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THE WORKERS PARTY AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

When the petty-bourgeois opposition within the Socialist Workers Party constituted itself in 1940 into an independent formation (the Workers Party), it thereby split away not only from the SWP but also from the Fourth International itself. This was inevitable not only because the SWP, at the time, constituted the section of the FI in the USA but also, and much more, because the political and organizational differences which underlay the split were fundamental to the political and organizational concepts of the FI. In other words, it was a principled split although it took place in an unprincipled way.

Splits (even more than faction struggles) have their own logic and momentum. Just as, on the one hand, splits without principle, if persisted in, beget principled differences on which to perpetuate themselves, even so, principled splits, if persisted in, can end up only in the counterposition of program to program in every field of politics and the class struggle. This is exactly what happened in the case of the Workers Party.

The faction struggle in the Socialist Workers Party preceding the split was found in the very course of its development to turn not on the meager concept of "bureaucratic conservatism" but on the more substantial questions of the nature of the proletarian party and the fundamental principles from which its program flows. In demanding that as a minority tendency within the party it be given the right to appear before the masses with its own specific programmatic and policy concepts and proposals, the minority faction in fact challenged the concept of democratic centralism at the very root and sought to substitute for it an organizational concept which abandoned all centralism in favor of a petty-bourgeois anarchist brand of democracy. By their attitude to Marxist philosophy and to the Marxist conception of the State, they similarly struck at the very root of the Marxist method. It was thus apparant already before the split that the minority faction represented nothing else than a petty-bourgeois current within the SWP.

Those who walk out of the proletarian party not only walk out on their colleagues but also into another and an alien environment. The proletarian party is a developing collective body which, driving as it does towards a definite objective by definite means, also provides a specific milieu in which the revolutionary cadre is formed and hardened. Even a petty-bourgeois opposition which remains within the party has therefore the opportunity not only of setting itself right politically but also of proletarianizing itself effectively. The party assists in protecting them from the influences of the alien class milieu in which they otherwise move. By walking out of the party, therefore, they bring themselves under the full blast of alien class influences.

This was also the case with the petty-bourgeois opposition when it walked out of the SWP and the FI; and although its subjective desire might have been to remain on the ground of the proletarian revolutionary movement, the intensified pressure of bourgeois influence attendant upon an imperialist war which was neither interrupted by nor followed by successful revolution has tended steadily to push the WP off the ground on which it sought to stand, in the direction of,

if not wholly onto alien class ground. Nothing less than this is the meaning, for example, of its theory of bureaucratic collectivism, its views on the so-called national question, and indeed, its whole perspective of pessimism in regard to the proletarian revolution (e.g., the theory of retrogression); for all these theoretical positions, and in particular the practical actions resulting from them in war and peace, constitute nothing but capitulation to bourgeois pressure in the sense of adaptation to the bourgeois program.

It is precisely in this sense that the present program of the WP can be characterized as petty-bourgeois and revisionist; for, revisionism is the program of the adaptation of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie; and the petty-bourgeois, whether individually or in an organized grouping, who fails organically to assimilate the program of and to integrate himself into the proletarian revolutionary movement becomes, thereby, the transmitting mechanism of bourgeois influences in the proletarian movement despite every subjective desire to the contrary. The WP has become the consistent banner-bearer of petty-bourgeois revisionism.

A split casts upon the party obligations radically different from those which are cast upon it by a faction struggle. In the case of a factional struggle the task of the party is to provide an adequate arena for the proper discussion and democratic decision on the points at issue. In the case of a split, on the other hand, the first task of every party member is to defend the party. This task, the SWP, and with it the International, correctly understood. They have successfully repelled the successive attacks which the WP organized both nationally and on an international scale during the last eight years.

The first of these attacks was the attempt to organize a rival International in the guise of a Committee of the Fourth International. For, to call for a Fourth International was, in the first place, to deny the reality and the validity of the Fourth International that was already there. This attempt petered out. Not a single Fourth Internationalist formation could be found by the WP to support this Committee despite a world-wide search by its agents. The next attack came in the form of an unprincipled bloc with the AK of the IKD, with which the WP entered into a broad agreement to struggle against the FI, on both the political and organizational field. This bloc, like the previous committee, also petered out.

This sustained effort to compete organizationally with the FI, an effort which covered the duration of the second imperialist war, and its immediate aftermath, thus failed. The WP has furthermore failed in its effort to establish itself as a viable party in opposition to the SWP. The rest of the post-war period has therefore seen the WP engaged in a sustained effort to gain legitimacy in the movement via some form of fusion with the SWP. "Unity" with the SWP has been the slogan of the WP since 1945.

It is to be stressed that this "unity" campaign has been conducted within the framework of a steady continuance of the sustained hostility which the WP has shown, ever since its inception, both to the FI program and, especially to the FI organization. However, the fact that the WP sought "unity" with the SWP without abandoning any of its theoretical positions would not of itself exclude unity if its

announced intention of observing party discipline as a minority within the SWP was for the purpose of constructing the revolutionary party under the leadership of the existing majority. But this was not the case with the WP. Its conception of unity proceeded, as it still proceeds, from the idea of transforming the SWP and the movement into an arena for continuing the factional struggle which it has manifestly failed to conduct successfully from without. In other words, it was and is only seeking to execute in relation to the SWP and the movement a form of the entrust tactic, with the object of capturing the organization or splitting it at an opportune moment.

The first major indication of the real meaning of this conception for the WP came in the fact that its first "unity drive" proved to be nothing else than an effort to link up with a minority faction within the SWP. The SWP's defense of itself against this attempt was successful, though it entailed the split of the Goldman faction.

The next major indication of the meaning of "unity" to the WP came with the unity negotiations which were initiated by Smith in February 1947. The WP purported to be ready to accept discipline in the case of a fusion with the SWP. It was on this basis that it undertook to accept in advance the decisions of the EPC.

The joint statement of the SWP and the WP committing the two organizations to unity was consequently signed in February 1947. Its sequel, however, was not a growing rapprochement between the two parties but, rather a sharpening of the struggle between them; a situation which was characterized by a series of violations by the WP of the spirit and conditions of the very agreement they had signed. The November 1947 Plenum resolution of the WP, explicitly repudiating the joint statement of February 1947 was only an open announcement of a situation previously existing. The WP had already long ago ceased to act in any way in terms of the agreement.

In the resulting situation the Johnson-Forest tendency, drawing the necessary conclusions from this "unity" experience, broke away from the WP and joined the SWP. As for the SWP itself, it registered the collapse of the "unity" at a Plenum of February 1948, and defined its attitude to the WP as follows:

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

That the SWP correctly analyzed its experience in the above resolution has since been made crystal clear by a declaration of the National Chairman of the WP. This statement was to the effect that, in case the movement in the situation of another war between the Soviet Union and an imperialist power, followed its present policy in relation to the Soviet Union involved in war with an imperialist power, then, despite every present announcement of readiness to abide by majority decisions, he and his supporters would unhesitatingly split away again from the SWP and the movement.

