

# INTERNAL BULLETIN

VOL. 14, No. 2

June, 1952

## CONTENTS

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES FOR AMERICA

By A.P., Detroit, Mich.

Issued by:

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY  
116 University Place  
New York 3, N.Y.

15¢

## THE REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES FOR AMERICA

By A.P., Detroit, Mich.

### 1. Party Perspectives in 1947 and Today

In 1947 Comrade Cannon, speaking for the National Committee in presentation of the thesis on the American Revolution which was then adopted by the party, said:

". . . We have worked and struggled to build a party fit to lead a revolution in the United States. At the bottom of all our conceptions was the basic conception that the proletarian revolution is a realistic proposition in this country, and not merely a far-off 'ultimate goal,' to be referred to on ceremonial occasions.

"I say that is not new. In fact, it has often been expressed by many of us, including Trotsky, in personal articles and speeches. But only now, for the first time, it has been incorporated in a programmatic document of the party. That's what is new in our 'Thesis on the American Revolution.' We are now stating explicitly what before was implied.

"For the first time, the party as a party is posing concretely the fundamental question of the perspective of the American Revolution."

In 1948 the Fourth International issued a manifesto titled, "Against Wall Street and the Kremlin." The manifesto was based upon the concrete revolutionary perspective for America on the one hand, and for Russia and Eastern Europe on the other.

In relation to America the manifesto states:

"The U.S. proletariat faces a stormy development that will make up for the historic backwardness of its labor movement. Under the whip of the great crisis of 1929, the working class made a formidable leap ahead, and attained a very high level of trade union consciousness. With the magnificent rise of the CIO, the American trade union movement became the most powerful in the history of capitalism. Under the whip of the next economic crisis, the consciousness of the American working class will make a new leap forward and will acquire political consciousness. The politicalization of the American working class will be the most explosive and the most threatening that capitalism has known since the Russian Revolution. This development confronts American capitalism from now on. To prepare themselves for boldly taking over the leadership of this movement is the duty of the American Trotskyists. . . The country which today concentrates within itself the whole capitalist development will tomorrow give the revolutionary movement its highest expression. The sweep of American imperialism throughout the world will surely cause the American Revolution to be the signal and the motive force of the world revolution tomorrow."

In relation to Russia, the manifesto sums up its programmatic perspective on Page 40:

"The violent ejection of the bureaucratic regime is today an urgent task of the Russian working class, otherwise what remains of the

October conquests is in danger of being stifled under the weight of this parasitic regime."

That was in 1947-48. Today, the party is programmatically incorporating a smashing defeat of the American working class as a cornerstone for its perspective and orientation. In 1951, in an editorial in the Fourth International which introduced and summarized the main lines of the findings of the Third World Congress, in place of Cannon's explanation of "what is new" in 1947, we read:

"What is new and different in the world today? The character of the approaching war is new. The position of the classes, the circumstances in which the war takes shape and threatens to break out are different from those which surrounded past wars. . . The conflict of two mutually exclusive social systems taking the form of world war means in effect, that the class struggle, which has existed from the inception of capitalism as a struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, has extended in the decline of capitalism into a struggle between states which represent the interests of the hostile and conflicting classes. . . It is the merging of the two big phenomena of our times -- war and revolution -- into one. Trotsky wrote prior to the last war that either the revolution would stop the war, or the war would produce the revolution. Many. . . in artificially transferring this correct statement to a greatly altered situation were led into error. They visualized the outbreak of war as a sign of defeat of the workers movement and a victory for imperialism which, as in 1939, would not dare plunge into war without first settling accounts with the proletariat. Not the least achievement of the Fourth International Congress was its correction of this error. . . It is for this reason that the Fourth International envisages the outbreak of civil war throughout the world when hostilities begin."

Pablo, in the main report to the Congress, goes on along these lines:

". . . the fact that new possible victories in Asia and Europe, far from diminishing the threat of war, can precipitate it, since American imperialism has now decided to stop this process and enjoys a far more stable relationship of forces within the United States than that which exists in Europe."

The change in perspective is of such breath-taking magnitude, and is accomplished in passing, as it were, with such nonchalance, that it becomes necessary to use many quotes so that the comrades can study the crucial transition points for themselves.

