

TASKS OF THE PARTY IN THE PRESENT SITUATION

* * *

More than two years after the defeat of its imperialist rivals in the World War and its emergence as the principal victor nation and the only one with an intact economic plant, the United States has not succeeded in establishing economic stability either at home or in the rest of the world. Not a single one of the important non-Stalinist nations of Europe and Asia, which are increasingly dependent upon American support, has managed to achieve stabilization either in the economic field or in the field of political relations between the classes. The urge for economic assistance from the only powerful capitalist nation in the world, the United States, is counteracted in Europe and Asia by the resistance offered by all the classes, in different ways and degrees, to the political dependence which is the price of this economic aid. The working classes of these countries, who seek a socialist or anti-imperialist way out of the unresolved crisis, have developed an increasingly bitter antagonism to American imperialism and to its bourgeois agents and associates in their own lands, as they realize more clearly that economic aid from the United States must be paid for by political subordination to it, by a deterioration of their own social position, and by their integration into the military machine being prepared for the war between the two imperialist giants, the United States and Russia, in which these toilers are reserved as the shock troops of the former against the latter. This growing antagonism continues to militate against a capitalist stabilization in Europe and Asia and remains a profound source of violent social clashes on these continents. The same holds true of the situation in Latin America, even if in a less developed degree.

Thus, while the revolutionary wave which mounted during the war and immediately after it has largely subsided, above all in Europe, the European bourgeoisie and its patron, the American, have not yet achieved a capitalist stabilization. This has not been and could not be without its repercussive effects upon the situation in the U.S.

The world situation is decisive for the development of the American situation. The world policy of the American bourgeoisie is decisive for the development of its policy at home and therefore for the development of class relations in the country.

The axis of American imperialist policy is the organization, consolidation and extension of the largest and most reliable economic, political and military bloc of nations, necessarily subordinated to the U.S., to counteract the bloc which is likewise being organized by Stalinist imperialism and to prepare for the inevitable war to determine which of the two great powers is to dominate the world. The hour for the open military conflict has not yet struck. Barring accidents, it will in all probability not strike for a number of years. The economic, political and even ideological work of preparing the nations and the peoples for a war of such unprecedentedly monstrous proportions and historical significance, cannot be completed over night. But the work itself has already been started, is well under way and is being pursued in both camps with full consciousness and determination. All the talk about truce, peaceful coexistence, international understanding, arbitration, partial or total disarmament, control of atomic energy and the like, is sheer imperialist hypocrisy

on both sides; at bottom, all these protestations, proclamations, proposals, conferences, agreements, etc., are also part - an indispensable part - of the preliminary work of preparing for the Third World War, of jockeying for advantageous economic, political and military positions and, not least important, for ideological support from the suspicious and reluctant peoples of all countries.

Although the outbreak of a new world war is still some years off, the forces working for such a new conflict are readily visible and indicate the perilous future of society and mankind in the continued existence of bourgeois and Stalinist imperialism, both forces creating ever-broader bases for the degeneration of society into a modern barbarism. The age of atomic warfare only emphasizes the one way out for all humanity: death (capitalism and Stalinism) or socialist freedom. Given this alternative, the struggle for socialism must be carried out more determinedly, more consistently, more indefatigably than ever. For though the world socialist vanguard is today small and weak, the forces of social disintegration are so vast, the crisis of capitalism and Stalinism so insoluble, that the socialist struggle will grow daily in magnitude, attracting ever larger forces to its banner. So long as present-day society exists, in its bourgeois and Stalinist forms, the socialist struggle will remain its permanent accompaniment until the victory of the classless society.

Every imperialist war is preceded and above all accompanied by a tightening of the vise around the economic and political positions of the working class. This is an inexorable tendency. It is modified only by the extent of the effort that the bourgeoisie must make to win the war, on the one side, and by the economic power of the bourgeoisie, that is, its capacity to make more or less concessions to the working class even during wartime, on the other side. Thus, although the tendency toward authoritarianism and totalitarianism was common to all the belligerents in the Second World War, it was more pronounced in the European countries than in the United States.

