration of the Party. It is in this field primarily that the Party cadres will operate and from which new cadre material will be drawn.

See Program of Action, Point I (page 1).

Those who for legitimate reasons cannot be industrialized must join and become active in some other mass organization. It will be necessary eventually to exempt some party members from this rule or at least from active work in this field in the interest of other Party activities, but certainly this is not the most acute problem today. The task for today and tomorrow is that of getting every Party member into a mass organization. See Program of Action, Point I (page 1).

Our experiences in the work in mass organizations thus far reveal several important weaknesses in our basic approach. These, moreover, are in the very essence of mass organization work. If these weaknesses are overcome and our faults rectified, this phase of our work will bear great fruit for the Party in terms of recruitment and influence. We list five such weaknesses and deal briefly with each.

1. The tendency, particularly in the union movement to become immersed in union work to the exclusion of any political activity.

This weakness is predicated usually upon a false conception of what constitutes political work in the mass organizations and is usually supported by the "go slow until the comrades are sufficiently entrenched" attitude. There is certainly no objection to synchronizing our political activity in the mass organization with entrenching oneself. In practice, however, the difference has always revolved about the questions: What constitutes entrenchment? How does one go about entrenching? When is he entrenched? When does political activity begin? And how does one conduct political activity? In practice too we have found in many instances that the assumption of the "go slow" attitude is synonymous with stagnation of the political work. Comrades very often spend five and six nights a week in union work, one night a week at branch meetings. No time is allowed for their own political education, and not a minute is spent on the real political work of a Party member in the union. Often an occasional speech on a transitional slogan is equated with the sum and substance of political activity. Nothing is done to prepare the union ranks for the speech and nothing is done to supplement and develop it afterwards. Then one day a union bureaucrat

announces to the surprise of the membership that so and so is a "Trotskyite." Since so and so had to be discovered and "exposed" by the union bureaucracy, the totally unprepared union member tends to see the man merely as a strange label and the label as a stigma. This is often the fruit of the absence of systematic and consistent political work.

In the union field, therefore, it is necessary to place the heaviest emphasis upon political work (as inseparable from union work) and, in addition, to organize the political work to include: Party contacting and political discussions; LABOR ACTION and THE NEW INTERNATIONAL promotion in the shops and in the union; social activity; branch meetings and affairs in relation to contacts; the organization of classes from among union contacts; and recruitment and integration into the Party.

2. The tendency, particularly in the non-union mass organizations, to maintain membership as a formality.

If the task within the union movement is to emphasize the need to relax a portion of pure union work in order to allow for political work, the problem we face with our comrades in the non-union mass organizations is one of getting them to do any kind of work at all. In the latter types of organization the tendency is clearly toward maintaining a formal kind of membership, that is, holding a membership card, attending a membership meeting and making an occasional speech. Whatever political work is done (and it is indeed little) is vitiated by the consummate lack of interest displayed by our comrades in the work of the organization.

In general, the highly politicalized member of the Workers Party is thoroughly bored by the low level of the meetings which he attends. He regards himself as a political emissary of the Party, holds himself aloof from the mundane life and work of the organization, biding his time when he can make a good speech of advice, and thus, having fulfilled his mission, retire until another occasion leads him to the microphone. He regards the work as menial and unrewarding. He attends meetings as a chore and cannot conceal his disinterest. Hence, far from influencing people in his oral interventions, the members puzzle over why he belongs to the organization at all. Failing to participate in the work of the organization with the spirit and attitude of one deeply concerned with its development and growth, he is impotent to exert any political influence or to impress a single member with his ideas.

Comrades have on occasion pointed to our work in such organizations and have asked: "What have we gained?" But pertinent to the answer is quite another question: "What have we given? What have we contributed?" Any investigation into these queries will refute the assertion that "the members of the organization are unreceptive to socialist ideas." Almost invariably they will reveal one of two causes for a failure to gain: either the comrades working diligently in a given organization, for the organization, failed to carry out political work, or the comrades maintained only nominal membership in the organization.

If any political benefits are to accrue to the Party from our

participation in the mass organizations, then our members must enter these organizations to be active within them and thoroughly imbued with the spirit of BUILDING that organization. These are not opponent organizations which we are seeking to destroy. On the contrary, they are economic and social organizations which we must seek to strengthen by building them and by influencing them politically.