It should seem obvious, however, to put the matter mildly, that such a change has taken place in the evaluation of the American scene. Up to 1947-48, the party had the perspective of the American Revolution as a "realistic proposition" and "not merely a far-off 'ultimate goal.'" In 1947 we took, in consonance with the objective scene, a mighty step forward. In 1947, after twenty years and more of revolutionary acquaintance with and participation in the American scene, the party cautiously and soberly as befits Marxist leadership hailed a great new advance. We were for the first time programmatically incorporating the American Revolution; and, that American perspectives had a great deal to do with international perspectives as expressed in the mani-

festos, must of course be understood. This is not new. The Transitional Program, although an international document, took its point of departure in large part from the American scene, since America was then, and is even more so today, the heart of the capitalist system.

A matter of three years later, and we have revolutionary perspectives aplenty -- but not for America. Civil war will begin -- but not in America. As a matter of fact, it is the elimination of the revolutionary perspectives for America which now gives rise to revolutionary perspectives for the rest of the world. Let us not, however, be overhasty. The perspectives for the rest of the world have undergone a change in their own fashion. Instead of the masses of the world, including the workers and peasants of Russia and Eastern Europe, defending their own interests, they will have "representatives," they will have states which will represent their class interests. And let us at this point clearly say: Anyone who would propose, in terms of such an analysis, "the ejection of the bureaucratic regime. . . today," would be guilty of nothing less than treason to the working class. This is not the Spanish Civil War where we gave material but not political support to a bourgeois regime.

What has happened to the 1947-48 perspective? It has been thrown overboard like so much excess baggage in a phrase, in a passing sentence: American capitalism "enjoys" a far more "stable" relationship of forces so that it can go to war as it has "decided." We are hastily informed, however, that this war is not like past wars which we said came only after, and as, a crushing defeat of the workers. No, not this one? Say, if you like, that it will be victories in Europe and in Asia that will precipitate this war, unlike those in the past. But will not this war, especially this of all wars, in terms of such an analysis represent the most crushing defeat of the American working class that it has ever suffered? Is it not now said, unlike 1947 when the potentialities of the class struggle between the American working class and the American bourgeoisie held the greatest promise for the world revolutionary movement, is it not now said "that the class struggle which has existed from the inception of capitalism as a struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, has extended into. . . a struggle between states"? Has not thus the American working class, in three years, been transformed, without their knowledge and without their consent, from the vanguard of the world revolution into the bloody soldiers of the world counter-revolution? Is this not the greatest and most crushing defeat the American working class has ever experienced?

It is indeed fortunate that this defeat has been guaranteed, or we might say hailed in advance, only by the Pablos. The American workers have not, nor will they, accept such a role; nor do the capitalists and their agents within the labor movement feel any assurance whatsoever of what Pablo takes for granted.

It is necessary to recognize that a smashing defeat of the American workers plays a central and necessary role in Pablo's underlying perspective of "200 years of degenerated worker's states." He has never repudiated this thesis. His "explanation" of his position only made matters worse. For in attempting to retreat, to disguise, to equivocate, what he actually does is to equate the states of Eastern Europe and Russia as they exist today with a general problem of bureaucracy in the transition to complete socialism. He is, in effect,

equating the Russia of Lenin's time, "a workers and peasants state with bureaucratic deformations," with the Russia and Eastern Europe of Stalin. And he equates the two under the guise of inevitable problems of bureaucracy in the transition period. No Stalinist could do more.

Now any recognition of the real possibility of a revolution in America, with its immediate and immense effects throughout the world, would immediately destroy the illusion of strength with which Pablo is so impressed, the strength of the Red Army and of the Stalinist parties in general; and with the destruction of this illusion the "200 years of degenerated worker's states" would disappear forever. It will disappear unless -- unless Pablo doubts the ability of the working class in general to achieve anywhere anything more than a degenerated worker's state. It will disappear unless Pablo believes that even a revolution in America would lead, at best, to a degenerated worker's state.

There is here a marked similarity to the position of the Workers Party at the time of the split. The words are a little different, but the question mark placed over the ability of the masses to achieve socialism is the same; the evolution away from the masses is the same, only the direction of the evolution is different.

For the WP, the future of mankind was a "collectivist" future, out of which somewhere, somehow, sometime a socialist "collectivism" would arise. Russia was part of this "collectivist" epoch, bureaucratic, it is true, but nonetheless collectivist. The Workers Party was, therefore, for the defense of Russia against imperialist attack. To the best of our knowledge they have not to this day attempted a theoretical explanation of this line. But the real issue is clear -- the nature of our epoch and, indivisible from this, the question of the ability of the working class to achieve socialism. The WP having raised this question is answering it in practice with a movement towards capitulation to American imperialism.