By the above statement, the WP representative acknowledged not so much that the WP conception of discipline varied in peace and war, as that it would split the SWP again in wartime if it could not succeed in capturing it for the WP tendency or program in peacetime. In other words, they sought re-entry into the SWP without any genuine loyalty to the movement.

It is thus clear beyond all cavil that the "unity" drive of the WP constitutes not a change in the WP's policy of sustained and uncompromising hostility to our program and organization but only a change in the form of application of that policy. Having failed to bludgeon the movement from without, the WP has turned to an effort to capture it or split it from within.

It is impermissible and impossible, from any point of view, for the movement to permit itself to become the victim of such a policy. Although we permit the widest differences, political and theoretical, within our ranks, the only basis on which we can and do contain these differences is that of thoroughgoing loyalty to the organization. Without this, even lesser differences than those prevailing at present could not be contained within the organization without gravely hampering its activities if not paralyzing the organization entirely.

What then is our task? The balance sheet of eight years' experience points inexorably to one conclusion. The WP is at the present stage a politically hostile formation to the SWP and the International, and the impossibility of unity flows above all from the magnitude of the political differences. Not "unity" with the WP but its removal from the path of the proletarian party's progress is the task. Let this be understood not only by every section and member of our organization and movement, but also by those within the WP itself who wish to remain loyal to the movement. The SWP alone provides the framework for the further organized development of the Trotskyist movement in America.

(Adopted: 25 for; 5 against; 3 abstaining; 2 not recorded).

April 26, 1948

This draft resolution deals primarily with the theoretical aspects of the Negro question. Its general line has been approved by the Political Committee and it is submitted to the party for discussion, which in the opinion of the Political Committee should continue after the convention. Following the discussion, a final document will be prepared on the basis of this resolution and of such amendments and clarifications as arise in the course of the discussion. Another document, drawing conclusions from the recent experiences of the party and containing practical proposals for Negro work in the coming period, is in preparation. It will soon be published for discussion and action by the convention.

DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE NEGRO QUESTION

Introduction: Significance of the Negro Problem

Next to the emancipation of the working class from capitalism, the liberation of the Negro people from their degradation is the paramount problem of American society. These two social problems are integrally united. The only road to freedom for the workers, and to equality for the Negroes, is through their common struggle for the abolition of capitalism.

The Negro people in all aspects of their social and cultural life are a part of the American people. At the same time it must be recognized that the Negro struggle is not identical with the proletarian movement toward socialism. It exists as a distinct movement of an oppressed minority within the country, possessing its own historical origins, special characteristics, forms of development and methods of action. The economic, political, social and cultural degradation of the Negro people below the levels of even the most exploited layers of the working class places them in an exceptional position and impels them to play an exceptional role within the social structure of American capitalism. The Negro question in the United States represents a unique combination of the struggle for democracy by an oppressed minority with the working class struggle for socialism. The revolutionary party must take this dual nature of the Negro movement as the starting point for its theoretical and practical conclusions on this problem.

Marxism teaches us that under imperialism, the proletariat is destined to be the leader of all oppressed classes and groups. Petty-bourgeois revisionists of Marxism pervert this conception into the thesis that the Negro movement is in essence helpless and useless unless directly led by the organized labor movement or the Marxist party. This conception is merely a transference into the labor movement of the bourgeois doctrine that the Negroes are so backward that they are incapable of independent action and must therefore at all times be led, if not by the bourgeoisie, then by the proletariat. However radically phrased, this doctrine represents a capitulation to Jim Crow prejudices, leads to an underestimation of the revolutionary character of the Negro movement, and must be relentlessly opposed by the Marxist party.

At critical periods in this country's history, the Negroes have allied themselves with the revolutionary forces. The latter, as they approached decisive action, repeatedly found it necessary to reverse their previous opposition to the participation of Negroes.

To illustrate. The Army of Independence at the beginning rejected Negroes but was compelled to change its stand. The comparatively few free Negroes and slaves in the North demanding Negro emancipation and Negro rights formed a disproportionately large percentage of the Army of Independence.

The Republican Party began by a readiness to confine slavery to the Southern states and was hostile to the Abolitionists. It ended in an alliance with the Negroes against the counter-revolutionary South. After a generation of slave revolts, often directly stimulated by the international struggle against slavery (Britain, France, Haiti), the Negroes organized the Underground Railroad which rescued tens of thousands of slaves from the South and established the communications between the insurgent elements in the South and North. In addition, as propagandists and organizers, Negroes were the basis of the Abolition movement. The struggles that centered around the Abolition agitation and especially the Fugitive Slave Law when the South attempted to restrict the democratic and civil liberties of the North, were the immediate causes which precipitated the Civil War. Once the revolutionary North sponsored directly the cause of the slaves, the Negroes threw their support behind the Republican Party.

During the Populist agitation of the 80's and 90's, the Negro farmers and agricultural workers organized the Southern Tenant Farmers Association, with a membership of a million and a quarter. When the Populist movement assumed national importance, the Negroes appended their organization to the Populist Party. At the height of the Populist struggle, Southern white Populists were constantly engaged in defending Populist Negroes against lynching and vigilante attacks by their political enemies.

The commercial bourgeoisie of the 18th century and the industrial bourgeoisie of the 19th century, after they had risen to power, betrayed the Negroes. The Negroes also found themselves deserted by the farmers of the Populist movement who, after they suffered defeat because of their inherent inability to fight an independent struggle, made their peace with the capitalists.

The gravitation of the Negroes toward the camp of revolution has assumed varied forms in recent times. The leaders of the Garvey movement after World War I referred to themselves as the Negro part of the world-wide revolutionary movement led by Lenin and Trotsky. After the depression the Negroes broke with the Republicans and became ardent followers of the New Deal, but with loss of illusions about the New Deal they have given repeated demonstrations that they are ready to follow the lead of the CIO. The slavish political subordination of the CIO to the Roosevelt and Truman administrations has resulted in the formation of militant organizations like the March-on-Washington Movement and the tendency to revolutionary protests of which the latest and most significant is the Randolph-Reynolds protest against discrimination.

By their entire history the Negro people have been prepared for participating side by side with the proletariat in the struggle to reconstruct society on revolutionary socialist foundations. On the other hand, the proletariat, which by the very nature of its position in capitalist society must abolish all classes and all forms of oppression, is alone able to guarantee the Negro people against a repetition of past betrayals.

The Negroes in the South

Of the 13-14 million Negroes in the United States, the great majority, close to 10 million, live in the South. They are the crux of the Negro problem in the United States.

A large number live in the agricultural areas as tenant-farmers, share croppers, agricultural laborers. The most backward elements in the country's rural economy are in the South and the millions of Negroes there constitute the most poverty-stricken workers in agriculture. The remains of the cotton slave plantation system, adapted to the needs of modern capitalism, keep millions of Negroes (and whites) in a state of bondage through share cropping. Thus obsolete forms and methods of land cultivation are maintained. This system hampers the technical progress and development of the masses of Negroes, their initiative and education, which are essential for the fully productive utilization of the land.