3. The tendency to be politically timid; reluctance to reveal ones political affiliations.

In both the unions and in other mass organizations our comrades are too hesitant, too reluctant to "expose" their politics. Some comrades have expressed a positive delight in their ability to confound opponents (but also, of necessity, non-opponents) as to their political leanings. Sometimes this is explained on the "go slow etc." basis, but often enough there is no explanation given. The justice of the extreme "caution" is merely assumed. If some caution is understandable in a union where a job (hence union membership) is at stake, there is rarely any justification for it in non-union mass organizations. There is, in most cases, a certain point up to which the comrades are justified in "going slow" politically. That point is reached when our comrades have demonstrated that they are good and devoted union, or AVC, or NAACP etc. members. The simple secret to this gateway lies in the work we do toward the building of the organization. Once this is demonstrated, the comrades should proceed, with intelligence of course, to conduct themselves with little restraint in their political efforts, that is, to build that organization and the Party simultaneously.

The cadre member of the Party establishes himself in a mass organization by the positive work which he performs in behalf of that organization and by being politically aggressive outside the Party as well as inside it. Within a mass organization he thinks in terms of influencing that organization in a socialist direction, of raising the political consciousness of the members, of educating and recruiting for the Party. He speaks at the meetings, singles out the more militant and advanced for personal contacting and education, sells the Party press and its pamphlets, brings contacts to meetings and social affairs of the Party, enters into the social life of the contact, organizes study groups from among the members, recruits to the Party.

4. The tendency to insulate oneself from the social life of the members of the mass organizations in which we work.

This problem is, in reality, the counterpart of our own inner Party problem discussed in previous programs of action under the title of "The Integration of New Members." It is common in the Party to regard new recruits as having been fully integrated into the Party only after they have succeeded in isolating themselves completely from all their former circles of friends. And when, having so radically severed his old ties, a new member has nothing better to do on some Saturday night than to visit (by himself, of course) another Party member, when he has achieved that complete and total dependence upon the ingrown and closely regulated social life of the Party, then and only then is he proudly and solemnly announced as a "well integrated Party member." And the Party

whittles another notch in its already narrow band of contact with the world outside.

But even this is only an illusion, for the new member is not so readily admitted to the social circles of the Party. Most of our social circles are closed fraternities. The majority of our new members do not have the qualifications for admission. For a good while they must serve their apprenticeship as a social itinerant, and, if they survive, may gain entry to the real thing. The important thing at the moment, and relative to our work within the mass organizations, is this: we not only exclude new recruits and contacts from our own social groups, but we obstinately refuse to enter the social circles of new recruits and of contacts in the mass organizations, WHOSE SOCIAL DOORS ARE OPEN TO US.

Breaking the isolation of the Party requires, and in some respects depends upon, the breaking of the "social" isolation of the members of the Party. In all events, such are the requirements of proper functioning in the mass organizations.

5. Gains for the record. Recognition by election.

Misunderstanding the character and the nature of political work and political objectives within the mass organization, there is the tendency to give undue importance to elections to office or as delegates to conventions, and confusing these "gains for the record" with the real gains of sustained leadership that can come only when the comrades are "dug in" and working. It is only because "handing the organization a line" is regarded as the primary or the sole function of the Party member within the mass organization that interest in the organization's affairs mounts at about election time, and election to office or to a convention is regarded as the vindication of our efforts. As often as not, our comrades seek election to conventions, etc. because of the more spectacular nature of these affairs, and not as representing a following they have won through conscientious building and serious political work. To be sure, the Party is interested in influencing the course of an organization and utilizing the atmosphere and assembly of conventions for that purpose. But the method referred to above is precisely the way of discreditment.

The Party is concerned with winning of posts, but only as an expression of a following which our comrades have won and through which they are thereby able to exercise greater influence over the organization. The election of ten delegates who in reality represent no one but themselves is not worth as much as the single non-delegate who has succeeded in building a circle of ten solid supporters in the organization. The delegate can only make a speech, but the non-delegate can make ten revolutionists and through them and more make possible the election of delegates in the future who will not only make speeches but whose speeches will carry the weight of important numbers behind them.

Almost any member of the Party has the capacity to be a leader within the mass organizations. The question is not one of capacity, but one of earning the right to leadership and winning the following to support that leadership. The Party will gauge its successes in this field of work not merely on the basis of the number of posts it has won, but on the number of posts won in relation to the circula-

tion of our press within the organization and in relation to the number of members recruited to the Party from that organization.