Pablo, having raised this question, answers it with a continued movement towards complete capitulation to Stalinism. There can be no doubt, in terms of his analysis, that if the future 200 years is a future of degenerated worker's states that Stalinism and the Stalinist parties are the historically certified vanguard. We have no place except as visionary and idealist critics.\*

---

\*We must note here another of Pablo's "little" inconsistencies, retreats and evasions. Whereas in 1951 he spoke of victories in Europe and Asia precipitating a war, in the March-April, 1952, issue of the "Fourth International," he falls back on our traditional view of war as a defeat for workers when he says, "If important forces of the European socialist workers movement could become conscious of its enormous possibilities and find the strength to smash the obstacles, routine, the cowardice toward American imperialism and their own bourgeoisie, and to rise to the stature of history and its demands, this united socialist Europe would have a chance of coming into being and of acting before the storm of the Third World War breaks over its ruins." In other words, he is saying that victories of the proletariat in Europe can stop a Third World War but if it does not succeed then ruins, defeats, destruction will follow. We must also note here that for the first time in the Trotskyist movement masses are accused

of "cowardice." This is a typical petty-bourgeois reaction, utterly foreign to our movement in the past, which blames the masses, not the leadership, for defeat. This is, of course, completely consistent with the general question mark Pablo has placed over the ability of the masses to rise to the level of the tasks demanded by history.

---

All of this is beginning to have its concrete repercussions within the SWP. Within the general perspective of Pablo, a defeat of the American working class is necessary. With such a perspective there is little wonder that leading comrades were opposed to an election campaign. To what end campaign? There is little wonder that leading American Pabloites not only were among those that opposed an election campaign but are also advocates of a new, a real "Americanization" of the party; that is, they are seeking a formula, a unique "American" approach which will include working with a crushed, defeated working class with the inspiring goal of a degenerated worker's state; a unique "American" approach which will include dropping Trotsky's picture from The Militant and forgetting the "strangling norm" which the October Revolution left for us so they can better remember the idea that the present Stalinist Russian State is fighting in the class interests of the American workers. Truly a unique, realistic approach to the American workers. Truly a new "Americanization."

The existing leadership of the opposition to Reuther in the UAW, weak and confused as it is, is being forced by objective developments to search for an approach which will differentiate it from Wall Street and Walter Reuther on the one hand and the Stalinists on the other. But true to their perspective, the Pabloites can conceive of no such development and insist that any movement in the direction of differentiation from the Stalinists can have no progressive element at its base; that it is, and must be of its very nature, a capitulation to American imperialism. It may be that such a capitulation will take place; but if this happens, the utterly false perspective of these comrades will be in no small measure responsible. But this is a matter for a separate and more detailed discussion. Nevertheless, it will be recognized, and the sooner the better, that the Pabloites have nothing to say to the American workers and this nothing, this absolute negation of everything the American working class is at present striving for, they wish to call "Americanization." They are kidding no one but themselves.

## 2. The Basic Error

How did it come about that the American leadership has thus far capitulated to this monstrous caricature of Marxism without so much as firing a shot? There are two reasons, not altogether disconnected. One reason deals with the so-called Russian question which we have discussed in passing only in terms of one concrete manifestation, Pabloism.

The other reason is the economist misconception, apparently widely spread throughout the leadership, (a misconception not shared at all by Trotsky) of the nature of the crisis which lead to revolutionary upsurges on the part of the masses.

The perspective both implicitly stated and explicitly outlined by the SWP and the Fourth International in 1947-48 depended upon an

economic crisis like that of 1929, only far more severe, which would follow the temporary boom. Not only has this type of crisis failed to materialize but the boom seems to have taken on new life with an indefinite future due to an armaments economy and the increasing intervention of the state in the economy with the maintenance and increase of capitalist production as its main aim. It is not difficult to see why, granting the assumption of a depression crisis, the revolutionary outlook outlined in 1947-48 has become transformed into its opposite. It is this assumption, accepted and acted upon even if not clearly stated of late, that only economic crises of the 1929 type will set off the revolutionary upsurge of the masses, which is absolutely false.