This system is maintained and perpetuated by huge levies upon the national income which find their way chiefly into the pockets of the landlords, merchants and others who profit by it.

The vestiges of the old plantation servitude and the predominance of share cropping and tenant-farming on the lowest level have given rise to a corresponding social and political structure -- the domination by landlords through terror and political disfranchisement of the masses, together with the maintenance and perpetuation of a political oligarchy -- the Southern Bourbons.

This oligarchy constitutes a nest of political reaction, inside and out of Congress. It is always in the forefront of the enemies of civil liberties and the spearhead of fascistic reaction. The political representatives of the Southern system have acquired enormous power in initiating, supplementing and sharpening the attacks of capital upon wages, working conditions and democratic rights.

Thus the Negro problem is not to be considered simply as the problem of the South, or worse still, restricted to the fight for Negro rights and equality. Only the destruction of the Southern system can free the Negroes but the destruction of the Southern system is an indispensable precondition for the economic and political advancement of the whole country and cannot be accomplished by capitalism.

Alliance of Monopoly Capital and the Southern System

While insisting that the Negro problem is exclusively a Southern problem, the masters of the South have consistently acted in the knowledge that it is a problem of the whole country. Before the Civil War and afterwards, to maintain their privileged position, they have systematically propagated and injected racial discrimination, segregation, super-exploitation and prejudice into this country's life. In this they have been aided and abetted by Northern industrial capitalists. In 1876, after establishing its political domination over the defeated slave-owners, Northern capital cemented a new alliance with Southern propertied interests for the maintenance of white supremacy. Since then Northern capital has steadily extended its financial control until today the South is entirely in its grip. Thus today it is the

interests of capitalism which demand the maintenance and perpetuation of the Southern system.

The Southern brutality, its terror, its social discrimination, its robbery in appropriations for education, etc., its lynchings reported and unreported, its legalized oppression, persecution and humiliation of the Negro people, are not in any sense the product of any inherent racial antagonisms. Racial antagonism is the barbarous rationalization of an out-moded system of production, taken over by American capitalism, and so intensified and developed by it that today it forms one of the most cruel and shameful features of its civilization.

White supremacy, racial discrimination and Jim Crow have now become part of American capitalist tradition and have poisoned the minds of many millions. But that does not in any way alter the real origins of Negro persecution nor the fundamental reasons why it is maintained. It is said that the white share cropper maintains his racial disdain and attitude of aloofness from the Negro because the only palliative to his misery is at least his consciousness of superiority over the Negro. This and similar widespread propaganda is false to the core. The root of the division lies not in psychology but in such material facts as this, that preference is given to even the poorest whites in the competition for the better-paid jobs in agriculture, industry, government employment, social services, education, hospitalization, relief, etc.

When capitalism needed the Negroes in the struggle against the slave-holders during the Civil War and the Reconstruction period, the capitalist class did not hesitate to initiate and carry out by armed force large-scale actions to crush and discipline the Southern plantocracy and force it to recognize Negro rights. This was when the Negroes still bore on their bodies and minds the marks of slavery. While it would be a serious error to ignore the reality of racial hatreds which have been injected into the historical development of the American people, not the slightest concession must be made to any ideas which do not place upon capitalism the complete responsibility, deliberate and conscious, for the existing situation of Negroes, the spread of racial prejudices in all areas of the United States today, and the example and encouragement given by American "democracy" to race-haters and race-baiters all over the world.

Capitalism Its Own Grave-Digger

But, if, after conquering the slave-holders, capitalism has taken over and intensified the exploitation and sufferings of the Negro people, it has, in its later development, also created the premises of their emancipation. Capitalist production has penetrated, at first slowly but recently with greater speed, into the formerly solid agricultural South. The Negro agricultural population is now exceeded by the Negro urban population in the South. This industrial transformation has tended to draw whites and Negroes together, creating an element of growing unification against the social divisions of the South.

Heroic attempts have been made by the share croppers, white and black, to create union organizations. World War II saw many war industries established in the South and unification of white and Negro

workers both in industry and in unions. Capitalism, to avoid higher labor costs and unionization in the North, took the textile industry to the South, maintained Southern racial discrimination, and relegated Negroes to the lowest-paid and most menial tasks. But they are admitted to the textile industrial union. If not in job classification then at least in unionization the Jim Crow pattern in the South is being steadily undermined. Within recent years the CIO and AFL have instituted campaigns for the unionization of the workers. Precisely because of the economic and cultural backwardness of the South, the organized proletariat will carry a weight there far exceeding its mere numerical strength.

To contend that bourgeois democracy is capable of regenerating and reforming the South for the benefit of the Negro is to whitewash and embellish the present promoters and beneficiaries of Negro persecution. Only the proletarian revolution can free the Negroes, cleanse this social sewer and reorganize the economy.

The Negroes in the North and West

It is in the North and West that the needs of capitalist production have given the Negroes a role of singular importance in the economy. Conditions in the South drove an increasing stream of Negroes to seek relief by flight to the less brutally discriminating areas. In World War I and especially World War II capitalist production itself brought millions of Negroes out of the South and incorporated them into the basic industries, coal, steel, auto, etc.

Within the last generation, the workers in these industries have transformed themselves, chiefly through the organization and example of the CIO, into the potentially most powerful social force in the country. Precisely because the Negroes, owing to racial discrimination, could find a place primarily in these industries as unskilled, unprotected workers, they find themselves, with the rise of the CIO, an integral part of the most advanced sections of the proletariat. This transition from the rural misery of the South into the mass industrial unions of the CIO, simultaneously marks the transformation of the Negroes from the most degraded rural section of the population into part of the spearhead for the abolition of capitalism and the construction of the socialist society.

Despite the trickery of the capitalists, despite the Jim-Crow prejudices of many white workers and their opposition to up-grading in industry, the history of Negroes and whites in industry is one of their being constantly disciplined, united and organized by the very mechanism of capitalist production, which tends, slowly but steadily, to grind down the traditional social obstacles and racial prejudices. It is this unity which in a revolutionary crisis will be decisive. The traditions of the struggle for the organization of the CIO will help unite Negroes and whites in those branches of industry where they are still disunited.

Over one and a half million Negroes are already part of the organized labor movement. It has within its ranks the most advanced, the most disciplined, trained and tempered elements of the Negro people. Nothing but the total destruction of organized labor can seriously check the steady development of this movement.

It is the duty of the party to explain, illuminate and illustrate for the benefit of the labor movement, the transformation that has taken place in the role of Negroes in the basic economic and social activity of the country.

Growth of Negro National Consciousness

Capitalism confines most workers to slum-dwellings and miserable neighborhoods. This is itself a form of segregation, despite attempts to obscure this by fictitious democratic propaganda. This segregation of the proletariat as a whole assumes an exceptionally sharp and aggravated form in the case of the Negroes.