Campaigns and "Parallel" Independent Activities

Although the Party concentrates its major energies in work in and through the unions and the mass organizations, it does not become a hydra-headed fraction in the mass organizations. While our members and fractions in the unions and mass organizations concern themselves with the struggles waged by these organizations around pressing economic social and political issues (prices, rent, housing, wages, civil rights, independent political action, etc.) the Party continues to conduct routine activities and engages in independent campaigns and actions on issues parallel with those upon which the struggles of these organizations are based. The danger of our necessarily heavy emphasis upon work in the mass organizations is clearly that of deferring all actions and activities of the Party to the mass organizations, thus denying the independent role and work of the Party and reducing the branches to a clearing house for fraction reports. Without dulling the spearhead of our penetration into the mass organizations, the branches should maintain vigilance against this danger. The Party branch remains the GHQ of the Party in a given area directing the work in the mass organizations, conducting and directing independent activities outside and coordinates the efforts in both. It is in fact through the independent activities and campaigns of the Party that the work within the mass organization can attain its maximum fruition. These "parallel" activities not only serve to stimulate and guide our efforts within the mass organizations but become a bridge in influencing and recruiting from these organizations. In addition, it maintains the integrity of the Party and its propáganda, sustains its initiative as a political factor, and capitalizes upon additional avenues of Party growth. The central issues around which these independent activities will revolve are already indicated in the earlier sections of the document.

The main political campaigns of the Party (see Program of Action, Point II, p. 3):

1. Labor Party (see section (a))
2. Elections (see section (b))
3. Rent, prices and housing (see section (c))
4. Against the war danger (see section (d))

Party Organization and Tours

See Program of Action, Point VI, page 5.

Establishment of a National Youth Organization

The Party feels acutely the absence of a national youth organization: (1) as the arm of the Party in the fertile field of youth work; (2) as the spirit and effort of a youth organization reflect upon the life and work of the Party, and (3) as one of the sources providing and refurbishing the Party cadre. Opportunities for recruitment to the SL prevail in numerous fields from among which we call attention to the following:

1. In the high schools and more especially today upon the college campuses. While the predominant mood of the present college student is one of preoccupation with a career, campus interest in politics is beginning to revive, offering good opportunities for youth work. Here distinction should be made between the veteran and non-veteran student; the former, being as a rule older and more mature, are more suitable for Party membership. In most cases, joint Party and youth fractions will be able to function in common without difficulty as to the division of the work.

2. YPSL (2nd International). The "impending" unity between the SP and the SDF has provoked considerable programmatic discussion within the YPSL. Contacts which we have made with these young comrades reflect the concern of the Yipsels with Party bureaucracy and with the Russian question on which they have a confused defeatist position.

3. AYD and Stalinist youth. Our New York SYL has devoted some time to contacting youth attending the Stalinist "Jefferson School," have recruited from among these and have found many to be interested in our program. In Newark and New York our youth comrades have done some work in the AYD, with modest success. In both cases considerable interest in the SYL was displayed.

The Party is determined to implement the decision of the PC for an all out drive to build a youth organization which was to have gotten under way in September-October, 1947. This was conceived by the Party not as a two month drive but as a sustained effort covering a minimum of one year, during which time the Party branches are to devote a serious portion of their efforts to the task. (See Program of Action, Point IV, p. 4)

Recruitment

See Program of Action, PARTY BUILDER, Vol. I, No. 1, July 24, 1946 (Section II-A.)

Detailed treatment of the problems of recruitment are contained in the previous programs of action and most of what is written there is applicable to the tasks of the present period. Hence, these sections are incorporated into this Program of Action.

In the final analysis, recruitment to the Party is the barometer by which we gauge the effectiveness of our work in any single field. Every enterprise in which the Party engages must have "recruitment to the Party" as a central objective. Recruitment through campaigns, recruitment in the factories, recruitment in the mass organizations, recruitment through LABOR ACTION and NEW INTERNATIONAL sales and subscriptions, recruitment through contacting, recruitment through socials, recruitment through classes, educationals, forums, branch meetings, etc. All activity must point up recruitment to the Party. That is the way to build the Party.