Let us say, in order to make our point as clearly as possible, that the American workers today are more prosperous, enjoy a higher standard of living than ever before in their history. Let us say that not only are their "bellies full" but that there is every reason for believing that full employment will continue in the immediately foreseeable future. Does this mean the elimination of the revolutionary perspective in the immediate period ahead? Absolutely not. On the contrary, under the circumstances, **IT CAN INCREASE THE REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL**, and can make more certain revolutionary upheavals.

In the period of the death agony of a social system, be it feudalism or capitalism, when Marx's great generalization on the mode of production becoming a barrier to the advance of production itself becomes translated into the experience of the masses and when through this experience they arrive at a point of summation of experiences with the outlived social system on the one hand and the great, inherent possibilities for further advance on the other hand then "prosperity," ease of living, etc., become at least as great, if not greater, a goad to action, given the conjuncture of social and political crises, than the economic crises.

In order to get at the social and political forest through the economic trees we will quote Trotsky, who spent a great deal of time on this problem as a practical question, and we will also quote others who, while not being Marxists and at times somewhat overstating the case, are accredited as being keen observers.

Thorold Rogers, on Page 270 of "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," which, incidentally, is a standard reference for Marxists, says:

"Such political movements as are organized and developed with any hope of effecting their object ultimately and permanently are always the outcome of times in which prosperity, or at least relative comfort, is general. The force of society always makes easy work of the outbreak which despair sometimes instigates. The Jacquerie in France, the Peasants War in Germany, were desperate efforts, ferocious reprisals, but futile struggles. The years which preceded the Peasants War in England were times of high wages and low prices. The means of life were abundant, the earnings of the labourer exceptionally great. The teachings of the poor priests were addressed to men whose prospects were far higher than those of their fathers, whose opportunities were greater and more immediate than those of their remote descendants. What is the use of preaching social equality to the indigent and miserable? How can men combine and organize when their one thought is for their daily bread, and that is secure only for the day? (We are re-

mind of the Transitional Program where Trotsky states that one of the important reasons for demanding the sliding scale of wages is so that workers can turn their attention to other matters than their daily bread. We are reminded that the CIO was born not in the midst of the depression but in the period of recovery -- A.P.) The message of Wiklif's priests would have seemed a mockery to the destitute. How can the starving contend for their rights? The overmastering sense of the struggle for bare life leaves no room for any other thought. I am persuaded that the most remarkable religious movement of which we have accurate and continuous information, that of Wesley, with its unlimited sympathy and easily obtainable optimism, would have fallen on deaf ears in other times than those of the extraordinary plenty which marks the first half of the 18th century and agriculture became a favorite calling. But this plenty was as nothing to the golden times of the fifteenth, when the earth brought forth by handfuls, and the yeomanry were planted in England."

As for the French Revolution, See in Chapter III of "Economic and Social Conditions in France during the 18th Century" tells us that the peasants who constituted about four-fifths of the population had been very generally freed from serfdom; and Barnes on Page 116, Vol. II of "History of Western Civilization" says, "There were only about a million serfs in France in 1789, and the French peasants were rather better off than the similar class in Europe." But it is from De Tocqueville, author of the famous "Democracy in America," that we get the clearest picture (on Pages 212-213 of "The Old Regime and the Revolution"):

"Measurably, with the increase of prosperity in France, men's minds grow more restless and uneasy; public discontent is embittered; the hatred of the old institutions increases. The nation visibly tends toward revolution. More than this, those districts where progress makes its greatest strides are precisely those which are to be the chief theater of the Revolution. The extant archives of the old district of Ile de France prove that the old regime was soonest and most thoroughly reformed in the neighborhood of Paris. In no other pays d'election were the liberty and property of the peasants so well secured. Corvees has disappeared long before 1789. The taille was more moderate, more regular, more evenly distributed there than in any other part of France. . . . On the other hand, the old regime was nowhere in so high a state of preservation as on the borders of the Loire, especially near its mouth, in the swamps of Poitou, and the moors of Brittany. That is the very place where the civil war broke out, and the Revolution was resisted with the most obstinacy and violence. So that it would appear that the French found their condition the more insupportable in proportion to its improvement. One is surprised at such an anomaly, but similar phenomena abound in history. Revolutions are not always brought about by a gradual decline from bad to worse. . . . Evils which are patiently endured when they seem inevitable, become intolerable once the idea of escape from them is suggested. The very redress of grievances throws new light on those which are left untouched, and adds fresh poignancy to the smart; if the pain be less, the patient's sensibility is greater. Never had the feudal system seemed so hateful to the French as at the moment of its proximate destruction. The arbitrary measures of Louis XVI -- insignificant as they were -- seemed harder to bear than all the despotism of Louis XIV. The short imprisonment of Beaumarchais aroused more emotion in Paris than the Dragonnades."



