

# DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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## THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN AMERICA

(Political Resolution adopted by the 16th National Convention.)

### America's International Position

In the sphere of international politics, the most striking and weighty phenomenon since the end of World War II has been the defeats and setbacks, military and diplomatic, suffered by American imperialism. Far from accomplishing the task of "organizing" the world to assure its own ascendancy, the United States has been compelled to assume a defensive posture against revolutionary forces that threaten destruction to the discordant ruling class of which it is the leader. The pattern is all the more remarkable when we consider that the end of World War II was to have ushered in the "American Century."

Germany, Japan and Italy were smashed in World War II. Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, etc., emerged in such ruined condition that they were able to escape proletarian revolution only thanks to Stalinism and the Social Democracy. The same was true of Italy. Thus capitalist America came out of the war with overwhelming superiority. As a result, Wall Street was able to enforce its will, in the main, on both its defeated foes and its ruined capitalist allies. But by incorporating these bankrupt states in its structure and moving its borders, in effect, to the frontiers of Eastern Germany and North Korea, the U.S. included in its foundations all the weaknesses of capitalism as a world system.

After its war victory, American imperialism turned to the job of settling accounts with the Soviet Union. The accomplishment of this task, however, has been delayed by a series of major events. First of all, the victorious American armies disintegrated under the impact of the "Get Us Home" movement. Secondly, the cooperation of the Stalinists was needed to head off the post-war revolutionary upsurge in Europe which was close to taking power in a number of countries. This required deferment of the attack on the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, the revolutionary repercussions of the victory of the Soviet Union in the war began to be felt. Thanks to the planned economy, the USSR recovered from the devastation of the war at phenomenal speed and became the second power in the world. Along with this, out of the decay of capitalism as a world system, a decay that had been accelerated by the war, came revolutionary forces of vast scope and power. The greatest colonial uprisings since the establishment of the capitalist empires greatly weakened the metropolitan centers. China, the big prize of World War II, broke the imperialist grip and emerged as a new factor of immense weight in world politics. While, on the other hand the revolutionary upsurge of the European workers has been contained, it has not been crushed. The pressure of the workers on the European bourgeoisie translates into resistance to the unlimited dictation of Wall Street. The breaking of the American monopoly on atomic weapons has further altered the relation of forces to the disadvantage of Washington. The weakened position of world capitalism was graphically demonstrated by the defeats and setbacks it suffered in Korea and Indochina.

Thus, although the United States has reached the pinnacle of its

power in an absolute sense and scored a number of counter-revolutionary successes -- thanks primarily to the treacherous role of the Social Democracy and of Stalinism -- nevertheless, in relation to the Soviet bloc and the colonial areas as a whole, it has suffered a decline. Its absolute strength has been undermined. At the height of its superiority it finds gangrene setting in at its extremities.

The main consequence of this development, which was wholly unexpected by Wall Street, has been the continual deferment of World War III. At present a stalemate exists, which the Kremlin covers and paints up with its slogan of "peaceful coexistence," while Eisenhower responds in kind with his slogan of achieving a "modus vivendi." In recognition of the new balance of power, Washington and Moscow have been moving since the truce in Korea toward a temporary deal -- to formalize the stalemate by explicit agreement.

Such a deal would not eliminate the jockeying for position which has been going on since the end of World War II. Washington now sees as the main task of its diplomacy the political unification of the capitalist world and the splitting of the Soviet bloc in order to redress the unfavorable balance of international forces. At the same time the Kremlin will continue its efforts to drive a wedge into the imperialist camp. Such activities will continue regardless of any understanding, tacit or explicit, that may be reached between the two camps and constitute part of the preparation for ultimate war.

The interlude of a formal deal would not block the basic orientation of American imperialism toward another war. First of all, the U.S. is under economic compulsion to open up the Soviet bloc to capitalist investment and exploitation. Secondly, it feels that the mere existence of planned economy -- despite anything the Stalinist bureaucracy may offer in partial concessions -- constitutes a standing challenge. From the imperialist viewpoint, acquiescence in continuation of the status quo would mean eventually the spread of nationalized economy to new areas. The freedom of planned economy from depressions constitutes still another threat, for in the eyes of the masses it stands in contrast to the instability of capitalism. Thus mere maintenance of the status quo means an economic race in which American imperialism understands it is at a disadvantage in the long run.