While the NC refrains from fixing a numerical goal for recruitment, it feels that the Party must strive to attain a membership of 500 by the end of this period. Nor does the NC contemplate a national membership drive with local quotas. However, branches are themselves urged to conduct local recruiting drives with "quotas" based

upon a realistic knowledge of contacts and recruitment possibilities. Such local drives can have the effect of speeding the consummation of contacting efforts which frequently have a tendency to linger. Such drives can be staggered according to the various fields and the prospects there. Or, arbitrary general time periods may be set. For branches which prefer this, we place for their consideration February 1, 1948 (about mid-way through the present Program of Action) and May Day as suggestions for such "sprints."

Labor Action and The New International
Promotion

Addenda to Program of Action to be prepared by Press Department.

Finances

See Program of Action, Point VII, page 6.

#

REPORT TO NEW YORK MEMBERSHIP OF SWP
ON SWP PLENUM HELD IN AUGUST 1947 -

(Below we print a summary of a report delivered in the name of the Political Committee of the SWP by George Clarke, New York Organizer, before a New York membership meeting of the SWP, attended by about 100 members, on the subject of the Plenum of the SWP National Committee held in the Midwest in August 1947. The summary is entirely accurate and an almost verbatim account of Clarke's report. Direct statements by Clarke are placed between quotation marks. We do not comment on the obvious falsehoods and misrepresentations about the Workers Party, its membership and its line which are contained in Clarke's report. This is not necessary not only because most comrades are sufficiently well aware of the actual facts but above all because that part of Clarke's report is not what is important and interesting. The primary importance of the report lies in the picture which it gives of the SWP. It is only for this reason that we publish it for our own membership. - Ed.)

* * *

International Report

Movement is undergoing a deep and serious struggle which is centered around the next EPC. The EPC will take place "in the next period." The centrifugal forces in the Movement are trying to split it: 1) they propose to invite to the EPC not only groups belonging to the Movement, but also such hostile groups as the traitorous POUM and the ossified Bordighists; 2) they are opposed to discipline, behave like anarchists, some of them did not even print the pre-conference resolution in their press and do not follow their line.

These opposition groups consist of an unprincipled alliance: Retrogressionists, Munis, Shachtman, French majority, American minority, English majority leadership. Shachtman, who proposes that all parties in the Movement without exception enter the Social Democratic parties, is united with the British leadership that refuses to even enter the Labor Party. Mangano (Italy) is with them, but only has a shadow of an organization. These groups do not criticize each other. Munis remains silent about the pro-Stalinist French majority, etc. The French majority leadership no longer has the true majority of the party - the rank and file.

All these groups have created a de facto split. Have no discipline, except to themselves, and to their own center - the WP. British decided first that they would not abide by the CIC resolution pertaining to England - only later did they change their stand a bit at the last moment.

But the overwhelming majority of the members of the Movement (India, China, Belgium, Healy group, a sizable group in England, French rank and file, SWP) are with us in the orthodox wing in the Movement. We are confident the EPC will solve this problem.

Unity

There is not much new to report. The plenum confirmed our change of opinion as expressed in the Stein-Cannon exchange. There

will be no unity before the EPC. Let us see how the WP acts at the EPC and if they will abide by its decisions. If they do, then very stringent conditions will be imposed on them by us, and if they still want unity, O.K. - but we are realistic. A de facto split exists in the Movement as a whole, and the opposing center is led by the WP! Therefore, "unity is far more remote than ever."

Therefore, the Plenum had to discuss the problem of whether we should keep our February 1947 unity offer to them. Frank-Clarke introduced a resolution opposing this and calling for an immediate end of the unity negotiations, etc. However, the majority of the comrades voted them down, decided to keep the unity offer in force, coupled with the modifications of it in the Stein-Cannon exchange.

You know that Johnson split from the WP and brought 30 people with him, one-fourth of the WP. We decided to formally admit Johnson into the SWP by October 1, final ratification to then come from the CIC.

Clarke as the reporter made it clear that in his opinion the admission of the Johnsonites contradicted the February unity offer which specifically stated that no shifts from one party to another could be made as long as unity negotiations were in progress and the unity offer in force.

Organization

There was much frank self-criticism and soul-searching at the Plenum, and much discussion, heated discussion.