The launching of the campaign to prepare for the Third World War and to strengthen the domestic economy for that eventuality has already brought with it a drive against the economic positions and political rights of the American workers which is much further advanced than anything the working class faced on the very eve of the Second World War. Up to the outbreak of the Second World War and to a considerable extent even during the course of the war, the domestication of the working class movement and the disciplining of its most militant sections was left largely in the hands of the labor bureaucracy. Today, after the war has ended and although the next war is not yet immediately in the offing, this "self-disciplining" is already inadequate for the purpose and needs of the ruling class. It has succeeded in placing on the statute books the most aggressive anti-labor law in decades and in opening up a firm political and economic anti-labor offensive almost all along the line. This offensive has not reached its culmination by any means, but it has unmistakably begun and it has just as unmistakably thrown the working class from the offensive, which it took immediately upon the ending of the war, into the defensive.

The reasons for this change of relations between the classes, and the consequences of the change, are of great importance.

As soon as the war came to an end, large sections of the American working class sprang forward like an uncoiled spring in a series of offensive struggles for their class interests. In all the European countries where such struggles occurred, the working class, acting through its traditional parties, made an open bid for government power, for leadership of the nation, on the basis of political programs that called for resolving the whole social problem. In the United States, however, the labor movement confined its struggles mainly to purely economic demands with no claim to government power and with no political program. Its actions were limited to economic strikes or threats of strike. Except for the "G.M. Program" of the UAW, which never went beyond the verbal stage, the labor movement sought to meet the growing inflationary crisis, which aroused the most vigorous interest and concern of all the people, with nothing more than demands for wage increases to meet the rising cost of living and a futile appeal for the continuation of the very government price control system which was breaking down at every point.

The post war strike struggles were fought with exemplary solidarity and tenacity on the part of the workers, without a break in their ranks resulting from the enormous pressure exerted by all the organs of bourgeois opinion, and without the bourgeoisie even thinking of smashing them by direct action (strikebreakers, troops, etc.). The miners' strike, in particular, which by virtue of the key nature of the industry began to take on the character of a partial general strike affecting all the key industries of the country, showed the capacity of the working class to paralyze all essential bourgeois production almost at one stroke. However, the result of the first post-war strike wave was more negative than positive. The economic gains which it achieved, namely, the wage increases themselves, were speedily cancelled in most cases by the continuing rise in the cost of living which has been assured by the power of the capitalist monopolies and their control of the government. The narrow economic limitations imposed upon the working class by its official leadership, the apparent futility of strikes for wage increases which are promptly nullified by price increases, the failure of the union movement to supplement its ability to bring industry to a halt with a broad and bold political program for dealing with the multitude of nation-wide and intertwined social problems (inflation, housing, veterans, Negroes, production, world peace, etc.) -- all these characteristics of the sterility, conservatism and bourgeois-mindedness of the labor leadership and the political immaturity of the working class itself produced negative results. The working class itself was driven into a blind alley, with no clear perspective for a solution, with no effective outlet for its incontestable militancy, and with widening doubts as to the efficacy of strike actions at this time. The urban middle class which looked sympathetically to the labor movement for national leadership began to feel doubts about its capacity to solve its problems, or even to become irritated and hostile to it. The big bourgeoisie itself, seeing the decline of self-confidence among the workers, gained a corresponding confidence in itself and was emboldened to turn the offensive of the workers into an offensive of its own against the workers and their organized movement.

The failure of the first post-war offensive of the workers heavily underscores the fatal weakness and inherent limitation of pure-and-simple economic struggles, and therefore of the present trade-union movement in the United States, even when - indeed, especially when - they are conducted by the numerically strongest and solidest trade unions, for the more powerful and comprehensive the purely economic struggle becomes the more pronouncedly does it reveal its limitations.

The failure of this offensive made possible that when the bourgeoisie, given its world problem and its world role, found necessary, namely, the launching of the anti-labor offensive and the extension of its open long-term preparation for the Third World War. These are characterized by the Taft-Hartley Law and its concomitant widely-organized "anti-Red" drive aimed not only at Stalinist Russian influence but also at all forms of working class militancy and independence, by the effective smashing of any serious housing program, by the uncontrolled price rises which exact such a heavy tribute from the working class, and by the drive to establish peace-time universal conscription for the first time in American history.