Marx also discussed this question. True, he discussed it from a more general view but his thoughts are important for they sharply establish a line of demarcation between the Marxists and the vulgar economists who think "full bellies" and a high standard of living mean the end of struggles by the workers. On Page 33 of "Wage-Labour and Capital," Marx says:

"A house may be large or small; as long as the neighboring houses are likewise small, it satisfies all the social requirements for a residence. But let there arise next to the little house a palace, and the little house shrinks into a hut. The little house now makes clear that its inmate has no social position at all to maintain, or but a very insignificant one; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilization, if the neighboring palace rise in equal or greater measure, the occupant of the relatively little house will always find himself more uncomfortable, more dissatisfied, more cramped within his four walls. An appreciable rise in wages presupposes a rapid growth of productive capital. Rapid growth of productive capital calls forth just as rapid a growth of wealth, of luxury, of social needs and pleasures. Therefore, although the pleasures of the labourers have increased, the social gratification which they afford has fallen in comparison with the increased pleasures of the capitalist, which are inaccessible to the workers, in comparison with the stage of development of society in general."

We are by no means attempting a study of revolutions, we are giving some outstanding examples which we think will be of great help to the comrades in reorienting themselves. But now let us get closer to the present period. Trotsky on Page 233 of "The First Five Years of the Communist International" says:

"The question which is raised by many comrades abstractly, of just what will lead to revolution: impoverishment or prosperity, is completely false when so formulated. One Spanish comrade told me in a private conversation that in his country it was precisely the prosperity which came to Spanish industry through the war that produced a revolutionary movement on a large scale, whereas previously stagnation had prevailed. Here we have an example that is not Russian but Spanish -- an example from the other side of Europe. Neither impoverishment nor prosperity as such can lead to revolution. But the alternation of prosperity and impoverishment, the crises, the uncertainty, the absence of stability -- these are the motor factors of revolution . . . But today this blessed state, this stability of living conditions, has receded into the past; in place of artificial prosperity has come impoverishment. Prices are steeply rising; wages keep changing in and out of consonance with currency fluctuations. Currency leaps, prices leap, wages leap and then come the ups and downs of feverish fictitious conjunctures and of profound crises. This lack of stability, the uncertainty of what tomorrow will bring is the most revolutionary factor of the epoch in which we live. And this is quite lucidly stated in the Theses. In them we refer to the crisis, as such, and also to prosperity. This also covers the political conditions under which the working class lives."

Page 209: ". . . but when the crisis is replaced by a transitory favorable conjuncture, what will this signify for our development? Many comrades say that if an improvement takes place in this epoch it

would be fatal for our revolution. No, under no circumstances. In general, there is no automatic dependence of the proletarian revolutionary movement upon a crisis. There is only a dialectical interaction. . . In 1910, 1911 and 1912, there was an improvement in our economic situation (in Russia -- A.P.) and a favorable conjuncture which acted to reassemble the demoralized and devitalized workers who had lost their courage. They realized how important they were in production; and they passed over to an offensive, first in the economic field, and later in the political field as well. On the eve of the war the working class had become so consolidated thanks to this period of prosperity, that it was able to pass to a direct assault."

Page 224: "Under the Hohenzollern regime the German workers found a certain stability and well defined limits. The workers knew on the whole what could be done and what was forbidden. In Ebert's republic a worker-striker always incurs the risk of having his throat cut in the street, or in the nearest police station. Ebertian 'democracy' offers the German workers as little as do high wages in terms of completely depreciated currency."

Parallels aplenty can be drawn. We leave that to the comrades. But one thing should be noted and that is that added to all of which Trotsky spoke is the conjuncture of the social and political crisis of war.

But let us now restate in somewhat different fashion the generalization with which we began this series of quotations. We have had a statement by Marx of the positive drive to social unrest; to more fully round out the picture we have quoted the negative aspects of this question so brilliantly outlined by Trotsky; and added to these must be the great social and political crisis of war. There is an increased consciousness on the part of the worker, especially of the American worker today, of the great potentialities for him in the technological level of present day society. Combined with this increasing consciousness is an instability which is rapidly reaching the ultimate question of life or death, an uncertainty that deals not so much with a full belly but rather with the question of whether any society at all will continue to exist. In a way, atomic energy is the dramatic summation of this terrible dilemma, more terrible than at any other time in the history of all humanity; atomic energy with its vast potential for production and its terrifying potential for destruction.

