

FORUM

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RESOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

The outstanding feature of the post-Korean-War developments in the international situation, which is dominated by the contest for world supremacy between the United States and Stalinist Russia, is the abatement of the danger of total war between the two powers. So long as the ruling classes of these two countries remain in power, the danger of war to the bitter end will continue to exist and it is an illusion to believe that any accommodation is possible that will assure their peaceful coexistence. Nevertheless, the speed at which they have been drawing closer to the outbreak of the total war has slowed down for the time being. The relaxation of the war danger is the result of the stalemate reached in the conflict between the two powers. Neither side is able to impose its will upon the other by military actions confined to a small scale. At the same time, neither side is able to make serious military advances against the other side on a small scale without immediately threatening to precipitate a military struggle on a global, all-deciding scale. Such a struggle is precisely what the two war camps are at present unprepared and unwilling to enter. Hence the stalemate. The suspension of direct and open hostilities in Korea inaugurated the stage of the stalemate and is the outstanding example of it. It was a criminal adventure on the part of the Stalinists to precipitate the war in Korea in the interests of expanding the frontiers of their empire and delivering a blow to their imperial rival; for even if the cause of the national unification of that country could conceivably be represented by Stalinism, it would be a crime to seek the victory of that cause at the cost of a world war. It was a criminal adventure on the part of the Truman Administration to enter the Korean war, without troubling to consult its allies or even the Constitutionally-authorized Congress, on the entirely imperialistic ground that the United States has the right to intervene with force of arms into the internal affairs of any other country. The reactionary, anti-democratic and utterly futile character of the war in Korea, thus publicly stigmatized by the Independent Socialist League from the outset, has been demonstrated by its outcome on the soil of that devastated and still-divided land and on the bodies of its martyred oppressed and still-divided people, a harbinger on a small scale of the vaster and more monstrously destructive futility of a coming third world war. The Korean war alone is enough to show that neither one of the war camps is capable of bringing about peace and freedom. However, together they have brought about the stalemate. The outbreak of the war has been averted for the moment, but no peace has been established. The main indications are that the next period in international relations between the two camps will be an extended one of neither war nor peace.

Fundamentally, the period of breathing spell which has now set in represents a partial victory for the forces represented by the Third Camp. The strength displayed by the Third Camp in the most general sense -- which is nothing more than a synonym

for the tens of millions who resist or refuse the leadership of both American capitalism and of Stalinism and seek a democratic, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-totalitarian road to peace, freedom and prosperity -- confirms the position taken by the Independent Socialist League and justifies its conviction in its ultimate triumph over both camps of reaction.

The stalemate has been produced because neither side has been able to bring to bear such a preponderance of strength over the other as to win a decisive victory in the partial conflicts that have broken out. The two imperialist camps are of more or less equal strength, each one making up for inferiority in one field by superiority in another. Decisive superiority is quintessential in the politics of both sides inasmuch as both are aware of the fact that the war, once it breaks out, will be fought for conclusive world mastery, that is, an attempt to achieve the complete annihilation of the vanquished by the victor. Consequently, to reduce the risk of defeat, and therefore with annihilation, to a minimum, requires the mobilization of the last possible neutral or half-neutral, independent or half-independent country, the enlistment of the support of the last possible people or groups of people. In this most important of all fields of war preparation, more decisive even than superiority in the field of atomic or even hydrogen bombs, both war camps have suffered severe setbacks and even defeats. On both sides of the Iron Curtain, refusal to support the war camps, resistance to the mobilization efforts and domination of one imperialism or the other or both together, the demand for independence in policy and action from both camps, have been the main characteristic of the popular struggles of the last two-three years. Until the forces engaged in these struggles -- which are the forces of the Third Camp -- have been subdued by one camp or the other, or been deprived or duped out of their independence and reduced to political and military troops of either camp, the imperialists are not likely to risk an all-out war. By the same token, insofar as the forces of the Third Camp and of the "uncommitted world" are finally tied to or identified with one or the other imperialist camp, the outbreak of the world-consuming war is brought so much the closer. Hence, the apologists for imperialism who, in the name of the struggle against totalitarian Stalinism, on the one side, or in the name of the struggle against capitalism, on the other, are seeking to break the resistance of the forces of the Third Camp and to undermine their independence in order to enlist them on the side of Washington or Moscow, are in actuality working to bring closer the day when the total war breaks out. Contrariwise, the possibility of prolonging the period of peace and even of averting the outbreak of the war altogether lies exclusively with the maintenance of the Third Camp, with organizing and coordinating its endeavors, with sharpening and clarifying its consciousness, and above all with firmly preserving and deepening its independence from both war camps. Confused, demoralized, tired, skeptical and cowardly elements have deserted the struggle for democracy, socialism and freedom in recent years, asserting that there is no basis for an independent struggle or movement, or that none exists or has any significant strength or importance, and that all those who

still seek to maintain their independence must take the "practical" and "realistic" step of joining and subordinating themselves to one of the war camps. Yet the forces of the Third Camp, at which all deserters sneer, have proved powerful enough, and their resistance to the two imperialist camps, even though it is still mainly a passive, uncoordinated, not fully clarified resistance, has proved firm enough, to produce the present relaxation of the immediate war danger. It is to these forces mainly, and in no wise to the peaceable proclivities of the two imperialist powers, that the world today owes its breathing spell.

The breathing spell is not only a welcome gift to the forces of the Third Camp that urgently require time in which to develop themselves; it is a necessity for the two war camps as well. To them the breathing spell is only a stage in the preparation for the war which they have been compelled to postpone. The direction which this preparation is taking on each side reveals the nature of the two conflicting regimes and the crises which continually undermine them, thereby maturing the pre-conditions for the inevitable triumph of socialism and democracy.

To protect its interests, the Stalinist regime must find allies and supporters, willing or unwilling, outside its own ranks. The fundamental social antagonism between the totalitarian bureaucracy and the capitalist classes of the world has become clearer, more pronounced and increasingly irreconcilable in the period following the second World War. This has made it more difficult for the Stalinists to follow their past course of exploiting for their own ends the violent conflicts among the capitalist classes themselves, as compared with what they were able to do with such outstanding success before and after and above all during the second World War. This is the big change since the "Grand Alliance." To be sure, for day-to-day political analysis it is necessary to see that the Stalinists still have opportunities to maneuver between their enemies and to play them against each other in particular and limited respects; but more important and basic is it to underline that they now find themselves obliged to seek allies not only and not so much in this or that capitalist class or grouping, as by exploiting for their own ends the profound and revolutionary antagonism of the masses of the world against the entire social system of capitalism and against traditional capitalist imperialism and colonialism. The reactionary exploitation of these revolutionary sentiments has always been a mark of Stalinism; since the end of the war it has been multiplied and intensified a hundred-fold.