The adoption of the Taft-Hartley Law with the effective support of both capitalist parties is the strongest weapon with which the capitalist government has ever armed the capitalist class against the organized labor movement in this country. It is the clearest example we have yet had in this country of the basic truth that if the working class does not take political power into its own hands and reorganize economic life in its own interests, the political power of the capitalist class will increasingly reorganize the working class and the labor movement into completely controlled instruments for the preservation of its economic life. The provisions of the law, if strictly enforced, are among the most binding and paralyzing restrictions imposed upon a labor movement in our time in any bourgeois-democratic country. The working class therefore cannot make serious progress in the next period without militantly resisting these reactionary provisions with all the strength at its command and seeking by all the appropriate means at its disposal to obtain the repeal of the law itself. It is characteristic of the official labor leadership that on the whole it is already prepared to capitulate to at least some of the reactionary provisions of the law or to confine their contesting of these provisions to pure-and-simple court appeals. This leadership fears the consequences of initiating a mass action against the law in which the fused economic and political strength of the working class would be brought into play. Yet it is only by employing this strength in mass action that the working class and its organized movement can be preserved from the destructive effects of the law and its enforcement. Such mass action can - and it is the only way to - smash and nullify every single one of the reactionary measures of the Taft-Hartley Law, and of all State and local laws drawn up in the same sense, and every militant in the labor movement must be mobilized along this line as against the half-hearted, cowardly, court-bound ineffectual opposition advocated by the official leadership of the labor movement.

Meanwhile, it is clear that the bourgeoisie as a whole is not yet prepared to go through with an immediate and strictly literal

enforcement of all the provisions of the law. Important sections of the bourgeoisie, at least, are leaving themselves an avenue of partial retreat from the law or for the moderation of the law, if the working class displays an effectively militant opposition to it instead of a docile acceptance of it which the bourgeoisie hopes for but does not confidently expect. The attitude of the bourgeoisie on the Taft-Hartley Law is its attitude toward the working class in general at the present time. It is even more aware than is the working class that while the latter has failed in its first post-war battle, it has not been smashed or even routed. The labor movement has not only remained organizationally intact and showed no sign of loss of membership, but on the contrary the unions continue to recruit new workers by the hundreds of thousands. They have reached an all-time high membership figure; their actual and potential strength on the economic field is greater than ever in American history. In addition, the sentiment for unity of action and even for complete unification into one central trade-union movement is now stronger than ever before. It is entirely correct to say that the labor movement has been driven into the defensive and that it has not even properly organized itself to conduct this offensive. But it is utterly false to assume that the working class and the labor movement have been smashed or dispersed or demoralized, or that it is incapable of a speedy turn to the most militant progress. The working class in this country is still exceedingly powerful; the economic situation ("full employment") continues to provide all the necessary basis for a restoration of the highest self-confidence and aggressiveness; the relative prudence with which the bourgeoisie still feels its way in the offensive against the labor movement is by itself sufficient evidence of the degree of which it fears the power of the organized workers.

Furthermore, the greatest importance must be attached to the effects of all recent developments in this country - the Taft-Hartley Law, the inflation, the feeling of an inevitable economic crisis, the growing apprehension over the "drift toward war" are most prominently included - with regard to their stimulation of the turn of the working class to political action. The PAC-CIO, whose significance has already been analyzed, has not disappeared but rather gives every indication that it will play an even more important role in the next period than in the past. Even the AFL leadership threatens for the first time to emulate the PAC which, for all its fundamental inadequacy, represents an important advance beyond the traditional political policy of the AFL. The tremendous reception given by workers all over the country to Wallace reflects the growth of popular dissatisfaction with the two old capitalist parties, the desire for a political movement that will bring about a "New New-Deal" in this country and guarantee peace all over the world. The extraordinary support given by the workers - of all the labor organizations - to what they regarded as labor tickets in the Oakland and Allentown elections, cannot be set down as isolated phenomena but must be considered as barometers of the national trend.

The real progress of the American working class can be measured decisively only by the extent to which it engages in independent class political action and develops its independent class political party. The most urgent need of the American working class today remains - now even more than before - the organization of a national independent labor party based on the mass labor organizations and

aimed at the establishment of a workers' government. Active and continuous support for the organization of such a party is still confined to the ranks of the revolutionary Marxists in the labor movement and of a small section of other labor militants. The two most powerful trends in the labor movement aim to keep the working class within the broadest confines of capitalist politics. One trend is to support the Democratic candidate for president in 1948 as a lesser evil in comparison with the Republican candidate, leaving open the possibility of supporting independent or "semi-independent" local candidates and especially of intervening as an organized force in the Democratic (or Republican) primaries for the purpose of nominating "progressive" or "pro-labor" candidates on the tickets of the old parties. The other trend is likewise to support the Democratic presidential candidate against the Republican candidate, but in the form of a Third Party which aims to put forward its own candidates for as many local offices as possible. At present, the former trend is by far the dominant and more powerful one, just as the latter is still more powerful than the trend toward an independent labor party.