What are the concrete manifestations of this crisis in America?

### 3. The Crisis in America

War, next to civil revolt, is in general the greatest social and political crisis of the capitalist system. The bourgeoisie takes workers and farmers, trains them as fighters, puts weapons in their hands and sends them out to kill or be killed. In time of peace the workers are exploited but must be kept alive if the system is to continue. In time of war the ultimate is demanded, the absolute of exploitation is reached -- the lives of the workers are demanded by the capitalists. At the same time that the capitalists ask for lives they paradoxically give to the workers the weapons with which they can save their lives and free themselves once and for all from capitalist exploitation.

That is why war represents such a grave crisis for the bourgeoisie. That is why the ruling class must strain every nerve to insure a docile, subdued working class, and even then it lives in constant fear, as well it might, of the consequences.

And what is the American working class which the capitalist class must arm, what is this working class like today?

Compressed within the experience of living American workers, engraved upon their minds and within their hearts (and no one who knows the American working class can doubt this for one moment) are three great negative experiences with capitalist society and one great positive experience with their own power. The negative experiences encompass two immense world slaughters sandwiched around the great depression. It has become a commonplace with the American worker of today that wars are fought for the rich and mean nothing but blood and tears for the people. It is a commonplace among the American workers of today that if it were not for the preparations for war we would be in the midst of a depression which would make that of 1929 look like a rehearsal.

This is the summing up which the American workers have made for themselves, these workers who have never known a major defeat, who are the strongest, most prosperous, most self-reliant workers in the world; it is their summation of their experience with the richest, strongest capitalist nation in the world. And it is the final summation.

The positive experience of these workers is the formation of the CIO; still as fresh in their minds as if it were yesterday is their "instinctive attempt to raise themselves to the levels of the tasks imposed on them by history." And as Marx put it in the "German Ideology," "ideas which are seized upon by the masses become transformed into objective fact."

The workers not only talk about these commonplaces, they show readiness to act given the opportunity. The most the labor leadership can do is to divert this readiness to act into the direction of wage struggles; not that the labor bureaucracy wants to engage in struggles for higher wages since these struggles have within them the seeds of a far mightier explosion; not that the workers are particularly interested in a few cents more an hour -- it is a truism with them that they will lose more in increased prices and taxes than they will gain in wages -- but they struggle wherever they have an opportunity so long as they cannot yet see their way clear to breaking from the strangling embrace of the labor leadership. Is it not amazing to note that while they are yet hamstrung by a bureaucracy which is pushing the capitalists for greater effort in the war drive they are at the same time forcing them -- in steel, in rubber, in oil, the railroad men, the teamsters, the stevedores, telephone operators, telegraph operators, Western Electric employees, skilled and unskilled auto workers chafing at the bit of the five-year contracts -- all within the past few months, to lead them in struggles, yes, in some cases directly against the government itself? Is it without significance that the present bureaucracy does not dare even hint of a new no-strike pledge, much as they would like to? The workers today are beginning where they left off in the days of the mass movement against the no-strike pledge. Asher Lauren, a close and keen bourgeois observer of the labor scene,

expects that the period ahead will be marked by strike waves unparalleled since 1936-37. In any case, regardless of the subjective motivation of the workers, the objective consequences of their actions cause state and constitutional crises. The labor movement, if it is to survive, must find political answers in the period immediately ahead. The labor movement will survive.

And their efforts to find a new leadership must not be passed by unnoticed either. Take a look for a moment at Local 600, the world's largest. Is it without significance that the Ford workers virtually drove Stellato from Reuther's camp into spearheading the opposition to Reuther's forces -- and this opposition, relatively weak and unclear as it might be, has driven Reuther to take what can be termed only as an act of desperation, the placing of an administratorship over Local 600? He is gambling high, is Brother Reuther, for if the Ford workers reject him, he is on the way out. At the first opportunity the Ford workers will reject him and all he represents; and Ford workers are not so different from the rest of the auto workers; the rest of the auto workers are not so different from the mass of American labor. (We have indicated elsewhere concrete political manifestations emanating from this opposition leadership.)