Stalinism in power is totalitarian in its very nature, and without this characteristic it could not and would not exist in any way or form. Its oppressive, exploitive totalitarianism is manifested in the preparation of the war as in all other fields, that is, by its cynical and contemptuous disregard of the economic and political interests of the masses over whom it tyrannizes. The satellite countries are treated

more brutally than the old Czarist regime treated its vassals. The aspirations and needs of the peoples of those oppressed countries are denied and repressed and the masses themselves regarded only from the standpoint of their capacity to serve the economic, political, military and diplomatic interests of the Russian ruling class. The aspirations and needs of the Russian people themselves are treated with little more consideration. The result has been a universal slow-down strike against the Kremlin throughout the satellite nations, reaching its highest point of rebellion when it was transformed into the June insurrection of the unforgettably heroic German workers; and an almost equally universal slow-down strike against the Kremlin in its own homeland, with particularly severe consequences in agriculture.

Threatened with increased isolation and therefore danger from the masses whose passive, if not active, support it must have at the foundation of the regime, the Kremlin has been forced in the new stage of world developments into a turn to the left, or more accurately -- for the terms "left turn" and "right turn" do not and cannot have the same significance for Stalinism as they have for either the capitalist or the working class world -- a policy of liberalization or appeasement of the masses.

Some of the concessions which the Kremlin has been forced to make are real, even if they are neither fundamental nor large. First and foremost are the concessions which are being made to the masses of the peasantry in Russia, in the expectation of overcoming the agricultural crisis which still remains one of the most explosive sources of a general political crisis for the regime. The policy of super-industrialization, indispensable for the reinforcement of the totalitarian but basically inferior Stalinist war machine and war preparations, has had to be modified in the direction of greater emphasis upon the hitherto grossly inadequate production of consumer goods. The policy of super-concentration of agriculture and super-subjection of the agricultural population ("agro-gorods") has been postponed indefinitely. In general, the policy in agriculture has been modified to reduce the tribute exacted from the peasantry by the omnipotent bureaucracy and to increase the productivity incentives of the peasant by increasing what he is allowed to retain for his own use and consumption. To the extent that the working class has suffered from the low standard of living imposed upon it by the preceding policy of the ruling class, the new course in agriculture is likewise a concession to the urban masses. At the same time, the regime has been obliged to make some concessions to the various sections of the intellectuals upon whom it depends heavily for the ideological poisoning of the minds of the masses, and out of whose ranks it must be ever watchful against the emergence of conscious and articulate champions of the revolutionary opposition to the regime. Finally, the regime has made concessions to the managerial bureaucracy, to minimize the insecurity prevalent in this stratum of the exploitive ruling class as a result of too intensive, too monopolistic, too disruptive intervention in all spheres of economic life by the G.P.U.

Abroad, concessions have been made by the Kremlin in reducing the monstrous tribute exacted by it from the oppressed satellite countries and in ordering a modification of the cruel and in modern times unprecedented intensity of exploitation of labor upon which it insisted until recently. In East Germany, where Stalinism faces a revolutionary working class, with powerful live traditions and unbroken spirit, in which is perfectly fused the struggle for socialist democracy and national freedom from the yoke of the alien despot, economic concessions have been the greatest, while repressive police measures against the rebellious populace have been employed with the greatest prudence and unostentation.

Other concessions which the Stalinist regime has appeared to make are neither real nor substantial, but fraudulent through and through, calculated to serve the function of deluding and duping the masses in the Stalinist empire and public opinion outside of it or to serve some diplomatic maneuver against Washington. The "curbing" of the G.P.U. following upon the murder of Beria and his immediate clique, is one such fraud. The purging of Beria underlines the inherent instability of Stalinist totalitarianism and the premanency of the crisis which are invariably manifested in purges which neither the regime nor its props can ever fully overcome. It does not however reduce the power of the G. P. U. It was never less under the complete control of the central Stalinist bureaucracy than it is now; it holds the country as a whole and the so-called Communist Party in particular in the grip of its terror only inasmuch as insofar as it is itself entirely in the grip of the central bureaucracy; and if the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy is absolutely inconceivable without the organized police terror of the G.P.U., this terror is practised and can only be practised in the name and in the interests of the bureaucracy, but never in the name and interests of the G. P. U. itself. The basic relationships between bureaucracy and police and between police and population have, therefore, not been altered in the slightest degree. The central bureaucracy has simply limited the jurisdiction and scale of the intervention of the G. P. U. in the field of the bureaucracy as a whole. In the realm of the people over whom this bureaucracy as a whole tyrannizes, the power and terror of the G. P. U. remain intact.

The "rise of the army's power" as contrasted to the "curbing of the G. P. U.'s power" is another fraud, aimed at the dupes of Stalinism at home and abroad. It is true that some of the army commanders enjoy a type of prestige among wide masses of Russian people that the bureaucracy as a whole, to say nothing of the G. P. U. bureaucracy in particular, does not enjoy. It is true, too, that the party bureaucracy has not hesitated to exploit that prestige for its own purposes, both in getting wide covering for its murder of the Beria gang and in spreading the impression inside and outside Russia that the "non-political" army heads are playing an important role in the Stalinist regime and exercising a "moderating" influence on its domestic and foreign policy. At bottom, this is fraud and fiction.