From these considerations it can be concluded that American imperialism will continue its present course toward building its own war machine, rearming Germany and Japan, stabilizing its military bases abroad, consolidating its grip on the Western Hemisphere and securing its home base by chaining the labor movement hand and foot.

A Soviet-imperialist deal would not succeed in preventing new revolutionary upsurges and colonial uprisings. The strike wave in Germany in August 1954, following the general strike in France and the uprising in East Germany in June 1953, indicates what can be expected to happen in Europe. Moreover, new revolutions such as occurred in China can be expected elsewhere in the colonial sphere. This means continual upsetting of the equilibrium, the deeper and deeper involvement of the U.S. in the revolutionary process that world capitalism itself is generating.

The worsened position of America on the international scene has given a qualitatively different sense of insecurity to the people at

home, particularly the middle classes, from that felt in previous periods of crisis. An essential ingredient of the preparations for war is psychologizing the masses. This has been going on since 1946. Wall Street's insistence on preparing for war, however, runs into lack of faith among the people in the perspective of imperialist war, a consequence of the disappointment and disillusionment following two world wars. Binding these doubts together is the dread of what an atomic conflict might mean in slaughter and destruction inside America itself and to civilization as a whole. Yet we must prepare for war, to believe the capitalist propagandists, for America, they claim, is being hemmed in and made subject to attack by an advancing fanatical enemy who is so powerful and adroit that he has honeycombed the United States with spies.

Thus the war propaganda ripens the psychological conditions for the fascist explanation of how the foe succeeded in getting the "secret" of the bomb, how "we lost China," and why America -- which never lost a war up to now -- has become so weak it can't win even in Korea. The conditions are also made ripe for the fascist leader who offers a sure-fire cure. This is the setting in which McCarthy, the would-be Super Hitler, appeared with his demagogy about "20 years of treason."

The main source of the strength of McCarthyism derives from the unfavorable position in which American capitalism finds itself internationally. To understand the rise of McCarthyism we must understand first of all the decline of American power on a world scale.

### The Threat of Depression

The worsening international position of American imperialism tends continually to become converted into a domestic crisis. This is evident at the most fundamental level, the economy itself, as well as in the political sphere.

Throughout the post-war period American economy has manifested an inflationary trend. The threat of economic crash is met primarily by armaments expenditures that stave off the day of reckoning. The steep decline of 1949 was overcome primarily by plunging into the Korean civil war. This demonstrated that mere preparation for war has become insufficient to prop up production and employment.

After the Korean truce, the economy at once began to decline. The economic slump of 1953-54, the deepest America has suffered since the end of World War II, indicates in faint outline what the consequences of a major depression will be. At the beginning of 1954 unemployment started mounting and at one point reached well above 5,000,000. A large section of the working class were on part-time work. An even larger section were deprived of the overtime needed to maintain the standard of living of most working class families. At the close of 1954 the economy again shows an upturn, but there is no ground to expect this trend to have an enduring stability. Only expenditures on the scale required by war itself can overcome the tendency to slide into depression.

Fresh inflationary measures, constituting state intervention in the economy, can be instituted by the Eisenhower administration in continuation of Wall Street's political decision to defer as long as possible, or to a more propitious time, the reckoning American capitalism must eventually face. The major fact remains that, despite

the recession, a big section of the population is still riding the economic boom that began with the entrance of America into World War II.

This is particularly true of the wide petty-bourgeois level, together with the top layers of the working class, which have been enjoying a standard of living in sharp contrast to pre-war depression conditions. Millions of families once on relief rolls have purchased farms, homes, automobiles, TV sets, etc. But the burden of mortgage debt and installment credit is tremendous and ever increasing. None of them are cushioned against the effects of a major depression, and they live in dread of losing what they have gained.