The system of plantation slavery dictated the rigid social segregation of the slave. Driven by the needs of the Southern system and its own needs, capitalism, while integrating the Negroes into Northern industry, maintained and extended Jim Crow segregation. Everywhere the Negroes have been herded into ghettos. As a result, there have developed large Negro urban communities not only in the South but in most of the great industrial cities. The Negroes especially in the North, East and West today form solid compact communities, overwhelmingly proletarian or semi-proletarian, with a large minority of organized proletarians, while the majority form an immense mass of domestic servants, porters and other menial laborers.

A Negro bourgeoisie, owning capital and exploiting labor in industry, is practically non-existent. The petty-bourgeois intermediary between the Negro masses and big capital is in the majority white and not Negro. The Negro petty bourgeoisie is composed predominantly of a thin layer of lawyers, doctors, clergymen, teachers, journalists, musicians, and so on. But race prejudice continues on the whole to exclude the Negro petty bourgeoisie from social contact with the ruling class as well as from those minor positions of authority which help cement substantial sections of the white petty bourgeois to bourgeois society.

Thus the integration of the Negroes into industry and the simultaneous rise of these Negro communities have stimulated the racial and political consciousness of the Negro people.

With a great number of organizations of all types, with a large and varied press, a growing body of distinguished writers and spokesmen who chronicle their wrongs and protests, a fanatical pride in the history of the Negro race and the achievements of remarkable Negroes in any sphere and in any country, these Negro communities are knit together by resentment against their exploitation and humiliation by white America. During the last fifteen years the sentiment of racial solidarity and organized protest has grown by great leaps. There is now growing up an embryo "nation within the nation." But contrary to similar manifestations in Europe and Asia, this feeling of racial and national solidarity among the Negro people thus far aims solely at acquiring enough force and momentum to break down the barriers that exclude Negroes from American society, showing few signs of aiming at national separatism. These new moods coupled with constantly increasing activities have already had a powerful effect on the Negroes in the South who, even within the shackles of the Southern system, try to follow the Northern example as far as possible.

It would be a grave error to underestimate the social and political significance of this maturing Negro racial and national consciousness. It is rooted in the very conditions of American capitalism, has grown with them and will disappear only with them. It does not lessen but grows continuously. Every stage by which Negroes have been incorporated into industry and industrial unionism, every expansion of the Negro ghettos, every social advance of the Negro people, has meant a corresponding rise in the solidarity and temper of the Negro community and its protest against segregation. Despite all appearances American capitalism constantly increases and intensifies its Jim Crow system. The greatest Jim Crow organization ever created was the Army for World War II. Protests resulted only in special Negro air squadrons, special Negro war correspondents, special groups of Negro entertainers, etc. Thus directly and indirectly the American army carried with it the American Jim Crow system to every quarter of the globe. The more powerfully the Negroes organize and protest, the more capital is compelled to attempt to bribe them with special Negro schools, special Negro hospitals, special Negro colleges, special Negro playgrounds, special Negro news films, special Negro appointments -- generally to government departments dealing with Negro affairs.

The Negroes have repeatedly exploded in revolutionary outbursts of the most varied types. As soon as they found themselves in sufficient numbers out of the South, the Garvey movement erupted. This extraordinary mass movement testified to the protest against Jim Crow which was and is restrained by terror in the South. Since that time the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other petty-bourgeois dominated organizations have grown steadily. But they are absolutely unable to discipline the insurgent Negro masses. In Harlem where the masses feel themselves strongest, the protests tend to express themselves most violently as in 1935 and 1943. There the Negro masses expressed their pent-up resentment against Jim Crow by coming into the streets and wrecking shops owned by whites in the main centers of Harlem, while at the same time carefully refraining from violence against the whites who walked the streets unmolested.

Similar outbursts have taken place in cities such as Detroit, and are incipient in every Negro community. With extreme rapidity the Negroes in 1941 organized the March-on-Washington Movement on a nationwide scale, creating consternation in the ranks of the federal government. In addition Negro soldiers fought bravely throughout World War II for equality and democratic rights within the army.

Marxists have repeatedly pointed out that in a revolutionary crisis the most oppressed social layers, who have hitherto remained outside of the class struggle, when awakened by the organized proletariat, constitute some of the most dynamic elements of the revolution. The hatred of bourgeois society and enduring capacity for revolutionary sacrifice which characterizes the deepest proletarian strata is combined in the urban Negroes with the organizational solidity imposed upon them by American segregation and the readiness to revolt which is the result of the universally recognized, intolerable, and indefensible injustice of their position.

Spread of Revolutionary Ideas

The petty bourgeois leaders of Negro organizations struggle in vain to instill into the masses the "principles" of American democracy.

But the petty-bourgeois leadership has far less control of the Negro masses than the labor leadership has of the basic ranks of the proletariat. In the lives of the great masses of the Negroes and even in the petty-bourgeois Negro press there is a mounting tendency to reject not only in words but in action, the shiboleths of American democracy and thereby, through conclusions from their own experience, to approach the truths of Marxism.

Thus it is that the Negroes more than any other social grouping in the country;

(1) Have challenged the conception that the great wars of the United States in our generation were fought for democracy;

(2) Have repudiated the fetishism of American democracy as the quintessence of freedom and equality of rights and opportunity;

(3) Are skeptical of the belief that the future of American political life is unalterably confined to alternation between the Democratic and Republican Parties;

(4) Have challenged the conception that the state is above all classes;

(5) Have discarded the conception that rights are obtained purely by democratic discussions and parliamentary procedures.

It is not in the slightest degree accidental that during World War II, those sections of the population who reached the highest pitch of protest against the bourgeois state were the miners by a continuous series of strikes and the Negroes in Harlem. If the miners had the sympathy of the great masses of the workers, the Harlem Negroes had still more the sympathy of the great masses of the Negroes all over the country. Miners and the Negro masses in Harlem symbolized on a small but significant scale the unfolding pattern of revolt, of singular importance for the coming period -- great mass strikes of the organized proletariat and rebellious outbursts among the Negroes. The same pattern is already being repeated on a higher scale. In the apparently unchallenged march of the American bourgeoisie to internal enslavement of the masses in preparation for war, once more it is the miners who raised the first open challenge by action, and the Negroes in the persons of Randolph and Reynolds who hurled the first open challenge and defiance.

While this movement has nowhere found clear, revolutionary socialist expression, its impact has already made itself felt.

(1) The March-on-Washington Movement resulted in the establishment of the FEPC which has become in its own way a potent source of conflict within the Democratic Party.

(2) The Harlem action in 1943 not only went unpunished by the government but was the signal for all the labor leaderships and liberal groupings to rally hastily together for the purpose of pacifying the Negro masses by means of a state FEPC with punitive legislation for convicted offenders.