That there exists a military bureaucracy that would like a freer hand in formulating and executing military policy (and correspondingly, foreign and domestic policy), may be taken for granted. That this bureaucracy is capable of gaining such a free hand is entirely unlikely; in any case, there is absolutely no evidence to sustain such a possibility. That this bureaucracy is the one that holds the army together, or that has the army under its control, is altogether mythical. The present Russian army is, as it has for long been, the army of the Stalinist counterrevolution, completely under the control of the central party bureaucracy which alone is capable of holding it together in its present form. That the military bureaucracy could play an independent role, let alone the dominant role, in Russia, is entirely excluded in practise; and even if it were to attempt such a role, its short-lived, ineffectual and even ludicrous character would only underscore the preposterousness of the idea more glaringly than did the ephemeral "regimes" of Badoglio or Raeder in the second World War. The role of independent and revolutionary opposition to the Stalinist regime falls exclusively upon the shoulders of the workers and peasants; any conflict between the central bureaucracy and any of its auxiliary or related strata can only provide, as the past has indicated, a momentary impulse to the performance of this role. An example in the satellite world of Stalinist concessions which are fraudulent is the granting of "sovereignty" to East Germany. The East Germany regime of Ulbricht and Co. is a Quisling regime, against which the German people must and will sit in relentless revolutionary judgment; to talk of "sovereignty" for a country whose land is occupied militarily by an invader who has shamed and despoiled its people and which is still in a position, by means of tank, bayonet, truncheon, concentration camp and executioner, to control and does control in actuality every aspect of the nation, is a grotesque hoax and a gross insult to the people of Germany in particular and to the intelligence of the world in general.

The fact nevertheless remains that the concessions, both real and simulated, have been made, and still others will be made, by the Stalinist regime under compulsion. They have the aim of increasing the faltering strength of the regime in Russia and the satellite countries, of reducing active opposition to passive opposition, passive opposition to passive support. They have the aim of encouraging and strengthening the hand of those elements outside of Russia who, desperately anxious to avert the horrors of a third world war, are ready to make the most conciliatory and even capitulatory gestures toward Stalinist totalitarianism, especially when the Kremlin gives the appearance of moderating the terror of its regime and its policies. The extent to which the turn in Kremlin policy, in the present stage of preparation for the war, will succeed in winning support cannot be determined on the basis of an analysis of this turn itself. Its success depends, first, upon the attitude toward it which will be adopted by the independent political and social groupings throughout the world, that is, upon whether they understand it and disclose its real charac-

ter or are duped by its demagogy and thereby become its instrumentalities. It depends, second, upon the continued existence of and development of American policy. The Stalinist policy can gain successes, if not in winning over active supporters, then in neutralizing present opponents, not so much by defending its own course as by attacking, either in representation or misrepresentation, the course of American imperialism. For more than a quarter of a century, Stalinism has succeeded in suppressing, silencing, disorienting and even winning over many of its opponents and critics by depicting capitalist imperialism as the only possible alternative to itself. That is its main stock in trade to this hour, and the demoralization and devastation it has wrought in the socialist movement above all is a tribute to its effectiveness. But this most reactionary of all frauds could not even begin to be effective without the involuntary but vast cooperation of capitalist imperialism itself, nowadays above all the cooperation of American capitalism and imperialism. The Stalinists are able to exploit not only lies about American capitalism but the truth about it. Indeed, it is the entirely genuine, and entirely justified, antagonism which the people of most of the world feel toward capitalism and imperialism -- outstandingly symbolized, represented and maintained by the United States government -- which enables Stalinism to so much as make its voice heard and tolerated in public. In fact, Stalinism would have the greatest difficulty in justifying the continuation of its tyrannical rule, and even its very existence if it were not for the existence of American imperialism. In this sense, which most profoundly represents the realities of the relationship between the United States and Russia as two rival imperialist powers and as two conflicting social systems of exploitation, Stalinism has a need, an irreplaceable need, for American capitalism. If it did not exist, Stalinism would experience the greatest difficulty in surviving the intensity of the contradictions that assail it, above all, in withstanding the undiverted hatred of the masses over whom it rules. The victory of the democratic, socialist working class over capitalism is therefore the surest and swiftest step that could be taken to put an instantaneous end to Stalinism. By the same token, all attempts which are made, especially in the ranks of the working class, to support and perpetuate the capitalist order are not only reactionary in general but reactionary also in the particular respect that they are the surest means of feeding new life to Stalinist barbarism.

If Stalinism needs American capitalism in order to maintain itself in state power, where it has already captured it, and in strong positions in the working class, where it still retains them, it is no less true, on the other hand, that American capitalism has an indispensable need for Stalinism. The extraordinary development of the productive forces of the United States, unfolding under exceptionally favorable circumstances for a long time, have long ago outgrown the national frontiers of the country. At one and the same time, they require for their maintenance, let alone for their expansion, an unrestricted control of the world market and the world's resources, and by

virtue of the tremendous power which they represent, they confer upon American capitalism the role of organizer and leader of world capitalism which is in such an advanced state of disintegration that it could not even exist without the support provided by the United States. The United States must soon become the only real capitalist power, by placing the rest of the capitalist world on short rations and completely at its service in all important economic, political and military respects, or it is sure to end quickly by not being a capitalist power at all. From this standpoint, the now commonplace and unquestioned use of the term "fight for survival" to describe the struggle of American capitalism, is perfectly accurate and justified.

Abstractly, the endeavor to become the only important world power would inevitably tend to bring together practically all the other capitalist powers, big and small, in a united front to resist the advances of the rival who threatens to subordinate and even subjugate them to its global domination. Concretely, however, such a united front has been rendered impossible by the existence of Stalinism, on the one side, and the free working class and anti-imperialist movements on the other.

While American capitalism threatens to reduce the capitalist classes of all other countries to the role of complete subordination and vassalage to itself, the anti-imperialist movements threaten to deprive them of all imperialist power and privileges and Stalinism as well as the rising socialist tide, each in its own way and toward its own end, threaten to expropriate them and deprive them of any and all special power and privilege whatsoever. Hence the universal capitalist dependence upon and alliance with American imperialism, an alliance which, however reluctantly and resentfully it is made and maintained, is held together with the cement of class solidarity of the world bourgeoisie, prompted by fear of social expropriation. American imperialism needs Stalinism as the main whip with which to intimidate the rest of the capitalist world into following its political and military leadership, for without this whip it would not only be completely isolated but would face a more or less united, hostile capitalist resistance everywhere. American imperialism needs Stalinism in another field, namely, the working-class movement itself. World rule is absolutely inconceivable in the face of the open and active opposition of the working classes, especially in the more advanced countries. Stalinism threatens the capitalist classes with complete extinction; the working classes it threatens with a living slavery. This is realized by tens of millions of workers and peasants throughout the world. American imperialism has sought to exploit their opposition to Stalinism, because to the extent that it has been able, not to win the active support of the working class and popular democratic movements -- it has not been able to win them that support anywhere -- but to reduce or neutralize the antagonism these movements feel toward it, its success has depended exclusively upon the extent to which it has established the myth that it is the only practical alternative or bulwark against Stalinist totalitarianism.