The farmers have indicated their uneasiness by the volatile character of their vote since the end of the war. The war prosperity that came to them after a quarter of a century of stagnation and poverty aroused them to profit while they could. They expanded, mechanized their farms, and modernized their homes. Television helped end their isolation and pull them into the main stream of the country's political life. The repeated indications of the unstable character of the economy and its wobbling on the edge of depression has thoroughly disquieted them.

The American farmers are inclined to radical solutions in times of stress. If the labor movement fails to bring forward a positive and dynamic program pointing to a sure road out of economic crises, it is certain that under the impact of a major crash, a large part of this important sector of American society will turn toward the fascist demagogues.

### The Political Crisis

Symmetrical to the weakening of its international position, American capitalism has become increasingly malignant in its domestic politics. With the opening of the "cold war" in 1946 under Truman, American imperialism became the chief organizer of the world counter-revolution. It is not possible to revive, bolster and sustain every reactionary force abroad, from the Japanese Mikado, Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee in Asia to the former Nazis, Franco and the Vatican in Europe, without affecting the ideology of the home front. The reactionary character and moral corruption of these allies tend to become fashionable in America -- all the more so in view of the setbacks abroad and the appearance of fresh obstacles requiring further postponement of war. The rantings of a Chiang Kai-shek or Syngman Rhee on the need for a supreme effort to reduce the Soviet bloc countries to an open arena for imperialist exploitation became a factor in American politics, although the popular majority has decisively rejected them.

While organizing counter-revolution abroad, Big Business opened a reactionary drive at home to prepare the domestic front for World War III. American imperialism had sufficient resources in World War II to buy off the labor bureaucracy and a section of the working class, thereby blunting the opposition to war and gaining effective allies in keeping it under control. In a new conflict, untold devastation would be visited on America. Aside from that, mobilization of the country's resources on the scale required by atomic war would preclude

diverting much into bribery of the workers on a mass scale as in World War II. Consequently, the sacrifices that would be demanded of the workers in the projected atomic conflict are of an order qualitatively different from anything demanded of the workers in the past. The ruling class cannot count on buying off this opposition or seriously expect that the labor bureaucracy can contain it. Therefore their tendency will be to depend more and more on repression.

The unions are marked as the major objective, but the dollar plutocracy is not so stupid as to begin with a head-on struggle against such a force. Their strategy is "one at a time." They have carefully singled out unpopular victims to whose defense the labor movement would be least likely to rally, and given them the works first. At the same time they have moved step by step to construct a police state capable of strangling all democratic institutions, rights and practices and transforming the trade unions into an integral part of the police-state apparatus. The norm of democracy in America is disintegrating. The disintegration has gone so far that for the first time in American history a political party has been outlawed.

The witch hunt becomes the main political instrument in the drive against the democratic form of government and the democratic rights associated with it. A witch hunt has a logic of its own. It can be kept going only by providing fresh sensations, each more startling than the last. Otherwise it tends to die down. Since the witch hunt is an essential element of the drive to psychologize the people for war and for smashing the unions, Big Business is reluctant to let it die down. The fresh sensations are provided. America is even given the electrocution of "spies" in peacetime.

At a certain point, however, the fantastic premises of the witch hunt begin to appear to be true, especially to a nervous middle class. A desire thereupon arises in this section of the population for a drastic solution. Each new sensation, proving the "correctness" of the new outlook on reality, deepens this need. The witch hunt thus becomes ready for a qualitative change, for the birth of something new.

In November 1953 this development was dramatically projected on the national arena when McCarthy in a radio-TV speech answered ex-president Harry Truman. Brownell's smear of Truman as the protector of Harry Dexter White, an alleged Russian agent occupying a high government position, has been properly characterized by Truman as "McCarthyism." After Truman's rebuttal, McCarthy took over, hurling his challenge November 24 at both the Democrats and Eisenhower Republicans and clearly delineating the independent fascist course of his faction.

These fireworks illuminated the whole national political scene, showing the emergence of a fascist nucleus in the administration and in the Republican Party and the crystallization of an incipient fascist movement in the United States.