(3) Racial conflict in Detroit over housing and discrimination resulted in an anti-Negro pogrom, stoutly resisted by the Negro masses. The UAW was immediately involved and the climax of its intervention was of great significance for the future relations between the Negro mass movement and organized labor. The city election of 1944 was fought by a combination of the UAW and the Negro masses against the reactionary Mayor Jefferies, the race question playing a major part in the campaign.

(4) The power and solidarity of the Negro protest has compelled the leaders of the Democratic Party to weigh the nearly 300 electoral votes, in states where the Negro vote is decisive, against the less than half as many votes controlled by the South, and to propound a civil rights program which is helping to tear the Democratic Party apart. The Wallace third party movement profits by Negro dissatisfaction to mobilize great blows against the Democratic Party.

(5) The Negroes themselves, both in the mass, as in Harlem in 1943, and as groups, as in the Randolph-Reynolds protest, though basing themselves on their racial problems, show a profound recognition of the unity of their struggle with that of other oppressed groups and constantly demand joint action with whites. Though racial hatreds in the South may well be the cause of bloody reprisals for centuries of repression, among the most oppressed groups, the share croppers, the Negroes have repeatedly taken the lead in organizations comprising Negroes and whites.

(6) Hostile as the Negro petty-bourgeois leaders are to mass action by Negroes, they have repeatedly joined together and in the name of millions of Negroes, recited their grievances and pointed out the weaknesses and crimes of both parties in regard to Negroes. They have solidarized themselves against the reactionary politics of the Southern bloc and therefore implicitly -- and often explicitly -- with the labor movement; and declared themselves, on behalf of the Negro people, as supporting the struggles for independence of the colonial nations. They have taken the symbolical step of appealing to the United Nations against the American government. Under the pressure of mass sympathy for the proposals of Randolph and Reynolds, those Negro petty-bourgeois leaders who were carefully nurtured by the Roosevelt administration as spreaders of bourgeois ideas among the Negro masses, were forced to refuse to take any part in assisting the government to integrate Negroes into a segregated army. Despite the inevitable vacillations, compromises and capitulations of the Negro petty bourgeoisie, this sharp break at a time when they are badly needed indicates the dilemma of the government between its need to mobilize the nation and the rebelliousness of millions of Negroes.

Many of these actions have not been carried through to any decisive conclusion. But their increasing frequency and widening scope, the variety of forms in which they appear, their deep historical roots in the past of the country, illustrate with unusual richness and clarity the truth of one of the great contributions of Leninism to Marxist theory.

Effects of Negro Movement

"The dialectics of history," says Lenin, "is such that small nations, powerless as an independent factor in the struggle against imperialism play a part as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli,

which help the real power against imperialism to come on the scene, namely, the Socialist Proletariat."

In analyzing the role of small nations Lenin cast light on the special contribution of the Negro struggle to the proletarian movement in the United States. Under the banner of Negro rights, the movement of the Negro people is rendered most sensitive and responsible to social tensions. It acts as a spur in precipitating struggles for elementary democratic rights; it unmasks the class nature of the capitalist state; it helps educate the working class to the reactionary role of bourgeois democracy and the need to wage merciless struggle against it; and propels into action the major political forces of the nation and the organized labor movement.

Important as these contributions are to the forces of social revolution, the Negro movement has invariably suffered heavy depression and demoralizing blows, with the betrayal, defeat or lack of response of these forces. Deserted by the victorious bourgeoisie in 1876, the Negroes bore the full brunt of Southern reaction and revenge. After the defeat of the Populist Movement the South passed drastic anti-Negro legislation. Isolated from the revolutionary forces, the Garveyite outburst, though of great social and historical significance, became besmirched with grotesque follies and fantasies and rapidly disintegrated.

Today the greater organized political power of the Negro struggle faces correspondingly greater dangers. The CIO has brought the Negro back into the fabric of American social life. Defective as may be its positive contributions, the mere existence of the CIO and its enunciation of equality for Negroes, combined with the relative freedom with which Negroes function within it, create the arena in which Negroes become increasingly bold in their struggles. It acts as a check upon the more flagrant aspects of Negro persecution. The defeat of the proletariat by American capitalism would inevitably result in unprecedented persecution for the Negro people. Already in 1943 when the Negro struggles were at their height, Roosevelt's Attorney-General Biddle proposed that Southern Negroes be prohibited from coming North. If the proletariat is defeated, the Southern system will be extended over the whole country, and wherever American imperialism holds sway.

That organized labor is the principal shield and ally of the Negroes is true not only in a broad historical but in an immediate sense as well. In Detroit during 1943 the influence of the organized labor movement saved the Negroes from horrible massacres and persecutions by anti-Negro elements and the police. Today, the ruling class can seize upon the Randolph-Reynolds anti-Jim Crow movement and deal harsh blows to the Negro people from the professional race-haters and vigilantes, and from the police and troops, unless the sympathy and support of organized labor are aroused.

The Party and the Negro Movement

The party pays special attention to the Negro mass movement. Our members join these organizations which offer, if only for a time, a fruitful field of work. We assist in the creation of new organizations, aiming at the struggle for democratic rights, promoting them in accordance with the objective situation and the strength of the party.

In our attitude to these organizations, we recognize the great difference between a periphery organization which is guided by party policy on a particular issue or consists of close sympathizers of the party, and an organization which rises up independently of the party to express the deep needs and aspirations of millions of oppressed people. In entering such organizations the party does not at all insist that they be Marxist in program as a condition of working in them any more than we impose such demands on the union movement as a condition for working in them.

Neither do we judge these organizations by the character of their leadership at any given moment, as for instance the reformist, petty bourgeois, timid character of the NAACP. At critical moments organizations of this type can become centers of genuine mass activity. On the other hand, as the March-on-Washington Movement proved, new organizations, expressing the aroused fighting spirit of the Negro people can spring up overnight. In critical times, mass outbursts, as in Harlem in 1943, can become the starting point for the creation of new or the revitalization of old organizations. From all these points of view, participation by our members in the existing organizations of the Negroes according to the party's strength and aims, remains a permanent feature of party work.

Party members participate in these Negro organizations, as in all others, as revolutionists. Our main purpose in them is the mobilization of the Negro masses for revolutionary action. The party applies here, too, the principles of its program, which, presented with patience and flexibility, will find a ready hearing among the proletarian and semi-proletarian Negroes. The party wages unceasing struggle against the Negro petty-bourgeois leadership, the same type of struggle that it carries on against the union bureaucracy. It strives for an unambiguous militant program based upon the needs and readiness for struggle of the broad masses. It seeks to replace the vacillating, reformist petty-bourgeois leadership with a militant leadership fighting on the principles of the class struggle and in the closest alliance with organized labor and the Marxist revolutionists.

The party raises the question of political affiliation, and on the basis of the widespread Negro disillusionment with the two traditional parties, urges these organizations to go on record for a Labor Party, and to outline their program for such a party and not on the Negro question alone.