This course, schematically outlined, has not, however, proved to be an effective means to achieve the ends of American imperialism. The results obtained in the popular democratic movements outside the United States, never very outstanding, are today at a new low point. In Europe and Asia, in particular, the trend in these movements away from support of American imperialism and toward an independent political position is steadily growing. In countries like England, France, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Japan, India and Indonesia, while the Stalinists have made no significant gains in the working class or anti-imperialist movements or have even lost ground, the masses in these movements show a more pronouncedly critical attitude and opposition toward American imperialism and its policies than ever since the end of the war. They see the "crusade for freedom and democracy" more clearly every day as a defense of capitalist imperialism and colonialism, as more and more an alliance of the most reactionary political groups in the capitalist world, as a world-wide campaign against the ideas and aims of socialism which hold the allegiance of the working classes of every advanced country, except the United States, and most immediately and above all as an acceleration of the danger of the atomic and hydrogen bomb war.

American capitalism has not been compensated for losses in this field by gains in the form of uniting and consolidating the capitalist classes behind its leadership. Quite the contrary. The prestige of the United States as a great power has never been lower among these classes. It has failed to overcome the conflicts and antagonisms in its own administration and decide firmly on a foreign policy to follow with greater or lesser clarity and consistency. It has failed to overcome the conflicts and rivalries among the capitalist classes of Europe over whom it has asserted its claim to leadership. In Korea, it failed, for the first time in a century, to inflict a decisive military defeat upon an enemy, an enemy, moreover, of the "inferior" Asiatic peoples. In Indo-China, it failed to overcome the disastrous defeat with which France has paid for almost a century of imperialist crimes. In Southeast Asia in general, it has failed to win a single major Asian country to its proposal for an alliance to defend that area from the Stalinists.

There are several other factors that have contributed to the failure of the United States to consolidate its leadership over a united international capitalist front. In some countries, the bourgeoisie, while granting that abstractly a war between the capitalist and Stalinist worlds is inevitable, hope to postpone that war as long as they can in order to gain the longest possible breathing spell. In American imperialist policy they see the growing trend toward precipitating the war, toward the "preventive war," and they understand that while defeat means their complete extermination, even victory, which might give Washington a good deal, would leave its present allies completely prostrate, exhausted, and helplessly at its mercy. In other countries, the bourgeoisie, while realizing the significance to itself of an ultimate victory

of Stalinism, hesitates to follow the present bellicose American policy against it for fear of arousing the active and even revolutionary opposition of the anti-war working class it faces at home right now. In still other countries, the bourgeoisie, while fundamentally as hostile to Stalinism as the American bourgeoisie, seeks to exact greater concessions from it by appearing to follow a conciliatory line toward Stalinism. Finally and in general, in practically every capitalist country, be it imperial England or a tiny Latin-American republic, the native bourgeoisie deeply resents the fact that it must depend, to one extent or another, upon the economic or military might of the United States, and resents even more deeply the fact that the American bourgeoisie and its government treat their allies abroad not as equals but with arrogance, chauvinistic superiority, ultimatic demands and commands, contempt for their legitimate national feelings above all their feeling for national sovereignty.

As a consequence of the series of military, diplomatic and political disasters and setbacks suffered by the United States from the combined results of these factors, American imperialism, like Stalinism, finds itself in a crisis of foreign policy which forces it, too, into abating the danger of an immediate war, and into adopting a turn in its policy. The turn is toward a policy further to the right than before. To implement it in practice requires time and this in turn implies, again, a relaxation of the war tension, insofar as an out-and-out global war is concerned.

The turn to the right is indicated because, in the first place, a turn to the left is precluded organically. A turn to the left would entail a policy of support, partial support at any rate, or at the very least encouragement of the democratic anti-imperialist and working class movements of Europe, Asia, Latin-America and Africa. The appeals which liberals and labor leaders in this country direct to the American bourgeoisie and its country to follow such a policy, could not be more thoroughly utopian, futile and misleading. No American capitalist government will under any circumstances support or encourage such movements which are directed, first and foremost, against the very ruling classes upon which the American bourgeoisie relies and by its very nature must and will continue to rely for support and cooperation.

The turn to the right is indicated because, in the second place, the American bourgeoisie is learning the basic political lesson -- absolutely correct from its class standpoint -- that the wavering and conciliatory elements of world capitalism will fall in line only when they see that the solid and intransigent elements are firmly united.

The rightward turn, which has actually been unfolding for the past period with growing emphasis and clarity, is manifested in the increased reliance which American imperialism places, in its endeavors to unite the capitalist classes behind its leadership, upon the more reactionary, more authoritarian and

more totalitarian governments or political groups. The latter, in exchange, are proving to be, relatively, the staunchest and least critical of Washington's allies. In Asia, the two most reactionary regimes in the East, Syngman Rhee's and Chiang Kai-shek's, are the surest allies of Washington. To their ranks are now being joined the Pakistan regime, in one corner, and the reactionary, militaristic Japanese regime, in the other. In the Near East, the United States depends most reliably upon the authoritarian regime of Turkey and the semi-feudal monarch in Iran. To their ranks the U. S. A. now seeks to win the reactionary Arab governments at the expense of the Israeli regime. On the continent, the American orientation is more and more openly away from France and toward alliance with the arch-conservative, clerical, semi-authoritarian Adenauer party behind which stand the big monopolists and military caste, toward openly fascist regimes like Franco's, and in general toward the Vatican and the more conservative elements of Catholic clericalism in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, France, Belgium and Holland.

This course, which is already plainly visible especially in Europe, may well succeed in consolidating the basic forces of social reaction in Western Europe. It does not, however, provide any assurances to Washington that it will result in solidly uniting the capitalist regimes for American policy in the cold war, for among its very first results are the growing criticism and opposition to American policy produced in the British Tory ranks and the much stronger and more widespread opposition it has intensified in French bourgeois circles against the unborn EDC and the stillborn NATO.

Far more important, from the socialist standpoint, is the fact that not only does this course guarantee, in general, that Washington forfeits any possibility of support among the workers of Europe, but that working-class opposition to American imperialism is growing apace even in those sections which, up to recently, showed a less hostile and even friendly attitude toward it. The reckless way in which American imperialism has been ready to risk precipitating the third world war, the constant threats to unleash the terror of atomic and hydrogen bombs upon an enemy, the kind of alliances formed by Washington in preparation for the war, have provided the strongest impulses to the European working classes' reaction against American imperialism.