Nevertheless, all the indications are that the trend toward a "Third Party" will steadily gain the upper hand over the policy of supporting one or the other of the old capitalist parties, at first on a local and then on a national scale. The establishment of a Third Party, as against an independent labor party based upon and controlled by the mass organizations of the workers, is aimed objectively at keeping the break between labor and the bourgeois political parties confined within the general framework of bourgeois politics by setting up a party which commands the support of the working class for a petty-bourgeois program and leadership (and therefore basically a bourgeois program and leadership) without being responsible to and under the control of the working class.

It is possible that a "Third Party," a product of the complex political fabric in the United States, may be set in motion before an independent labor party comes into existence. We call attention to the Resolution on the United States, adopted at the last convention, which oriented the party in such an event by declaring:

"...it is necessary that our party examine each new political alignment of labor by going beneath surface appearances and seeking the class essence of the movement. Above all it would be wrong to condemn out of hand any new political movement merely because it denies that it is a labor party and proclaims itself a "third party" or a "people's party." While fighting against the Wallaces and LaGuardias playing a role in a labor political movement, even as figureheads, the party must not be misled into sectarian errors merely because of their presence. A party that bases itself upon 15 million organized workers, represented by their trade unions, and is controlled by the labor movement and expresses its demands must be judged on the basis of this class content. No labor party will spring into existence pure and undefiled other than one we ourselves would create."

Nevertheless, for the next period the central political slogan of the Party remains, more emphatically than before, the organiza-

tion of an independent labor party to fight for a workers' government. Inside the movement for an independent labor party based upon the unions, as well as in the party itself when it is established, the struggle between a reformist program and politics and a revolutionary program and politics must go on.

The most important forward step that the American working class can take in the next period is its declaration of political independence from the bourgeois parties. The Workers Party does not deceive itself with glowing dreams about becoming the mass party of the American proletariat over night, for it has no need for self-delusion in general or for this one in particular. The Workers Party is still only a revolutionary vanguard, whose main immediate next step is the concentration of all political and organizational efforts to help raise the working class movement as a whole to the level of political class independence, thus creating the most favorable realizable arena in the next period for the development of a mass revolutionary socialist party of the American proletariat. Hence, all the independent political activity that the Workers Party can and must conduct, including those it can and must conduct in its own name and under its direct leadership, are not only aimed at recruiting directly to our own ranks but at directing all forces we can set in motion toward the objective of a centralizing, unifying, nation-wide independent labor party with a program of struggle for a workers' government.

The struggle for the independent labor party as it is conceived by the Workers Party not only can but must be conducted outside the ranks of the organized trade-union movement and among those workers who are not affiliated with the trade union movement and even among sections of the middle class. But in the very nature of the fight, it must be conducted mainly, primarily and with the greatest concentration of our efforts, in the ranks of the trade union movement itself. To pose the problem abstractly, as though it were a question of "unions" in general and "the masses" in general, is an academic absurdity; to counterpose to "the masses" the "union" - as our main field of political work - is no less an absurdity. The unions, in the United States, today, constitute the largest, best organized, most democratic and most representative, most advanced, most militant and most fruitful concentration of the masses in existence. It is not only the most powerful but the only seriously organized basis for the conduct of the struggle to attain the political independence of the working class, to break the domination of bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties and politics, to advance the revolutionary political program and ideas of Marxism. The political work carried on by the Workers Party outside the ranks of the organized labor movement - and such work must be continued and extended - must necessarily be linked with and made part of the struggle to achieve the main immediate objective of establishing the political independence and class leadership of the proletariat.

This objective consequently indicates the main point of concentration of the Workers Party. This point is the trade unions themselves, particularly the unions covering the basic proletariat of the basic, key, mass-production industries. The Party cannot seriously think of making progress in the struggle for its political objective if it is not solidly rooted in the powerful, still-growing industrial unions in particular and the organized labor movement in general. Understood in this way - and this is the only way in which

it should be understood - the "trade-unionization" of the party (having the strongest possible core of the present party membership in the trade unions, and concentration on recruiting as new members into the party the most advanced trade union militants) does not mean primarily the transformation of the party members into "trade union experts" but means primarily and basically the establishment of an increasingly influential revolutionary political force within the labor movement. Understood in this, the only correct, way - the "trade unionization" of the party is not a technical or administrative problem for us, but a political problem, a political task which is an indispensable preliminary to the carrying out of our main political objective and an inseparable part of it.