Finally the party will find in the Negro organizations and in Negro life a fruitful field for the spread of the fundamental doctrines of Marxism. The situation of all Negro people offers exceptional opportunities for winning over the best elements in these organizations to Marxism on the basis of Negro needs and Negro experiences.

The Negro mass movement is a natural ally of the proletarian revolution. It will organize and reorganize itself many times in the course of its evolution to socialism. But the party governs itself by the fact that the high peaks of organized labor struggle, the CIO in 1935-1937, the miners' strike in 1943, the great strikes of 1945-1946 culminating in the widespread but bureaucratically suppressed desire for a general strike against the Taft-Hartley Bill, have been paralleled by the outburst of the Negro masses in Harlem in 1935, the March-on-Washington Movement in 1940, the outbursts in Harlem, Detroit and else-

where in 1943, the growth of the NAACP to over half a million members. In the crisis of the drive to war the Randolph-Reynolds movement and the refusal of the Negro petty-bourgeois leadership to collaborate with a segregated army today hold the center of the stage. The government and the bourgeoisie have never underestimated the potential force of the Negro movement and its threat to the capitalist system.

The forms and rapidity of its progress will be determined to a large degree by the strength and resolute participation of the party in its struggles and experiences, and its concentration upon promoting the economic and social interests of the Negro masses. We must support this mass movement, develop it, make it a politically conscious and definitely class movement. In marching hand in hand with it to the end we are marching far beyond its initial goal; we are marching to the very end of the division of society into classes.

The Negro Movement and Organized Labor

The primary and ultimate necessity of the Negro movement is its unification with the revolutionary forces under the leadership of the proletariat. The guiding force of this unification is and can only be the revolutionary party.

The most urgent task of the revolutionary party is the destruction of the strangling influence of the reformist union bureaucrats over the labor movement. Precisely because of its exceptional role in the country's economic and political life, the Negro question confronts the labor bureaucracy with a series of acute problems. These have already drawn a widening line of demarcation between labor bureaucratism and revolutionary Marxism in the struggle for the leadership of the American proletariat.

The labor leadership itself has been compelled to assume a titular leadership or endorsement of Negro rights and of the struggle against discrimination on the job and in the union. The imperative necessity of organizing the South has compelled the union leadership to grapple with the legalized and socially sanctified degradation and humiliation of the Negroes in the South. The formation of a Labor Party will immediately lead to a desperate struggle over the poll-tax, federal action against lynching and discrimination, and the whole system of oppression under the Southern oligarchy. Reformism can no more solve this burning problem than the reformist labor bureaucracy of Russia, Italy or Spain could solve the peasant question.

The labor bureaucracy is becoming increasingly entangled with the government in the deprivation of the democratic rights of the workers. In the coming period, particularly if the war drive intensifies, a repetition of mass Negro upheavals, opposed directly to the federal government, can awaken warm response in the minds of workers, and become a powerful source of exposure of the hypocrisy of American imperialism. The endorsement by the union bureaucracy of the bi-partisan war program and their red-baiting campaign have given prominence and opportunity to some of the most reactionary and anti-Negro elements in the union movement.

In the critical days ahead, the Negro problem inside the union movement can become an extremely important issue. The whole past of the Negro movement shows that the Negroes in the unions, once assured

of the support of a substantial number of white workers, will be in the forefront of any serious struggle against the labor bureaucracy as agents of governmental repression and reaction.

The American proletariat needs above all to be instilled with a consciousness of its historic mission as the fundamental force in the struggle against capitalism and leader of all oppressed groups and classes. The struggle for Negro rights and against the poll-tax, lynching, etc., have already made a strong impact upon the social education of the proletariat. This process will inevitably continue and develop. The mass struggles of the Negroes will increasingly pose the question of proletarian intervention and enable the revolutionary forces to come to the fore with their revolutionary policy as opposed to the reformist.

By its leadership and championship of the Negro mass movement, the party takes one of the surest roads to gaining recognition as an organization that is determined, not merely to right Negro wrongs, but to abolish bourgeois society.

The Struggle Against Racial Prejudice

The party does not deny or minimize the existence of racial hatreds and the very real dangers they hold and will increasingly hold for the proletarian struggle as the foundations of bourgeois society continue to crumble and release the passions it has fostered for centuries. The history of Nazi Germany shows what brutality, terror and sadism, capitalism in its last agonies can and will mobilize in its defense.

The party alone can carry on a fundamental propaganda and sustained and effective agitation against these dangers. Only the strenuous, patient, persistent and vigilant propagation of Marxist views on the Negro question, which are especially on guard against abstractions, can teach the workers to recognize and tear out by the root, the innumerable, often subtle and always constantly recreated forms in which bourgeois race prejudice infiltrates into the ranks of the organized labor movement and the revolutionary vanguard itself.

The party will increasingly be subjected to conflicts between different strata of the labor movement which will find their expression in racial form. Particularly the party's forceful struggle for influence in labor organizations of predominantly white workers will sometimes be impeded or placed in jeopardy by its championship of the Negro cause and Negro workers. Reactionary enemies of the revolutionary party will deliberately incite and magnify this issue to embarrass the party. The Stalinists, on the other hand, have shown their readiness to utilize the Negro desire for equality in order to disrupt the solidarity of the workers for their own ends.

This poses and will increasingly pose, difficult problems for the party. Even where, as in many AFL unions, the anti-Negro policy is flagrant, the concrete circumstances will often present serious problems for the party. Their successful handling, both for the education of the proletariat and the solidarity and growth of the party, must be based on the determination of the revolutionary party under all circumstances to maintain the principles for which it stands.

In the Negro movement in particular and often in the labor movement the party will meet Negro chauvinism. While making no principled concessions to it, the party treats it with great caution and makes a sharp distinction between the chauvinism of the oppressed and the chauvinism of the oppressor, even when the latter is expressed within the ranks of the organized labor movement. This chauvinism of the Negroes contains the possibilities of its being exploited under certain circumstances by the capitalists and turned into a terrible danger to the organized labor movement. Precisely because of this the party must take the lead in guiding it, explaining its progressive features, purging it of its dangerous traits, and both in theory and practice, impressing the organized labor movement with its potentiality as a force for the defense of all democratic rights and the struggle against capitalist reaction.

As the party grows and wins over groups of rank and file workers, white and Negro, the cruder forms of race prejudice will assume importance within the party. They must be mercilessly fought. It is only on the basis of a constantly widening recognition and exposition of the significance of the Negro struggle not merely for Negroes but for the social revolution, that the party will be able to carry out the necessary tactics with firmness and yet without hysteria or fool-hardiness. Both in the party and in the organized labor movement the party in opposing Jim Crow spares no pains to explain its reasons and exercises extreme caution and care, not to needlessly irritate and antagonize the white workers, victims of a long historical development.