Masses of workers, and members of the middle classes, of Europe, are aware of the fact that the world situation is pregnant with a suddenly precipitated war even though there has been a relaxation of the tension in general. Opposition to the war danger is general, especially throughout Europe and Asia which expect to be the main theaters of the third world war. At the present time, the opposition to the war has taken the form, broadly speaking, of "neutralism."

Insofar as "neutralism" is supported by socialist and radical workers, it represents a sound, healthy, progressive reaction

against those who seek to commit the workers to following the camp of Stalinism and against those who seek to commit them to following the camp of capitalism in general and American capitalism in particular. It is the instinctive and not yet clearly expressed aspiration of the workers to democratic self-government, socialist freedom, peace and abundance. It represents a long, strong step toward the conceptions and policies of Independent Socialism which are expressed in the watchword of the Third Camp.

Insofar as "neutralism" is at present an organized movement, an organized political current, a more or less consistently expressed and advocated policy, it is thoroughly confused, at best, and utterly futile, if not downright reactionary, at worst. In general, such a movement and its policy have little in common with the Third Camp position of Independent Socialism and in many particulars it has nothing in common with it.

Independent Socialism rejects the ideas and policies of "neutralism," insofar as it can be said to have developed ideas and policies. Its Third Camp position is not neutral in the present global struggle. It is irreconcilably opposed to capitalism; it is irreconcilably opposed to Stalinism; it is irreconcilably opposed to the conflict between them which promises mankind nothing but desolation and even extinction. This Third Camp, unlike the various brands of "neutralism," does not hold any theory of the "peaceful coexistence of the two social systems." It holds the theory to be false and misleading to the core; and basis itself not upon their coexistence or the desirability of their coexistence but upon unremitting struggle against them both. This Third Camp, unlike most brands of "neutralism," does not support any policy of appeasement of Stalinism, either in general or as a means of presumably averting war. It rejects appeasement of reaction in any form, Stalinism included, and regards the belief that it will avert or help avert war as deception when advocated by Stalinists and self-deception when advocated by non-Stalinists. This Third Camp, unlike all brands of "neutralism," believes that the struggle for peace can be conducted only by means of the class struggle and the independence of the working class from all dependence upon the bourgeoisie or class collaboration with it. It rejects and condemns such collaboration as is practised not only by Stalinoids but by socialist "neutralists" with bourgeois elements as reactionary as the French DeGaullists in the name of the struggle against war.

Independent Socialism, by virtue of its opposition in principle to all capitalist militarism, is opposed to the so-called EDC as well. In particular, it shares the opposition to EDC of those French and Belgian socialists who see in it a military concentration based primarily upon the fundamentally reactionary political forces of European Catholic clericalism which the socialist movement has always and justly fought. In particular, it shares also the opposition to EDC of those German socialists who declare that the German people must not be committed to any international military obligations while they

are denied their elementary right of full national sovereignty. However, we have nothing in common with the "neutrality" of those in France who are combined in one way or another with DeGaulism in fighting EDC. As against the DeGaulists, as well as against American and Stalinist imperialism, we propose as the next step in solving the economic, political and military problem of Europe, the immediate formation, on a consistently democratic basis, of an Independent Western Union.

The socialist Third Camp, unlike many brands of "neutrality," rejects all attempts to continue depriving Germany of national independence and sovereignty and thereby depriving that country of the right to decide its own military policy in the same way that the occupying powers now decide theirs. We denounce the continued disfranchisement of the German people by Russia, the United States, Great Britain and France, the occupying powers, as a gross denial of the elementary democratic rights of a people. To support the continued foreign military occupation of Germany and with it the continued denial of full national sovereignty is worthy of the Stalinist overlords or glorifiers of French imperialism like DeGaulle. When this policy is also supported and defended by British Bevanites and Laborites of the right wing and by French and Belgian anti-EDC socialists, it is a mockery of democracy and a disgrace to socialism.

Socialists worthy of the name just favor and support the right of the German people to reassume full national sovereignty, with all of the rights of national sovereignty, including the right to a national military establishment under their own control. What is reactionary in much socialist opposition to German rearmament is that it rests on rejection of this right.

There is, however, a different and an entirely progressive political motivation also involved in the widespread opposition to German rearmament among, for example, the British left socialist ranks that generally support Bevan. This expresses, in more or less clear fashion, the suspicion and hostility of these workers to a European army scheme which proposes to remilitarize Germany -- a Germany led by a reactionary government -- within a framework which is clearly imperialist, in order to tie a reborn German militarism to the cold-war camp of the U. S. This opposition to German rearmament is not opposition to Germany's national right to rearm but to the specific, presently proposed scheme for German rearmament which is being pushed by the U. S. camp in the form of EDC. This type of opposition is the progressive kernel of the opposition which German rearmament has aroused among European socialists.

One type of opposition, under the guise of being anti-war, is actually anti-German. The other type of opposition opposes the present European army scheme, German rearmament included, on anti-imperialist grounds, while recognizing Germany's right to national sovereignty, militarily as well as politically.

But this progressive basis for opposition to German rearmament inescapably raises the question of a positive socialist alter-

native to EDC and similar imperialist plans, a socialist alternative for the political organization of Western Europe and hence for its military defense. The lack of such an alternative sterilizes the socialist opposition to EDC throughout Europe.

The German Social-Democratic Party in particular weakens its popular appeal by taking a confused, negative and unrealistic position on the question of the defense of Germany. Part of the German people have already been militarily conquered by the Stalinist imperialists; the rest of them are threatened by such conquest and subjugation.

The German Social-Democracy rightly fears and opposes the reactionary political consequences of EDC and rearmament by the Adenauer government, but it does not itself offer a program for military defense against the Stalinist danger, which is a real one.

The social democratic movements of Western Europe have not been able to develop a socialist military policy, primarily because they have not developed a program for a socialist political framework on the Continent which such a policy would be designed to defend. In the absence of such a program they vacillate between half-hearted support of such schemes as NATO and EDC, and half-hearted opposition to them. This "position" alienates many workers, peasants and middle class elements who must be won to socialism and who are now being victimized by reactionary demagogues from the bourgeois and Stalinist camps.