What of the American people as a whole?

Take a look at the unprecedented expression of the American people on the question of the war itself. When have we seen such a flood of protesting letters to the public press, only a handful of which are printed; when have we seen parades of mothers, as was reported on the West Coast, demanding the return of the soldiers from Korea? The army records show that the flood of medals and honors rejected by grieving parents is utterly without precedent.

Take note of the political parties springing up, fly-by-nighters without question but symptomatic -- with their main note, Bring the Boys Back from Korea. The American Rally is one and the press reports the formation of another which brought together on a presidential slate a middle-aged housewife from the West Coast and some man miles away in Kansas, with their only point of contact the program, Bring the Boys Home from Korea.

Under these circumstances the defeat of the bill for Universal Military Training has more significance as an indication of potential revolutionary ferment, than the Korean "police action" for the counter-revolution; the response of the people to the Gallup polls holds greater promise for the revolution than the red scare for the counter-revolution.

The attitude of the Negro people is so well understood that it is often taken for granted and ignored as a revolutionary factor of the highest importance. And yet how often have we said words to the effect that their action may well provide the spark which will bring the main force, the proletariat, on to the scene? Never have the Negro people been so well organized, so ready for action. A few years ago a Moore incident would have been passed over in relative silence. Today it was the signal for a crisis of its own, with the formation of open, well-publicized defense guards.

The last war ended with actions of soldiers in the Philippines demanding that they be sent home. This war has not yet begun and soldiers from the battlefronts are openly demanding to know why they are dying. The Air Force complains that it has lost its "glamour" and can't get sufficient enlistments. Fliers stage sit-down strikes against flying anymore.

Symptomatic, yes, and such symptoms as we have never seen before in America, either quantitatively or qualitatively. They are not symptoms of a people and a working class that is crushed, or about to be crushed, by the all-powerful ruling class and then sent out to perform the dirty work of counter-revolution throughout the whole wide world.

How is it possible not to see the steady, cumulating crisis as it nears the explosive stage?

The appearance of unity within the ruling class is an illusion. The appearance of strength of the American capitalist system is a gross deception. How have we characterized those with a congenital tendency to underestimate the masses, both here, in Europe and in Eastern Europe and Russia as well, and to overestimate the strength of the ruling classes or the ruling bureaucratic castes?

Truman's decision not to run, although it might change, is not a personal matter but rather the clearest recognition that the policies he represents have been rejected as completely, as consciously, as thoroughly by the American people as ever before in the recent history of the United States, including the days of the Hoover regime. The political confusion among the people is matched only by the political confusion within the ruling class. Everything is wide open. Faced with an unsubdued working class, feeling the staggering inflation and the tremendous cost of underwriting the armaments programs of half the world, watching the growth of hostility to American imperialism in the great masses of the world, there is a visibly growing sentiment for retreat, a sense of defeatism going hand in hand with a demand for a "reformist" policy for American imperialism. The first note is sounded by the "new isolationists," the Hoovers and to some extent the Tafts; the second by men like the banker, Warburg, and the Supreme Court Justice Douglas. They are finding new spokesmen and a growing audience day by day within the bourgeoisie. With the exception of the labor leadership, all sections of the capitalist class recognize the imperative need to stall for time but what they can do with that time they are becoming increasingly uncertain.

The red scare has not yet run its course. But it has failed and will continue to fail to accomplish its purpose; the subduing of the working class. Overly self-conscious comrades sometimes forget this when they subconsciously substitute the party for the mass. What is, however, amazing under the circumstances of the preparation for direct war against "communism," is not the extent of the anti-red hysteria but the shallowness of it. The working class is already beginning to shrug off its most direct effects, subjectively as in the case of the Ford workers, objectively in the course of the struggles into which it is entering.

The masses are ready. The crisis is the "crisis of the revolutionary leadership." That is the element which is lacking.

But whoever proposes to guarantee the defeat of the working class because of the lack of immediate leadership, guarantees only that the revolutionary leadership will be lacking and thereby gives up all claim to the role. Only those blinded by the fetishism of Pabloist economics can fail to see the rapidly maturing political and social crisis in American capitalism.

We reaffirm Trotsky's formulation. Either the revolution will stop the war or the war will bring the revolution, not only in America but in Europe and Russia as well.

Our election campaign must be conducted with the real, the revolutionary perspective, not as one leading comrade put it, "as the last gesture before the deluge."

May 2, 1952