This objective finally dictates the nature of our Party's work inside the trade unions. Our members must not confine themselves to becoming the "best trade unionists" or devote themselves exclusively or overwhelmingly to the daily routinism of trade-union economic problems. Neither must they confine themselves to general (and abstract) preachments about the need for an independent labor party. As a general rule, our Party, even including its sympathizers in the unions, does not possess sufficient strength in the union movement to be able to strive for assuming control, leadership and responsibility for large union units. Our main aim certainly cannot be to become the administrators and leaders of union organizations in which we do not enjoy the political support indispensable for such positions - given the relationship of political forces in the labor movement. Our primary and main aim in the work in the unions is therefore the dissemination of our political ideas - presented concretely on the basis of the actual experiences and actual problems of the workers, and not in a purely abstract propagandistic way - and the recruitment of members to the party on the basis of these ideas. Our aim in the work in the unions is the presentation of our political program, of our political views, in concrete connection with every living problem that faces the workers and their organization. This does not and must not be allowed to mean the abandonment by our comrades of direct, active participation in the practical work and struggles of the unions or the shirking of such responsibilities, including the responsibility of office, as we can appropriately discharge. Nothing of the sort! It does mean, however, that the best test, over a given period of time, of the results of all the practical activities our comrades engage in in the unions, is the extent to which our political views have gained popularity and support among the workers, the extent to which our Party press is read and supported by the workers, the extent to which we have been able to increase the number of our Party sympathizers among the workers and the extent to which we have been able to recruit new workers directly to our Party. By itself, election of our comrades to union office is not and cannot be considered a test of our progress in the union movement.

Despite the attempts to root our Party in the main organizations of the working class - attempts which must be continued with unremitting persistency - it is still a fact that the Party remains a propaganda group in the main, isolated from the masses and their principal struggles and without decisive influence upon them. This isolation has been imposed upon our Party by a series

of historical events; it has not been produced by the Party and its program. However, the problem before us right now is not to repeat the already-discussed and already-established explanation and the "justification" for our isolation. The problem that demands concentrated efforts is to break out of the isolation with all the means that the situation places at our disposal.

No serious progress can be made toward breaking the isolation of the Party unless every member, regarded as the individual spokesman and militant advocate of the program of the Party, finds a field in which to advocate its program. This field is not inside the ranks of the Party itself, to which so many members now confine their "political activity." It is to be found only in the mass organizations and in political activity among the masses. Of the mass organizations, the Party continues to consider the unions the most lastingly important and fruitful.

The outlook and activities of the Party cannot and must not, however, be confined to the trade unions. In the first place, organizations of, and political activity among, workers outside the trade unions are of great importance and, in specific cases, can even be of greater importance than the unions themselves. In the second place, the Party is faced with the practical problem of a considerable number of its members being unqualified or disqualified for work in the trade unions.

It is therefore imperative to establish firmly the rule: every member of the Party must be an active and militant participant in a mass organization. For the worker-members of the Party, this means active membership in the union movement. For Party members who are veterans, this means membership in the veterans' movement, including those members who are already participating in the unions. For Party members who are students, housewives, professionals, this means membership in student organizations, in tenants or consumers or parents organizations, in professional organizations respectively. For Party members who are Negroes, this means membership in Negro organizations. In any political campaign that the Party conducts, it will be found that it is seldom necessary for us to "create" a special non-Party organization, except in the case of united front committees for specific purposes. Non-Party mass organizations already exist in ample numbers and with ample influence and with ample possibilities for our Party. It is only necessary to become part of them.

In this connection, it is important to anticipate illusions that undoubtedly exist about these non-Party organizations. In many cases, the active membership of such organizations is, for lack of leadership and perspective, comparatively limited in number and in political development. They can constitute an arena for political activity and recruitment to our Party not so much because of what they are on the day our members enter them, but because of what they can be transformed into as a result of persistent and patient work conducted by us, that is, the work of building them up into real and effective mass organizations as a result of the activity and the policies put forward by our members and militants they attract to themselves. Unless this is clearly understood, participation in these organizations can only lead to early discouragement and disillusionment.