A program for military defense against Stalinism is necessarily one which counterposes a socialist internationalism against the pseudo-internationalism of NATO and EDC. To the imperialistically organized unity of Europe, under U.S. tutelage and capitalist domination, it counterposes a European unity on a consistently democratic basis, which can be best expressed in an Independent Western Union of the European states.

Such a program is especially vital for the German Social-Democracy. On the basis of it, their present sterile and negative opposition to German rearmament under Adenauer can be replaced by a program which envisions the participation of an independent, democratic, working-class Germany as an equal partner in the military defense of an Independent Western Union from attacks from any quarter.

The military defense of Germany, as of all Europe, can only be a function of its political organization. An Independent Western Union of Europe, which in our view must develop toward a third-camp Socialist Europe, points to the only progressive form in which the Stalinist threat can be met militarily.

Independent Socialism is opposed to any intervention by the old or new imperialist powers in the countries of Asia, as it is opposed in principle to all forms of imperialism and the denial, under whatever pretext, of the right of every people

and nation to self-determination. In particular, it shares the opposition of all Indian socialists and revolutionary nationalists to any imperialist alliance to "defend" South-east Asia as an impudent, unasked-for intervention in the affairs of the peoples of that area. However, it rejects the "neutralism" of those who like Nehru, endeavor to be the "arbitrators" between the two imperialist camps. It holds that the next step in solving the problems of Asia that can be practically taken, is the formation of an Independent Southeast Asian Federation, so that all the resources are democratically pooled and the benefits thereof democratically shared, not only to assure the defense of an area which is threatened by both Stalinism and the old imperialisms, but to assure the radical agrarian reform and the modernization of the nations without which no further progress is possible.

The reactionary nature and consequences of U. S. intervention in Asia under the guise of "stopping Communism" has most recently been exemplified in Indochina even more clearly than it was in the disastrous Korean war. In Korea, at least, the U. S. intervened formally on behalf of an independent government; in Indochina, the U. S. openly appears as the champion and prop of French colonialism. In Korea, at least, the Stalinism North Korean government was the formal aggressor; in Indochina the formal aggressor is the French power, both historically as a colonial intruder, and immediately, by virtue of its past maneuvers with the Ho regime. In Korea, at least, there were no visible forces of any sort which were organized outside of the Rhee and Stalinist camps; in Indochina independent so-called "third-force" groups and elements exist, their significance to us being the extent to which they indicate that a genuinely democratic and anti-imperialist foreign policy could mobilize the Indochinese people themselves for the defeat of the Vietminh, as for the defeat of the French.

We reject any notion that the interests of the Indochinese people require the military or political support of the Vietminh against the French. The Vietminh is decisively dominated by its Stalinist leadership and functions in practice as the power instrument of Stalinist imperialism in Indochina. Its ability to appeal to the people as the champion of national liberation is the consequence entirely of the reactionary policy of French and U. S. imperialism and not of any progressive aspects of its own. We are for a policy which would further the development in Indochina of those forces who wish to fight against Vietminh domination and victory but who wish to fight not as subjects and instruments of French imperialism but on behalf of an independent and democratic Indochina. Such a policy could be nothing else but a consistently democratic foreign policy.

Once again the Indochinese war has demonstrated concretely the political power of that approach to the war crisis which is embodied in our demand for a democratic foreign policy, as put forward in more detail in the ISL 1951 resolution.

The demand for a democratic foreign policy is the positive side of the Independent Socialist's opposition to the third imperialist world war which is being prepared.

It describes why we are intransigently against the war drive in terms of what we are for.

One aspect of this demand's strength is precisely the fact that it appeals so powerfully and legitimately to every liberal and radical who thinks of himself as a critical supporter of "the West" in the looming war. For the best elements of this kind, this approach can and should be a bridge for crossing over to a clearly Third Camp position.

It cannot, however, be a bridge for Third Camp socialists to cross over to critical support of the war in any sense whatsoever.

It is, by its very nature, fundamentally directed against the policy of U. S. imperialism and of the bloc dominated by the U. S. -- not only against its present policy but against any policy which can be adopted by a capitalist imperialism like the U. S. A genuinely and consistently democratic foreign policy, in the sense in which we raise it and explain it, cannot be implemented by a capitalist government. Its implementation requires not only a labor government -- that is, a government organized and led by a working-class party -- but such a labor government as takes over the nation and defends the interests of the working people on the basis of a genuinely democratic course in foreign and domestic policy which is not in fact subordinated to the interests of capitalism and imperialism.

At the same time, this demand is by its very nature likewise fundamentally directed against the Stalinist war camp. For what we propose, to spell it out further, is a democratic foreign policy to defeat Stalinism. It is a demand directed against the illusions and ambiguities of "neutralism," insofar as neutralism means the general tendency to reconcile the war camps rather than fight them.

It presents in positive form the tasks of the Third Camp.

Only if the conscious, internationalist, proletarian socialists -- the Independent Socialists -- of all countries, succeed in winning large sections of the democratic movements to the course of policy indicated here, will it be possible to realize the tremendous potentialities for a radical change in the world situation which are deepseated in the "neutralist" movement insofar as it expresses the progressive sentiments of the working classes. Therein lies the main task of the Third Camp today.

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The ISL reaffirms its analysis of the basic forces in the international working-class movement as set forth in the resolu-

tion on that question adopted at its preceding national convention. It takes note of the following subsequent developments:

The Stalinist parties throughout the world continue to underscore their true character by their failure, to this day, to reconstitute even the formality of an international Stalinist organization which would go through the ritualistic motions of affording every Stalinist section and the membership thereof the opportunity of discussing, mutually reviewing and deciding their basic line of policy, not only in the countries where they are striving for power but in those countries where they have succeeded in seizing it. This failure is an indirect but unmistakable avowal that the Stalinist party member of a given country has not even the smallest formal opportunity, and therefore the right, to influence the course of the "brother party" of another country, least of all the two dominant Stalinist countries of Russia and China. Given the fact that nevertheless all the Stalinist parties adopt the same decisions on the same questions at the same time, the failure to present even the facade of an international organization is an indirect but clear avowal of the complete domination of the parties by the Russian or Chinese state bureaucracies, jointly or under terms of a division of spheres of influence or, as is the case primarily in Asia, in a rivalry for control. It is evident that the bureaucracies of the various Stalinist parties accept the lackey's role of instruments of Russian or Chinese foreign policy and diplomatic and military maneuverings in exchange for aid in achieving their aim of attaining state power in their own countries. As instruments of totalitarian slave regimes abroad and aspirants to such a regime at home, the Stalinist parties have nothing in common with socialism, democracy or the working class. The ISL reiterates emphatically its opposition to any policy of united front or collaboration with these tools of totalitarian slavery in the name of the interests of the working class. It declares that Stalinism must be fought in the labor movements and its influence rooted out. At the same time, the ISL rejects any support to the employment of reactionary methods or union with reactionary forces in the struggle to crush Stalinism, inside or outside the labor movement.