Main topic: The effect of the slump and the lull in the labor movement on the ranks of the SWP. Recruitment has slowed down much - especially since last convention. Subscription campaigns were much criticized and it was recognized that it is difficult to get comrades to go out on new campaigns.

Negroes - We had 325 at last convention time; however, the turnover is very great. Why? Were they too raw for the party? No-(as Warde puts it) - the party was too raw for them. Negroes come to the party because they hear one speech or so on socialism and they are convinced. Thereafter, they want no more speeches, they want action to establish equality. This the party cannot offer them, as it is too small and has too few roots in the mass movement. Hence, they drop out.

However, many who leave continue to consider themselves members at large - in their own minds, although they do not come around, do not pay dues, etc.

The total turnover in the party is large. We recruited 200 new members since convention 1946. In the same period we lost 200-300. Most of these were previous recruits who dropped out.

Therefore, our total membership remains at 1500, and this already includes the 80 Johnsonites.

We have learned that the way to push the masses into action is not through the SWP appearing under its own banner, but through the

SWP entering mass organizations of the workers, etc. and attempting to move the masses through their own organizations. In Chicago, our tenants work mushroomed to such an extent that our organizer was asked by the CIO to organize all tenants work in Chicago. Most of these militant tenants were not workers, but lower middle class elements.

This Chicago work plus 1-2 other local activities represented the sole national activity of the party.

The lull in the labor movement is not as bad as in the 1930's where one defeat followed upon another. Not so now. Anyway, it is a lull between two revolutionary upsurges. The first one took place upon the end of the war. The next one is already under way - ever since the miners strike and the Taft Hartley bill. Workers feel that the old program is exhausted - they begin to grope for a better solution.

"Our real influence in the mass movement has grown, although recruitment has stopped down."

Trade Union Policy

Our generalized and correct program must now be concretized due to our growing influence in the unions.

UAW - we have 120 members nationally in our fraction there.

Reuther faction fights against Addes faction - this is not a mere struggle for power, but more. The workers want a new program.

During the war we were opposed to both factions. In General Motors strike, we entered Reuther faction due to its progressive program. Now there is a new shift: Reuther is moving to the right, supports the Truman doctrine, is becoming a red-baiter, and allies himself with the right wing as exemplified by the ACTU. Reuther looks everywhere for support against the Stalinists, united in the Addes faction. The WP remains slavishly in the Reuther caucus. We, however, move toward greater flexibility, participate in both caucuses, depending on local situations.

There was an opposition to this at the plenum. This opposition stated that 1) we look like unprincipled factional shifters; 2) we should support Reuther only; 3) we should not succumb to the Addes faction and thereby succumb to the Stalinists.

However, this opposition was voted down. It was stated that Stalinist influence in the UAW and in the Addes faction was decreasing very much - we can best fight them within the Addes caucus rather than from the Truman-supporting Reuther caucus. We do not like to see the victory of either caucus in the UAW.

Plenum decided to: 1) NC to collect more data on Stalinist strength in UAW; 2) continue policy of flexibility, working in both caucuses.

Additional Organizational Remarks

1) Our subscription lists are now getting smaller at the rate of 113 a month.

2) The party is in a severe financial crisis which is to be remedied by a fund drive running into the thousands of dollars.

3) Salaries of functionaries have been raised due to higher living costs.

4) The periphery of the party, the sympathizers, have ceased contributing to the party.

#

ON "STATEMENT ON UNITY WITH THE SOCIALIST
WORKERS PARTY AND THE EXTRAORDINARY PARTY
CONVENTION"

(The following resolutions, which were presented for the consideration of the coming Plenum of the National Committee and Active Workers Conference, were properly submitted for publication in the PARTY BULLETIN. However, because there is not at hand sufficient copy for an issue of the PARTY BULLETIN and because we do not wish to hold up this pre-AWC discussion, the same are published in the PARTY BUILDER. - Editor PARTY BULLETIN.)

* * *

IN SUPPORT OF THE PC STATEMENT ON UNITY

By Paxon (Cleveland)

In re-examining our position on unity, at this time, a separation must be clearly and definitely made. The statement of the P.C. makes two points of the Unity question but does not adequately and clearly separate and differentiate the two. This must be done in order to clearly explain the change now proposed in regards to unity.