At the beginning of 1954, the question of McCarthyism dominated the national political scene. The Republican high command even listed the Wisconsin fascist demagogue as its main national speaker. The development of McCarthyism put a question mark over the continued existence of every democratic institution in America, including not only the unions, but all political parties outside of McCarthy's faction. The death agony of the capitalist system, having caught up with the United States, finds its symptoms most glaringly displayed in the form of an acute political crisis from which no one, Republicans, Democrats, labor bureaucrats or any one else can escape. The appearance of McCarthyism foreshadows the great historical alternative America faces -- fascism or socialism.

In its incipient stage, a fascist movement is subject to far greater ups and downs than the democratic capitalist political machines that pave the way for it. In this it reflects the shifting moods of the middle class, constituting a barometer of the intensity of the crisis and the degree of political independence of the labor movement as well as the concessions or blows it receives from the liberal opposition to fascism. This is well illustrated in the case of the McCarthy movement. From obscurity, the Wisconsin demagogue became a national figure in a few months in 1950. By the end of 1953 his movement dominated the political scene. Then within a year, after the Army-McCarthy and Watkins hearings, he suffered a sharp setback. The present eclipse of McCarthy should not be regarded as a definitive defeat of native fascism. The basic cadre is not smashed; in fact it is hardened by such experiences. Moreover, the basic causes of fascism, continuing to operate, will prepare a fresh revival of the movement. In the event of a social crisis, McCarthy's movement would show a rapid resurgence.

At the present conjuncture, however, the censure of McCarthy by the Senate -- by far the most serious reverse he has yet sustained -- signifies unmistakably that the decisive sections of the capitalist class are not ready to entrust their destiny to a fascist dictator. In the current policy of the ruling class, which seeks a modus vivendi with the Soviet bloc instead of a headlong course toward an early war showdown, there is no place for McCarthy -- except in the corner into which he has now been thrust.

### The 1954 Elections

The election of Eisenhower in 1952 was a result of the prolonged refusal of the labor bureaucracy to lead the working class on to the road of independent political action and -- in the absence of any political threat from the labor bureaucracy -- the determination of Big Business to exert a more direct control over the government apparatus. The victory of the Republican Party opened a new stage in the political development of the United States. Overthrowing the 20-year rule of the Democratic-Labor coalition, it ended the equilibrium that had been achieved. All the reactionary, anti-labor tendencies in the country were enormously strengthened.

The coalition, the aim of which was to tie the labor bureaucrats -- and through them the trade unions -- to the capitalist state, was different from similar coalitions in Europe. The workers had no mass political party of their own, and the labor bureaucrats were granted

no cabinet posts. This peculiar feature of the American version of coalitionism (or "Peoples Frontism") underlined the contradiction between the enormous potential strength of the unions and the feeble political weight of the labor bureaucracy in the structure of capitalist politics. The very weakness of the labor bureaucracy made more certain their docility as junior partners and tied them all the tighter to the state, occasional protests notwithstanding.

The political neutralization of the American working class by this process permitted the swing toward capitalist reaction to gain extraordinary momentum. The point was quickly reached where the "coalition" administration itself could be dispensed with.

This did not halt the efforts of Big Business to integrate the unions into the state apparatus. It simply changed the form. Whereas under Roosevelt and Truman it proceeded, by and large, through agreement and acquiescence of the union heads, under Eisenhower the tendency has been to utilize repressive anti-labor legislation and intimidation of the union bureaucrats.

Less than a year of Republican rule, however, was sufficient to set in motion a trend toward the Democrats. This was apparent in the 1953 elections, in elections in various places in the spring of 1954, and was confirmed by the outcome of the November 1954 elections.

The capture of the Senate, the House of Representatives and a number of governorships by the Democrats through the backing of the labor movement again opens a new political situation.

The middle class vote remained predominantly Republican. This was primarily an indication of the anti-war sentiments of the farmers. Despite a 20% drop in farm income since 1952, the farmers showed that they were still under the influence of Eisenhower's agreeing to a truce in Korea and this weighed heavier with them than the dip in prosperity. To them the Democratic Party appears primarily as the war party and nothing the Democrats or labor officials said was designed to change that impression.