The fact that the Party is still largely a propaganda group does not mean that it excludes agitational work and political activity among the masses. On the contrary, it is only by means of the latter that the Party can begin to advance from its present stage and to overcome its isolation. Here the Party struggles not merely on the issues and programs it champions, but always holds itself out as the Party of revolutionary socialism and internationalism. Such opportunities are best offered by the fight against the rising cost of living, rising rents (consumers' "resistance" movements in general), campaigns for more and better housing, fight against all forms of Jim-Crow and mistreatment of minorities, by movements of protest against imperialist atrocities abroad, etc. Local initiative is imperative in this work, and every branch must be on the alert for opportunities of this kind. It must be emphasized that this political activity is not to be considered the province only of those Party members who are not engaged in union activity but must include also the latter, that is, it must involve the Party membership as a whole. In this work, as in the trade union work of the Party, the same criterion must be employed. Our success must be measured not primarily by the official prominence attained by our members in the work or the movement conducting it, and not by the time and energy put into the work, but by the degree to which our program gains support among the workers over a given period and by the number of recruits gained directly for the Party itself.

The domination of world politics by the growing conflict between American and Stalinist imperialism is reflected everywhere by the systematic endeavors of both to gain the support of the masses in preparation for the inevitable war. This means that our Party not only confronts the problem of Stalinism in all its activity and in all the mass organizations, but that it will continue to confront the problem, to one degree or another, in the future. Our activity among the masses cannot yield the required results without a clear understanding and a firm application of our policy toward Stalinism. The SWP swings between the theory that Stalinism is next to itself as left wing of the working class and the practice of supporting the Stalinist faction of the labor movement or the reformist faction without political analysis, without basic political distinction and solely on the vulgar-empirical basis of which faction seems to offer better recruitment possibilities for the party at a particular moment or in a particular local union. We reject both the false theory and the opportunistic, rudderless practice. The Party gives no support whatever to the political program of the reformist leadership of the mass organizations, above all the unions. However, in a contest for control of the mass organizations between the reformists and the Stalinists, our Party, wherever it is unable to organize an independent movement capable of challenging both bureaucracies for control, unhesitatingly calls for support of the former against the latter. The former are the lesser evil and the lesser danger as compared with the latter - from the standpoint of the interests of the working class and of socialism. Objectively, the former are compelled to work (in their own reformist way) for the preservation of the labor movement. Objectively, the latter seek not only to subordinate the labor movement to the Stalinist autocracy but to exterminate them altogether as independent class organizations. The Stalinist movement is not any kind of left wing of the labor move-

ment. It is a totalitarian, anti-democratic anti-working class right wing and must be combatted as such.

The isolation of the genuinely Marxist movement cannot be definitively broken and the road to a genuinely revolutionary mass party cannot be traversed to the end until Stalinism has been shattered and liquidated politically. This must be understood through and through. If the revulsion against imperialist "democracy" impels militant workers to Stalinism, it is no less true that the revulsion against Stalinism impels militants and people in general toward imperialist "democracy" and its extreme left wing, social reformism. While these remain the two big choices in the eyes of the workers, the revolutionary proletarian movement cannot become a mass movement. Even if on a smaller scale than in Europe and Asia, Stalinism in this country nevertheless remains a large and heavy obstacle to the otherwise clear road that the revolutionary Marxists would have to being recognized as the left wing of the working class and the socialist alternative to capitalist decadence. Support (including "critical" support) of Stalinism plays into the hands of the latter, does not succeed in breaking away any of the followers of Stalinism, and can only disorient the Marxist movement itself. The theory and practice of this support is based upon the notion that Stalinism still "somehow" represents the ideas of the Russian Revolution and the Communist International and is therefore a progressive force. Any remnants of this gross misconception of Stalinism must be eliminated from the thinking and activity of our Party. Stalinism must be relentlessly and uncompromisingly fought by our Party and fought wherever possible in open alliance with all progressive, democratic (including social-democratic, social-reformist) forces in the working class.

The isolation in which our Party still finds itself naturally tends to create and nourish moods of depression and demoralization in its ranks. This has always been the case in such situations and our Party is not and cannot be expected to be an exception and therefore immune to such moods. The cause for the particular forms that these moods and tendencies assume cannot be found outside, need not be sought and the overwhelmingly dominant fact that in no period of the history of the working class and its revolutionary vanguard have they had to endure such a long and unbroken series of heavy defeats. The movement has suffered heavier and more devastating blows in the past quarter of a century than in the periods following the 1848 revolutions, the Paris Commune and the 1905 Revolution combined. However, here too the main problem is not an explanation of the phenomenon but an understanding effort to resist it and its consequences.