The pervading pressures of racial prejudice can take the most subtle forms. White workers and even union leaders in the party can find an easy escape from the hard task of combating racial prejudices by counterposing the importance for the party of its influence on the organized labor movement, as against the Negro movement. On the other hand, Negro workers, on gaining class consciousness and observing the practices of equality in the revolutionary party and in certain of the industrial unions, sometimes react with hostility to the Leninist analysis of the racial and national aspects of the Negro movement and tend to reject it as a step backward and an unnecessary concession to Negro chauvinism. Petty-bourgeois Negroes who find in the party not only a means of revolutionary struggle but a relief from the strains and humiliations of Negro life will sometimes oppose the bringing forward of Negro work to its rightful place in party life. These are not individual aberrations but reflect, each its own way, political weakness before the bourgeois pressure to relegate the Negro question to a subordinate place. Only a sound policy, actively carried out, can correct and check these and similar manifestations.

The situation of the Negro movement in American society gives a special role to Negro leadership, not merely among Negroes but in the revolutionary forces of the country. All great revolutions have, of necessity, utilized in the leadership members of oppressed races and nationalities as the most opposed to the existing order.

That the American socialist revolution will prove no exception to this rule is shown by the role already played by Negro leaders in the CIO. In its activity in the Negro labor organizations the party must devote great efforts to the winning over, education and preparation for leadership of Negro workers and intellectuals. But here again only the clear grasp of the character of the Negro movement can create the basis

for Negro revolutionists to take their rightful place in the revolutionary party and the revolutionary struggle of the organized labor movement.

The party will have to use chiefly Negroes in its activity among Negro organizations, even where whites are admitted as members, as a necessary concession to the historically justified suspicions and prejudices of the Negro masses. But if Negro leaders do not play a role in the general activity of the party on a national scale, that would represent a concession to the terrible power of bourgeois race prejudice, and would, in effect, segregate the Negro even within the revolutionary movement itself. This danger must be vigorously and consciously fought.

The Negro leaders of the party in Negro work must be consciously and carefully trained as Marxists of the international revolution. Unless they are so trained they cannot be good examples of Bolsheviks in the union movement; lack of such training would tend to perpetuate inside the party itself the bourgeois division of white and Negro. The party teaches the conscious elements among the Negroes and builds its cadres, both white and black, according to the dictum of Trotsky that "the conscious elements of the Negroes. . . are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class." Only a party educated in this spirit can create the surroundings to assist the Negro revolutionists in overcoming the influence of bourgeois race prejudice, express inside and outside the party the future historic role of the Negro people in the struggle for socialism, help to give confidence to the Negro masses that the past betrayals of the bourgeoisie are alien to the revolutionary proletariat, and demonstrate before the eyes of the masses the character of the new society.

Premises for Fruitful Work

At this stage of the party's development and at the present undeveloped level, in a strictly political sense, of both the organized labor movement and the Negro movement, the party must view the incorporation of Negroes and Negro work into the party and party building as a test and touchstone of its general revolutionary strategy and tactics, illuminating both the strength and weakness of the American workers and oppressed classes as well as the strength and weakness of the party.

The penetration into the most dynamic strata of the American workers, winning them over to Marxism, lifting them above the immediate preoccupations to the heights of Bolshevism, steeling them against prevailing prejudices, the consolidation of diverse elements of an exceptionally diverse population, the creation of a centralized powerful revolutionary organization united by an inner discipline -- all this at the present time finds a graphic expression in the Negro work of the party. "If it happens that we in the SWP are not able to find the road to this strata, then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and the rest would be only a lie." These blunt words of Leon Trotsky underscore his recognition of the vital importance of the Negro movement in the United States as a constituent part of the struggle for socialism.

But just as the Negro movement for all its revolutionary character depends upon the revolutionary proletariat for its final success and even for safeguarding it from defeat and destruction, so, too, the party's Negro work, important as it is, depends upon the general progress of the party in securing and extending its influence in the organized labor movement. Experience has shown that it is where the party

possesses real strength in the labor movement that its activities among the Negro masses meet with the greatest response. Only to the extent that the party successfully carries out the Transitional Program and rises to the level of its general political tasks will it be able to take fullest advantage of the great contributions to the socialist struggle inherent in Negro work.

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FOR AN INDEPENDENT THIRD GROUPING IN THE UAW

By E. Logan and R. Wilson

Comrade Cannon's article, "The Coming American Revolution," is not a premature thesis. The analysis contained therein describes the hopeless decay of world capitalism and the blind alley into which it plunges society. The United States is no exception! As the leading dominant capitalist country it is now subject to all the forces and impacts of the old capitalist countries in Europe. U.S. capitalism occupies a frontal position in this decaying process.

This incurable disease which U.S. capitalism imposes on its population does not go unnoticed, especially by the rank and file members of the organized labor movement. Only two years of "peace" were necessary to shatter any illusions of security or lasting prosperity. Five years of War Labor Boards and Labor-Management Committees were supposed to show that disputes and differences could be settled amicably. The Stalinists and official union leaders made promises that this amicable process would "educate" the bosses to the principles of "justice and reasonableness." For five years this incessant propaganda was drummed into the ears and minds of the workers so that naught else could be heard. Yet immediately with the cessation of war, the propaganda still ringing in their ears, deep powerful strikes shook the length and breadth of the nation. Even old conservative groups, who by their own considered and traditional conservatism thought themselves "safe" against strikes, were forced into strike action which ran counter to the ideas of moderation and compromise many accepted during war years.

It was a UAW group -- the General Motors workers -- that took to strike action first. Other unions followed, and in the course of these long, hard struggles working people everywhere learned that bosses are incapable of being taught justice and reasonableness. They learned this from the fierce resistance which the bosses counterposed to the just and reasonable demands of the strikers. They also learned that national "unity" was a farce.

For the UAW the strike culminated in the biggest economic gain in its history. But a few months later the gains completely disappeared. What happened to the 18½ cents that was gained at such cost? Inflation, higher prices, mounting profits and taxes nullified the union's economic victory.

But at this juncture the workers have learned a profound lesson. He views the situation realistically. Why should I go on strike and lose several weeks, perhaps months if inflation and higher taxes wipe out any wage increases I may gain? If I go on strike I want to be sure that I can make a boost in wages secure. What good is it if I win on a picket line and have it cancelled by Washington politically? Herein lies the nub of a revolutionary future for which we, as revolutionary trade unionists, must become prepared. If the workers are to struggle effectively they must do so with demands that are revolutionary in their very nature. If the workers reject old trade union methods and slogans as inadequate and obsolete it can only mean in the class struggle process the workers are ready for new, different steps!

Every analysis by our party stresses that capitalism in the U.S. cannot afford to give the American workers any further concessions. There is a certain minimum line beyond which U.S. monopoly cannot yield an inch. It will resort to direct force rather than have the workers cross it. That is why these new steps the American workers are now ready for are so charged with revolutionary content. Almost any one of the slogans in our transitional demands stresses the line, with which American capitalism will not bargain. Almost any part of our program, if carried out on a large scale within any major International union, would precipitate a political crisis for American capitalism. Yet the new tools the worker must use if he is to struggle effectively will have to be fashioned out of our program and perspective. There are no other tools, no other perspective, save the reformist tools of Thomas, Addes, Reuther, and these tools are being discarded as inadequate by the rank and file.