The ISL notes further the confirmation supplied by events of the fundamental position on such forms of National Stalinism as have appeared, embryonically, in China and in more advanced form in Yugoslavia, and the corresponding refutation of all expectations of those whose position has been based upon wishful thinking or a gross misunderstanding of Stalinism or a tendency to conciliate with or capitulate to it. There has not been the slightest indication to support the hope that, in China, the Stalinism state power would develop in the direction of democracy or socialism. While the victory of Stalinism in China struck a historic blow at the old imperialism from which it will never recover, it also set back for an indefinite period the triumph of the working class, democracy and socialism. Independent Socialism welcomes any rift in the monolithic front of the world Stalinist reaction, be it in the form of the rivalry be-

tween Peiping and Moscow or the open rupture between Russia and Yugoslavia. All such rifts must be used to help disclose the true nature of Stalinism, especially to those sincere socialists and communists who are in the ideological grip of Stalinism or under its influence to one extent or another. But Independent Socialism cannot permit itself to fall victim to any illusions about the National-Stalinist bureaucracy and its state power. In China, all the fundamental traits of Russian Stalinism are not only plainly in operation but are in some cases accentuated, as is inevitable under the circumstances of China's greater economic and political backwardness. If the backwardness and poverty of Russia were the main reasons for the imposition of the brutal police dictatorship upon the population, this applies with double force in China. Genuine revolutionists are as mercilessly hounded and murdered by the Chinese Stalinists as by the Russian. As in Russia, there are no organizations by the workers and for the workers, but only organizations of workers regimented by the totalitarian state for the purpose of controlling their thoughts and actions and enforcing a high degree of exploitation. In agriculture, the same basic tendency is manifested and growing in China that became the dominant characteristic in Russia: the transformation of the peasant into a state serf and the ever-increasing control of his life, his product and the disposition of it by the police state. For the people as a whole, years after the seizure of power by the Stalinists in China, they have not even bothered to go through the formality of granting themselves the popular legal authority of a national election to a national representative legislature and executive. This democratic right, which is nothing more than a Bonapartist plebiscite and therefore a fraud in all Stalinist countries, is as completely and contemptuously ignored in the Chinese Stalinist state as are any and all other democratic rights. We stigmatize the idea of a democratic or socialist self-development of Chinese Stalinism as a bluff or a grotesque self-deception which has as little in common with the idea of socialism as it has with the social and political realities of the class struggle in China. In Yugoslavia, where the break with Moscow generated so many eager illusions among all sorts of opponents of Stalinism, the most recent developments have served to corroborate the position of the ISL to the hilt. In its foreign policy and diplomatic maneuvers, Titoism continues, without modification, to pursue the same opportunistic, unprincipled, unsocialist and undemocratic course with the capitalist powers as characterized the Russian Stalinist regime throughout the period of the theory of "socialism in one country" and to an extent still characterizes it. The economic concessions which the Tito regime has made at home, above all to the peasants, under the pressure of the Western bourgeoisie, world public opinion and resistance at home, are a familiar maneuver of Stalinism to maintain its basic power intact and to gather new strength for a new tightening of the vise around the people. The basic economic and political, that is, the basic social character of the Titoist regime remains unchanged and is in every essential respect identical with that of the Russian Stalinists. In recent times, this has been most spectacularly

underlined by the enforced mobilization of the bureaucracy as a whole for the unanimous crushing of the Djilas tendency and the rejection of any deviation from the totalitarian police dictatorship in the direction of genuine democratization. The reiteration of the principle and practise of complete and exclusive monopolization of all political and therefore all economic and social power by the bureaucratic ruling class, which is the quintessential characteristic of Stalinist state power, constitutes the self-avowed Titoist identification with the fundamentals of Stalinism. Independent Socialism rejects all theories and policies based upon apologies for Titoist totalitarianism on the grounds of "exceptional circumstances," this being the classical form taken by all apologetics for the Stalinist totalitarianism in Russia and China. There are not and cannot be any circumstances so exceptional as to justify the disfranchisement, oppression and exploitation of the working class and peasantry in the sacred name of socialism.

The ISL takes note of the crisis that has broken out again in the Fourth International. The split in its ranks is worldwide, profound and appears to be irremediable. The group which has maintained control of the Fourth International has developed more drastically the theory and practise of capitulation to Stalinism against which we have warned repeatedly and systematically. The Fourth International is today nothing more than a channel through which Stalinism poisons the former Trotskyist movement ideologically and politically. The decision to enter the Stalinist parties (wherever they are mass movements) and to enter the Social Democratic parties as partisans of the Stalinist world camp is exceeded in gravity only by the final adoption of the theory that Stalinism represents, in a bureaucratic or deformed way, the international socialist revolution. This represents the self-liquidation of the Fourth International as any kind of independent socialist, revolutionary and internationalist movement and reduces it to the role of camp-follower and purveyor of troops to the Stalinist reaction. The ISL notes with satisfaction the reaction, however belated, half-hearted and confused, that this course has produced among many sections or supporters of the Fourth International, notably in the United States, France, Britain and Ceylon. It welcomes the resistance that these sections, which want to continue the struggle against Stalinism, are offering to the capitulation of the Fourth International. It calls their attention, however, to the need of soberly and seriously reconsidering their entire past theoretical and political position on Stalinism and the Stalinist state, which led relentlessly to the present capitulation of the majority and which is incapable of consistently and effectively combating the extremists of this capitulation. The former Trotskyist groups can be restored to a Marxist, socialist and internationalist position only by reconsidering and consciously rejecting the theory that Stalinist slavery represents a form of workers' state, that the Stalinist parties represent a form of workers' parties, and the Stalinist regimes must be unconditionally defended in any war with a capitalist regime. The perpetuation of these theories absolutely guarantees a capitu-