For over two years the WP has held a pro-unity position. For approximately 15 months after we adopted this position and proposed unification to the SWP, no action was taken by the SWP itself. Then in November 1946 at its national convention the SWP unanimously rejected unity, condemning it as a manoeuvre. In February 1947 came the complete reversal in policy of the SWP on unity and the joint agreement, which it is now proposed to disregard, was signed.

Here then are the two aspects of unity which must be clearly defined and differentiated. In the first place is the position of our party on unity adopted in 1945. This position is still the party position. The statement does not propose to alter it at this time. The statement goes on to say that in addition to upholding this position we intend to present it to the EPC and strive for a satisfactory unification. This is all well and good. We have had a pro-unity position for two years, now we carry the struggle for unification to the EPC.

Thrown into our general position in favor of unity came the joint agreement which is the second aspect of the unity question at this time and that part of it which must be revised. Originally the joint agreement was for us a practical means by which we could accomplish the actual unification of the WP and the SWP. Six or seven months after the joint agreement was drawn up and signed

this no longer is true. The joint agreement no longer serves as a working agreement between the WP and the SWP with the goal of unification as its aim. The joint agreement at present only serves as a deceitful trap whereby the SWP crassly violating its terms refuses to collaborate with us and concentrates as usual on party building and regular party activity. By further and more openly violating its terms, the SWP has struck a blow at our party by maneuvering the Johnsonite split and accepting the Johnsonites into their ranks. We, the WP, have continued for all too long a time to observe the terms of this agreement. The result has been a disorientation of the party away from regular party building and party activity. This has had its effect as witness the lack of recruitment in Detroit, Chicago, Buffalo, etc.

Any discussion on this joint agreement with a view of repudiating it must begin with a clear understanding of: (a) the purpose of the agreement. (b) How it has functioned. (c) the obligation upon the organizations which signed it, to observe it. (d) The effects of repudiating it.

The purpose of the joint agreement was clear and undisputable. Its purpose was to prepare the WP and the SWP for a healthy unification. It was to do this by laying the basis for collaboration in all fields of activity where collaboration was possible. In addition the agreement provided neither party could recruit from the other during the course of the agreement. This was to help eliminate friction and to discourage both organizations from taking advantage of the collaboration to recruit from each other.

How the agreement was carried out is also a matter beyond dispute. The SWP, despite our extensive efforts to the contrary, refused to collaborate in Trade Union work, AVC activity, joint meetings and election campaigns.

The obligation of the two parties to observe the agreement is another subject. To understand it we must recognize first that agreements of this type between two revolutionary socialist organizations are valid and workable only so long as the purpose for which the agreement was made is still valid and possible and (this is important) only so long as both organizations not only recognize this to be so but are also willing to carry out the agreement. Needless to say such agreements are not enforceable in bourgeois courts. Therefore, obviously, such agreement can work only so long as both parties are willing and deem it advisable to carry it out. To put it another way, such agreements are impractical to observe if either organization decides not to carry it out. To apply this to the present agreement, we can reach only one conclusion. With the failure of the SWP to observe the terms of the agreement it now becomes impossible for the WP to carry it out. We couldn't collaborate no matter how much we tried. We still can't. Plainly we cannot observe this part of the agreement even if we still desired. Are we bound by that part of the agreement which says we cannot recruit from the SWP? The SWP has accepted a large number of our former comrades in direct violation of the agreement. We should we continue to observe it? There is only one answer. We should not. This part of the agreement was to eliminate friction, confine collaboration to its purpose, etc. This the SWP has thrown out the window. If we recruit from the SWP will that throw it further out the window. It is difficult to see.

Who is to blame for the failure of the joint agreement to function and reach its goal -- unity? The answer to that question is clear and unmistakable. The Cannonite Clique. The Cannonite clique had little or no intention of observing the agreement from the moment they signed it. That is amply clear now. If we disregard the joint agreement now, will that share the blame for its failure? Hardly. The joint agreement has been dead for two or three months. Our recognition of this will only serve to give us a proper orientation toward unity and party building. (Any talk of "two wrongs don't make a right" belongs in the realm of Sunday school discussions. It bears no relation to the facts and has no place in a Marxist discussion.)