In the past our program -- our tools have been insufficiently branded. Whenever a UAW leader finds it absolutely necessary to rejuvenate himself or preserve his bureaucratic rump, he takes one of our tools, waters it down, misuses it and after he gains his bureaucratic end, insults it! Reuther did this with the "Open the Books" slogan.

Now these are revolutionary tools, and can be used only by the revolutionists. Reuther, Addes, Thomas are not revolutionists. They would rather face the consequences of the Taft-Hartley Bill than seriously use any of our tools against the boss class. Ours is a fighting program. Our slogans will be resisted by the bosses -- and the union bureaucrats. The bosses will resist them because they cannot afford to grant them; by the union leaders because if they accepted them they would have to fight the bosses.

The whole union officialdom preaches and practices appeasement of Big Business.

The Addes, Thomas, Reuther method of struggle is via the approved legal way, which means on grounds acceptable to the capitalists -- their courts, in their parliaments, etc.

Only a third grouping speaking with a bold tongue can lead the looming battle in a real class struggle manner. Only a third grouping with a bold program and leadership can lead the ranks of unionists to their new, different direction. And this, comrades, is a job for a revolutionist. We are revolutionists and the task befalls us.

The general situation is no longer adequate for a propaganda group. What is needed now is bold leadership, and a program corresponding to the needs of the auto workers. We cannot become that bold leadership if we are committed to a policy of supporting the lesser of two evils. At present we are "hangers on" -- albeit progressive ones -- nevertheless still hangers on!

As the June edition of the F.I. correctly points out, the reason Reuther and all the other labor fakers retained leadership is not because the former confidence bestowed on them by the ranks still exist but "because they did not have a new leadership and new policies to rely on." We learn, comrades, that these bureaucrats retain leadership by default. It almost sounds as if we were not a factor in the UAW.

Well, we never will become a factor for leadership if we continue to support some other leader. At the last convention we supported Reuther; now we are being asked to support a bureaucrat we opposed then. Addes hasn't changed, but we are asked to change our support. The "behind the door" support given Reuther at the last convention was supposed to bring us certain advantages if Reuther were elected. These advantages ended in a red-baiting attack on our comrades in Briggs Local 212 by the Reuther forces. In fact, our comrades were expelled from the Pioneer Caucus. Let us not repeat this support, and depend on doubtful "favors" from bureaucrats whom our theoretical organs analyze as bureaucrats and class collaborators, and who, in practice, confirm our theories.

The analysis of our press gives the clearest demonstration for the party to plunge into the mass movements, and with our uncompromising program and activity win the confidence of the masses and become their leaders. To say, "but from a practical point of view it is not wise to come out for a third grouping at this time," is to say: (1) that our objective analysis of the entire situation is wrong, and that (2) the situation is not mature -- or at least the workers are not mature for the situation. The second factor is stressed more against the third grouping than the first.

If the American worker has any national peculiarity, however, it is that fundamentally he is a person who is a genius for direct action. They perhaps may not consciously be politically aware of their backwardness, but they do use direct action whenever they become intent on achieving a desired end. It is precisely because the American worker is so militant in action that he is politically inexperienced. The speed and militancy of action won him organizational and economic gains, and because of these successful actions, there has, until now, been no necessity for recourse to political action.

With the ability of American capitalism to move to greater and greater reaction, we do not believe the American workers are going to accept reaction's deadly fruit. The continuation of capitalism is a challenge to the gains won in the past, and a blockade to progress in the future. American labor is not docile and it is going to move, and when it moves it will move with rapidity. It is not the immaturity of the proletariat, but the lack of confidence some of the comrades have in the American workers.

A recent development is the Taft-Hartley Bill, and the Taft-Hartley Bill -- as the bourgeoisie well understands -- is not intended to smash labor and its organizations. Powerful unions cannot be smashed and ruled out of existence by the passage of a law. What the Taft-Hartley Bill calculates to do is to put the fight on a legal basis. The class-struggle methods of direct actions have been so successfully used by the workers that the American bourgeoisie was forced to give concessions. These successes frightened Big Business and they had to devise a way to make impotent the force of organized labor and its direct action methods. Consequently the Taft-Hartley Bill now places the fight on a legal plane, a plane on which the American bourgeoisie can more easily cope with American labor. Specifically, it puts the fight on the side of the legal minded bureaucrat and their class-collaborationist advisors and lawyers. No longer is labor to struggle and show its strength through unity of action. No, the battle

is now calculated to be fought through lawyers and the mugwumps of labor. This kind of battle only tends to stabilize the crust of bureaucracy which is becoming more and more hardened, and eliminates the participation of the rank and file -- the real strength of organization.

If the comrades opposed to a third grouping want to fight the way the labor bureaucrats like to fight, and with half their checkers under the board, we can assure them with certainty the party will never win the leadership of the masses. Addes, Thomas, Reuther, and all the bureaucrats will eventually follow "the law of the land." They will end up by telling the workers to be reasonable and obey the laws. Bourgeois lawyers are already telling the top leaders and secondary leaders how labor should fight; mostly how they cannot fight because it is illegal! We must be free to fight against these misleaders. We cannot afford to be tied to a faction which restricts the accomplishments of our tasks.

The present policy of supporting progressive steps of either group has led to loose and oftentimes conflicting actions of not only branches, but also of comrades within a branch. A comrade of one shop may line himself up with the militants who, in this particular shop, may support the Reuther faction. In another shop the militants may be supporting Addes-Thomas. Neither group can be identified from a programmatic point of view. This lack of basic distinction between the two groups has led to the Chicago branch (who were then supporting Reuther) not supporting the entry of the Farm Equipment Union and the Detroit branch to support the merger. A third independent grouping within the UAW would halt these conflicting positions by our comrades and other union militants.

With Reuther using red-baiting and a social democratic, demagogic approach, and Thomas-Addes in their zest for posts, each faction is accusing the other of everything but good unionism. The vicious charges each faction has accused the other serve to discredit them both. In either case neither faction is concerning itself with the problems of the rank and file. This unconcern in conjunction with the inability of the leaders to lead effectively leaves the doors for the formation of an independent third grouping wide open.

We do not deny there are some difficult problems to surmount, but with discussion, with concentrated work, we think the party can accomplish this task.

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This article was written sometime ago. In fact, it was written in the late summer months. However, it was decided that we would hold it back until the completion of the UAW Convention, and then to give our "shift" time to take hold. However I see that the picture is not changing and feel that this article must appear before it is too late to change our policies in the UAW. In the coming elections of the UAW in the next two months, it is apparent that both factions are struggling for posts. It is only where our comrades are in the position to be influential that we can put our ideas into play.

February 1, 1948