The elections also recorded a drastic change in the weight of McCarthyism. The outstanding McCarthyite candidate, Joseph T. Meek, was defeated in Illinois. Charles J. Kersten, a test McCarthyite candidate in the fascist Senator's home state of Wisconsin was defeated by a big majority. On the other hand, the one Republican candidate whose defeat McCarthy openly called for, Clifford Case, won in New Jersey. These defeats deeply injured McCarthy's standing as a power politician. At the same time, the witch hunting engaged in by Nixon and other Republicans to influence outcome of the elections failed to prove decisive. On top of that the reorganization of Congress means that McCarthy loses his powerful post as the Senate's chief witch hunter.

The shelving of McCarthy during the Republican campaign, following the Army-McCarthy and Watkins hearings, and his subsequent formal censure by the Senate, indicate a decision in top ruling circles to administer a check to the McCarthyite movement without destroying it. For the time being it is reduced to a minority faction in a minority party. However, this should not be taken as signifying the



end of fascist movements in America. Big Business remains free to give McCarthyism a push forward whenever it believes it would serve its political interests to do so.

The Republicanism of the middle class prevented the Democratic trend from becoming a sweep. However, that makes all the more impressive the solidity of the working class vote for the Democrats.

The workers rejected the Republican party, the preferred party of Big Business, because of its "give-aways" to America's 60 ruling families, its lightening of the tax load on the rich, its open anti-labor drive and its indifference to the plight of the unemployed. The tidelands oil concession, the Dixon-Yates contract, the raids on public resources and parklands, and other special-privileged measures in behalf of the giant corporations forcibly reminded the workers that the GOP has not changed as the traditionally rich man's party. The more and more anti-union implications of the witch hunt as it developed under Republican sponsorship disquieted even sections of the labor bureaucracy. The passage of new anti-union legislation more far reaching than the Taft-Hartley Act served -- even though the Democrats voted for it -- to further repel the working class. The failure of the Eisenhower administration to concern itself about unemployment, heightening fears of a depression such as the last one suffered under the Republicans, aroused the workers and consolidated their vote heavily in those areas where the problem is most acute. This was especially evident in the depressed coal, steel and auto centers.

The workers voted for a return to the New Deal. They voted for returning the Democratic-Labor coalition to power. This is not to say that the workers have no doubts about the Democrats. However, the working class as a whole registered its decision to give the Democrats another try. That no other alternative appeared open must be charged to the account of the labor bureaucrats who have stubbornly refused to take the road to independent political action.

The main political meaning of this outcome of the elections is that the working class has not yet completed its experience with the Democratic Party. It is still under the influence of the Roosevelt reforms and the war prosperity enjoyed under the Democrats. As a peacetime party, it views the Democrats as New Deal and is still under the illusion that the New Deal can be restored. Consequently its support of the Democratic candidates is an expression of the delusory hope that the Democrats can assure jobs and decent living conditions. The workers see the Democrats as "pro-labor," the Republicans as "anti-labor."

Neither the world nor the domestic position of American capitalism permits any basic improvement in the workers' conditions. On the world scene, despite the present indications of a temporary balance of power deal, the basic drive is toward another world war; a postponement of the war and a prolonged stalemate poses the threat of an economic crash. The Democratic Party, controlled as it is by Big Business, cannot do anything to change that. However, the working class will not learn this except through its own experience and the labor bureaucracy will do everything in its power to prevent it from drawing the necessary lessons.

The slim majority held by the Democrats in Congress, plus Republican domination of the executive branch, will facilitate this treacherous policy of the labor bureaucrats. Under present conditions, real control of Democratic policies in Congress rests with the Southern Bourbons. Instead of utilizing this fact to expose the reactionary character of the Democratic Party and to show the futility of playing along with it, the labor bureaucrats can be expected to turn it into a specious argument for electing more Democrats -- in order to "weaken" the Bourbon wing.

Similarly on unemployment, anti-labor legislation, discrimination, civil liberties and welfare needs, the de facto Bourbon and Republican control of Congress will be converted into arguments for electing more Democrats.