What effect upon unity will our repudiation of the joint agreement have? I question if it will have any. It is clear now that unity will not be accomplished by the sole efforts of the WP. What may be decided at the EPC is a subject of speculation. Whatever that may be, we must make it fully understood that our party will reserve the right to pass on it at a regular party convention. In the meantime our repudiation of the joint agreement should be clear and unequivocal. The repudiation and the reasons for it should be made known to our L.A. readers and the SWP membership. Let the blame for the failure of the latest effort toward unity fall where it belongs - on the shoulders of the Cannonite Clique.

October 2, 1947.

FOR KEEPING THE JOINT AGREEMENT

AGAINST THE TREND OF THE PC STATEMENT ON UNITY

By Hauser, Hauser, Campbell,
Parker, Decker (Cleveland)

Unity has never been a simple one-sided matter. It has definite negative aspects: the giving up in public of our positions, developed over a period of years, and strengthened by events of the day - these ranging all the way from defense or defeat of Russia, to which faction we support in the UAW. On the other hand, we see the positive side of unity, including the fact that such a unity by itself would mean a definite change in the character of the SWP; and would strengthen our tendency in the International. Taking into consideration the advantages and disadvantages of unity (not all of which are mentioned here), we come to the conclusion that unity is desirable. We took this position over two years ago, we stated and re-stated it, we declared it again in February of this year.

The position of the SWP on unity has been another matter. They have consistently been against it; they have feared it. The November 1946 SWP Convention resolution against unity made it clear to all at home and abroad, who was for and who was against unity in the U.S. The events of February, leading up to the SWP "turn" on unity, were largely motivated by a need for the Cannon leadership to cleanse itself of its public record on this matter. In a sense it was a trap for us: to put the SWP on record as for unity, and to maneuver us then by their sabotage of unity into taking a position against it. The trap was set, and it was designed to put us on the spot. We acted properly in accepting the challenge, but the PC statement makes it look as if we are now acting as Cannon wished.

Cannon was opposed to unity when Goldman proposed it. Cannon was opposed to unity in February 1947, as the X letter demonstrates. But this isn't news to us. We know the SWP leadership. We know it would be a fight all the way. Nothing has changed in this respect to alter our position on unity.

Now what does the PC propose? To formally declare the joint agreement dead. Yes, Cannon has violated the agreement in spirit many times over. But he has been careful to keep to it in formal actions and statements. Our PC wants to be honest, but in an innocent sort of way. We (the writers) want to keep the record absolutely and unmistakably clear for all to see. We want to go before the American working class and the EPC with our hands clean. We want to lean over backwards in this respect, so that there can be no doubt whatsoever as to our position on unity. We want to give no ammunition to Cannon, to let him say that our party broke off negotiations.

Now what would we gain by giving up the agreement? We were for cooperation with the SWP in all possible fields while they were opposed to unity. We were for it during unity negotiations. We will still be for it regardless of the life or death of the joint agreement.

The only thing we really give up for the duration of the agreement is the right to recruit from their ranks. We don't know how many SWPers would be affected by this. But even if this is a considerable number, it is worthwhile to us to leave them in the SWP a little longer, for the sake of keeping our record clear before the world. We are not consigning these comrades to the SWP for life. The EPC is not far off now. After the EPC, it will be a different matter. Either we have unity or we don't. In either event we will be joined by these comrades without any difficulty.

The whole trend of the PC statement seems to be to lead to a general stand against unity. It is not stated so specifically, but what other interpretation can be given to the statement that "failure of unity is due only in part to the maneuverings and the bureaucratic intolerance of the SWP leadership..." Or to speak of "a fundamental and politically unbridgeable difference" between us. Is this meant as "unbridgeable" in a united party? Or does the favorable light cast on our party as an independent force mean that we can exist separately (as we, the writers, certainly do not deny), or that we prefer separate existence (which can easily be read into the statement)?

In summation then: the PC statement calls for breaking off the unity agreement. We oppose this and call for adherence to the agreement on the part of the WP, both in spirit and in form. The statement, further, leaves in doubt our orientation towards unity. Are we still for it, or have conditions changed sufficiently for us to be against unity? We want an unequivocal statement from the PC, and we want it to reiterate our previous stand: FOR UNITY! Up to this point we have conducted ourselves in a correct manner towards unity. Let's not change it now.

This statement was presented to the Cleveland Branch at its regular meeting of October 12, 1947. It was discussed as a counter-motion to the PC resolution, and was passed by a vote of 9 to 4, with one comrade absent. (Provision was made for recording this comrade's vote at the next meeting if he so wishes.)