The moods of demoralization range from one extreme to another, for all that they have in common. At one end, they are revealed in the grotesque capitulation of radical phrasemongers of the Johnson variety to the aggressive opportunism of the SWP on the ground that Cannonite opportunism is compensated for by the purely verbal revolutionism with which it covers itself at times. At the other end, they take the form of passivity induced by a failure to understand the position of revolutionary Marxism in the world today and the role that our Party has to play and is playing. Now that the prospects of unification between our Party and the SWP have been effectively sabotaged to the point of nullification by the latter, the Workers Party appears, and must appear more clearly and consciously,

as the revolutionary political vanguard organization which takes an uncompromisingly independent class position because it is not tied in any way or to any degree with the two main sources of world reaction and decay, American and Stalinist imperialism. The indispensability and justification of existence and right to growth of our Party is defined by the watchword which characterizes its program and perspective: "Neither Washington nor Moscow! For the independence of the working class and international socialism!" Our Party has the special task, in these crucial and difficult times, to bring the outlook, the socialist policy and the socialist aspirations represented by this watchword into every corner of the working class and its movement. It distinguishes our Party from every other political organization and movement, without exception, for there is not one of them that does not proclaim allegiance to one extent or another either to Washington or Moscow. By virtue of this fact, our Party alone represents consistently the program and prospects of socialist internationalism. An understanding of this must animate every single member of the Party and the work of the Party as a whole.

The defeats all over the world, the slowness till now of the political development of the American working class, the failure of the Party to overcome its isolation - these have had adverse effects upon the Party cadre as well. Without a firm cadre, the Party cannot maintain itself, let alone grow. Such a cadre, especially today, requires not only understanding but solidity, tenacity and the ability to set the example for all. The idea that the cadre can be constituted out of members whose understanding and agreement with the Party program is of a high order but whose activity and capacity for inspiring others is of a low order, is an absurdity which has nothing in common with our conception as embodied in the resolution of the last Party convention.

It must be recognized that a section of the old Party cadre to the degree that it existed has become exhausted, to a greater or lesser degree, and is no longer capable of fulfilling its indicated tasks in the national as well as in the local leadership. Without resorting to any administrative measures, which offers no solution, the Party must consciously and planfully renew and enlarge the Party cadre. This is now one of the most urgent tasks of the Party, especially because the failure is most marked in the main, not the lesser, political centers of the Party, where it has its most adverse effects. Party education and training must be given ten times more attention, and more systematic attention, than heretofore. The idea of the professional revolutionist, not in its bureaucratically-distorted but in its Leninist form, must be raised to its rightful rank of first-class importance in the Party. That is, the Party must select from the ranks those members who are ready and able to devote all their available time, in any field of Party work that is indicated and not only as Party officials, to the building up of the Party. It is these members, systematically educated and trained, who must more and more assume the leadership of the Party at all points. It is upon them primarily, and not upon those whose membership has become more or less formal, who are bored, or who have fallen into passivity or who fail to discharge their obligations to the Party in full, that must fall all responsibility for the Party.

From this point of view, the Party must henceforth devote

great attention to a field that has been grossly neglected, the Youth organization. In the past of the revolutionary movement, the Party leadership was constantly renewed and extended to a large extent, and at times exclusively, from the reservoir of the Youth organization. In contrast, our Party has suffered for the past few years from the absence of a Youth organization. The beginnings made recently in reestablishing a Youth organization are already promising. However, both the national and local leaderships of the Party have failed to give anything like the attention and support to the Youth organization that it deserves. It is absolutely imperative to introduce a radical change in this respect, so that the efforts of the youth comrades to build up a serious organization may receive unstinting and continuing assistance of every kind required from the Party.

If the Party cannot rely upon a solid and active cadre, it can rely on nothing. It must consciously and systematically train and bring into all the positions of responsibility and leadership new elements in the ranks, without regard for personal sensibilities that may be offended.

September 25, 1947.

#

NOTE: The Political Committee is submitting the above statement as a draft for the consideration of the National Committee meeting to be held in connection with the Active Workers Conference. At the same time, the draft is being made available to the membership as a whole so that it may be discussed both before and during the Active Workers Conference itself.

#