Above all, the possibility of putting a Democrat in the White House in 1956 will be utilized as an "unanswerable" argument against any moves toward independent political action.

The labor bureaucrats can get away with such a perfidious policy only because the working class itself has not yet exhausted its experience with the Democratic Party. As yet, the consciousness of the workers in America remains far behind the objective situation.

### Political Tasks

Class-conscious militants, in considering their own political tasks, must begin with the understanding that it is necessary to go with the working class through all its experiences. There is no escape from that. However, they go through the experience in accordance with revolutionary socialist principles; they do not advise the workers to take false steps against their own real interests. That means no compromise with capitalist politics. It means remorseless criticism and exposure of the labor bureaucracy in complete opposition to all (such as the Stalinists) who offer their services to the labor bureaucracy or who, as a "clever" maneuver, participate in capitalist politics whether in the primaries or elsewhere. The main task is patient, pedagogical explanation of the class interests of the workers, why the course offered by the labor bureaucrats is wrong and why the road of independent class political action offers the only real hope, pointing as it does toward socialism.

The impermissibility of crossing class lines, in political struggles as in strike struggles, must be re-established as a principle in the labor movement. The Social Democrats and Stalinists have succeeded well in breaking this down, but the new struggles that are sure to break out as the general crisis of capitalism deepens will facilitate the task of bringing it back as a principle that no one violates with impunity in the American labor movement. To succeed in this requires going back to the most elementary fundamentals of the class struggle and explaining them over and over again in the light of living experience. There will be no lack of material for this. In form, the task will shape up as a running criticism of the most merciless kind against the crimes of the labor bureaucracy.

The solidity of the working class in voting against the Republican Party and for the Democratic Party is a highly distorted

expression of their urge to advance their own interests as a class, and to do it in an organized way. Workers who come to understand how correct it is to act as an organized body to advance their class interests can come to a break with the Democratic Party much easier than those who don't, for the problem then boils down to finding the most effective form for accomplishing that aim. The transition to the idea of independent political action at any of its stages is thus facilitated.

Likewise in the struggle against unemployment, demands that arise among the union rank and file such as a reduced work week at the full rate of pay are clear, if only partial, expressions of the urge to advance the workers' interests as a class. They imply such fundamental issues as society's obligation to provide every one of its producers with a decent livelihood and lead naturally to such broad questions as the cause of depressions, the need for planning and what prevents it from being carried out under the capitalist system.

Similar instances can be found in the struggle against the witch hunt and anti-labor drive. The action of the San Francisco longshoremen in militantly resisting the invasion of the Velde Committee is a good example of the opportunity such actions offer for showing the real feelings of the workers, how they should be expressed, and how the limitations of the expression should be transcended. Another excellent example is the Square D strike in Detroit where all the elements for an outstanding victory took dramatic form, providing rich material for exposing the inadequate or treacherous policies of the various sections of the labor bureaucracy.

The struggle for equality, involving primarily the minorities, but of first importance to the labor movement, offers similar examples. The Supreme Court decision in favor of school integration -- a great victory for the Negro people -- is a case in point. The positive side -- the campaign of the Negro people, the pressure from abroad, and the favorable interest of the unions, all of which forced the decision -- becomes the point of departure for criticizing the weaknesses in method and suggesting more effective means for enforcing the decision and making integration a living reality.

In the case of war, every expression of opposition, even those as muted as polls taken by capitalist agencies, can be used to indicate the real feeling of the people about Wall Street's projected conflict. The fact that the Democrats committed themselves the day after election to a common program with the Republicans on this overriding issue serves as an outstanding example of how superficial the differences between the two parties really are.

The point in all these issues is to find the difference between the rank and file and the labor bureaucrats, to drive the wedge deeper by bringing the rank and file a step closer to realization of their own class interests, and by demonstrating that the bureaucrats represent capitalist interests. In each case the difference can be hinged on one or another transition slogan -- the Labor Party, the 30-hour week at 40-hours pay, etc.

In the immediate period ahead, the stress must be on patient explanation. This necessarily signifies that major activities center

upon advancing socialist literature, particularly the press, and campaigning for the necessary financial means. These goals may appear modest but they happen to be what the situation calls for.