lation to Stalinism, if not in the general form that the Fourth International has now taken, then in every concrete important political situation. The Fourth International has proclaimed itself an integral part of the Stalinist camp in general and the Stalinist war camp in particular. The ISL completely repudiates, as inimical to the interests of the working class of the entire world, those under the rule of Stalinism included, the theory and practice of "defense of the Soviet Union" in any form and declares that support of the camp of Stalinist slavery is incompatible with the interests of democracy, internationalism and socialism. The ISL confirms its opposition to Stalinism, not in the name of support of capitalism, but in the name of support of socialism. The ISL's position toward the planned imperialism war repudiates this conception of opposition to the war. It cannot, does not and will not assume any political responsibility and therefore given any political support to any capitalist imperialism, for the latter fights not for the defense of the nation but for the rights and privileges of private property and its imperialist interests abroad. In the period of preparation for the imperialist war as well as during the war itself, should it break out, the ISL therefore defends only the interests of the working class and of democracy by the only means at its disposal, the class struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie, which it proposes to conduct not in order to assure the victory of the armies of the "revolutionary camp" which the Fourth International now claims is represented by the Stalinist reaction, or in any way or degree to facilitate such a victory, but solely and exclusively to advance the interests of the independent workers class in such a way as to bring it constantly closer to a workers' government and a democratic socialist struggle against capitalism, imperialism and Stalinism. From the standpoint of this position, the ISL denounces the latest turn in the court of the Fourth International as an abandonment of the struggle against the war and a shameful capitulation to Stalinism.

The ISL reaffirms its position in favor of all independent socialists who are now everywhere reduced to small cadre organizations, joining the Social Democratic parties in all countries where they exist as serious working class political organizations in order to work within their ranks, alongside the worker militants, as a loyal left wing seeking to revitalize these movements into revolutionary socialist instruments of the working class. In this connection, we note two developments. First is the reconstitution of a sort of Social-Democratic International at the Frankfurt Conference of European Social Democratic organizations. The repudiation of the class struggle at this conference indicates anew the complete degeneration and theoretical bankruptcy of the official Social Democratic leaderships in Europe. They represent nothing more than petty-bourgeois socialism in the working class movement, that is, the policy of reforms within the framework of maintaining capitalism, at the best, and social imperialism at the worst. The refusal of the socialist organizations of the colonial or former colonial countries, in Asia primarily, to join the newly-reconstituted Second Internationalists, is entirely justified and correct and deserves the support of every genuine socialist. However, it is nevertheless in these Social Democratic parties of Europe that, as analyzed and forecast by the ISL, the radicalization of the socialist masses has thus far found its clearest and strongest expression. First and foremost is the Bevanist movement in the British Labour Party. The widespread nature of this development is attested by the fact that developments of the same type, although of different degrees of strength and political clarity, have taken place in most of the other European Social Democratic parties and trade union organizations. The ISL gives its warmest support to these movements, which are a manifestation of the irrepressible urge of the workers to break away from conservative, petty-bourgeois, bureaucratic socialism and collaboration with capitalism and imperialism in any form, without at the same time falling into the trap of supporting Stalinism in their place. The ISL, however, not only does not support the entire program and politics of such movements as the Bevanists, but warns most fraternally and most urgently against the gravely harmful nature of many aspects of this program. The

tendency to ignore or subordinate the importance of workers' democracy and workers' control in the nationalized industries can be disastrous to the socialist evolution of the Bevanist movement and with it of the British working class as a whole. The tendency toward appeasement of Stalinism, in Russia or in China, like the tendency to depict Stalinism and the Stalinist states as having basic characteristics in common with socialism, can, if unchecked, develop into a fatal cancer for the Bevanist movement in which these tendencies have made their appearance. The desire to fight ~~the~~ vigorously and uncompromisingly against militarism, imperialism and war, which represents one of the most encouraging and welcome hallmarks of the Bevanist movement and the widespread sentiment it represents in Britain and elsewhere, can be vitiated and negated if the movement continues to demand that, presumably in the interests of democracy and peace, the German people and their nation must continue to be deprived by the naked power of foreign military occupation of the elementary right of national sovereignty and self-government which the British and French people justly regard as an inalienable right. A positive socialist program, put forward as an alternative both to the capitalist road and the Stalinist road, is an unpostponable necessity and the desire to fight for it is the outstanding contribution made by the Bevanist movement. But it cannot, in the long run, prove to be a contribution to socialist progress unless it is permeated consciously with an internationalist spirit of democratic equality for all nations and peoples, and a union of all available forces for an unambiguously formulated independent struggle against capitalist imperialism on the one side and Stalinist tyranny on the other.

The ISL finally notes the encouraging developments in the socialist movement in Asia, as manifested by the convocation of the Asian socialist conference at Rangoon. Unlike the petty-bourgeois socialist leaderships of Europe, some of the socialist organizations in Asia represent a healthy, progressive, militant movement, on the whole, stemming primarily from the distinctive historical and political position of their countries, the distinctive social position of their working classes (non-existence of an imperialistically-corrupted aristocracy), and their living associations with recent or still-operating revolutionary national movements. We welcome the general tendency among most Asian socialists to adopt a course of independence from American imperialism and from Stalinist reaction. While the effectiveness of this course is weakened, at one extreme, by the conciliatory position toward American imperialism of the Japanese Right Wing Socialist Party, and at other extremes, by the conciliatory, or confused position toward Stalinism of some elements in the Indian Socialist Party, and by manifestations of Nehruist neutralism in general, the basic tendency of the Asian socialist movement is in the direction of a firm anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-Stalinist and therewith an independent socialist position. The ISL welcomes the formation of the Asian Socialist International and will do all that lies within its power to help in the clear and strong socialist development of the revolutionary proletarian movement of the continent, and to help in ~~the~~ informing the American proletariat of the problems and positions taken by that movement.

NOTE: C o r r e c t i o n: In the issue of FORUM of May, 1954, the amendment to the American resolution of Shahtman, Gates and Haskell, was reported as a motion by the PC minority. As the text indicated, this is a wrong characterization. There was no majority, and therefore, no minority, on this question of political action, since the PC was evenly divided on the question. The forementioned motion did not carry for want of a majority and the designation minority of the amendment was not accurate.