This does not exclude other campaigns. They must, however, be carefully selected to avoid dissipating forces and to give maximum striking power to those that are undertaken so that in each case every possibility for their full success is realized.

Such campaigns come under two headings.

(1) Struggles initiated by unions or minority organizations such as the longshore defense against Velde, the Square D strike, American Safety Razor, Trumbull Park, school segregation, etc. In these we participate as a normal feature of our mass activities.

(2) Electoral activities and campaigns associated with them. The opportunities for these next spring and fall, particularly in municipal campaigns, must be carefully weighed in each case. In some we may be able to participate as part of larger forces as was the case in Newark. In others where candidacies of our own are involved the decision must hinge on the size and experience of our forces and our financial capacity. In some cases where the effort appears out of proportion to the possible gains, it may be necessary to sacrifice the opportunity in order to better husband our resources for the presidential campaign in 1956.

Among the problems facing us inside the Socialist Workers Party, recruitment deserves special attention. The obstacles are familiar enough -- a decade and a half of prosperity based on war or the prospect of war and the worst witch hunt the country has experienced. These obstacles, we may assume, will be with us a while yet. But they do not bar what can turn out to be exceptionally important for the future growth and development of the party, individual recruitment of rebels against the witch hunt and of workers who out of their own experience have begun to make rather far-reaching generalizations about the responsibility for depressions and wars and other ills of the society we live in. These prospective recruits learn about the party in the course of its normal activities. It is necessary to consider each of them an opportunity requiring the collective attention of the branch. Winning a new member in times such as these is an achievement. It is more than that -- it is the avenue to the wider prospects that are certain to open for us as the general crisis of capitalism grows more intense.

Special attention should likewise be paid to educational activities within the party. This should be aimed not only for new recruits but should be considered as the necessary internal supplement to the external propaganda work of the party. Our propagandistic activities necessarily take the form of a polemic, first of all with the open representatives of capitalism from Eisenhower on down, and then with the indirect representatives starting with the labor bureaucracy. But we cannot achieve maximum fire-power unless every member makes it a personal ambition to become the best possible Marxist not only in the field of action but in the field of theory. This includes the history of our own party as well as the Marxist movement as a whole. It includes the basic outlook as well as the method of Marxism. It includes special problems in fields indirectly related to the class

struggle. By widening our views and deepening our understanding, by learning the lessons of past struggles involving our party and the Marxist movement, we arm ourselves for more effective participation in the big struggles looming ahead.

It would be false to conclude, from the lull on the international scene, marked by the slowing down of the imperialist war drive, or from the present economic upturn and the continuing political passivity of the American working class, that the party is condemned to a long period of relative isolation in which it will be confined mainly to tasks of propaganda and internal education. The era of the mortal crisis of capitalism is essentially one of abrupt changes and sharp turns. This is true internationally and on the national scene as well. The relative calm of today can easily be disrupted by the most stormy events tomorrow. The possibility of a sharp break in the economic conjuncture in one or another sector of the capitalist world, with its tremendous political consequences, is inherent in the very structure of the sick capitalist system.

The unfolding developments, acting as a stimulant to the class struggle, will give the party its long-awaited opportunity to forge ahead and achieve its role as the revolutionary spokesman and leader of the American working class. All our work in the next immediate period is a work of preparation for this future,

# # #

CONVENTION MOTION ON POLITICAL RESOLUTION

(1) That the Convention adopt the general line of the second draft of the Political Resolution;

(2) that the draft be edited and amended in the light of the convention discussion, including those amendments accepted by the incoming National Committee;

(3) that the draft as edited by the Political Committee after the convention then be published in the discussion bulletin and submitted for discussion in the party;

(4) that the next Plenum of the National Committee be authorized to edit and adopt the final draft of the resolution for publication, with the inclusion of all such clarifications and amendments as are brought out in the general party discussion and accepted by the Plenum;

(5) in the meantime the general line of the resolution shall guide the work of the party and the press.

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY by the 16th National Convention.