

# Bulletin

## OF THE WORKERS PARTY

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I therefore see no sense in my remaining in the party and resign with the hope that the party will soon transform itself into a propaganda group without demanding discipline in action on very many questions.

Comradely yours,

Albert Goldman

P.S. I would appreciate your publishing this letter in LABOR ACTION.

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STATEMENT OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE OF THE  
WORKERS PARTY ON THE RESIGNATION OF ALBERT  
GOLDMAN

At its meeting on July 27, 1948, the Political Committee voted to accept the resignation from the party of Albert Goldman which was received the day before. It was also decided to notify the party membership immediately and to announce the resignation in the party press.

The Political Committee regrets the withdrawal from the party of a comrade of Goldman's ability and long standing in the revolutionary movement. However, for at least a year now, Goldman's participation in the leading committee of which he was a member was reduced to a minimum and his membership in the Chicago Branch which needed the active leadership which he should have provided was reduced in the same period to a mere formality. The Political Committee, without resorting to any formal action, made repeated attempts to urge upon Goldman greater responsibility and active participation in our work, but without any success. It became increasingly evident to all the leading comrades and to many members of his own branch, that Goldman's growing indifference and declining activity were due primarily and above all to his loss of any perspective and loss of any confidence in the struggle for a socialist future.

In the light of this, the resignation from the party presented by Goldman was no cause for surprise. All that may be considered surprising are the reasons which he cites for resigning from the party to which he gave and owed his allegiance. It was and still is Goldman's right to disagree with the decision of the National Committee on the coming presidential elections, to hold that our party should support the candidates of only one of the socialistic sects instead of urging a vote for any one of these sects. But it should be perfectly obvious to everybody that this difference of opinion is not one over principle nor even over a question that is of decisive significance for the development of the future of our party, let alone of the presidential elections. Goldman did not even find it necessary to attend the plenum at which this question

RESIGNATION OF ALBERT GOLDMAN FROM THE WORKERS PARTY

We print herewith the letter of resignation from the Workers Party sent by Albert Goldman, along with a statement of the Political Committee of the Workers Party.

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July 23, 1948

Political Committee, Workers Party  
New York, New York

Dear Comrades:

The position which the majority of the National Committee took, at its recent meeting, on the question of the coming presidential elections makes it impossible for me to remain in the party.

I want to support the Socialist Party; I want to do everything in my power to help that party in the campaign. I do not know whether an offer of my services to aid that party in the campaign will be accepted but I want to make such an offer. To give full-hearted support to the S.P. in the campaign seems to me the best method of advancing the interests of socialism.

The majority of the N.C. is in favor of letting the American workers decide for themselves which party claiming to be socialist they should vote for. To me that is utterly absurd. A party which claims to give guidance to the masses and, in a presidential election, tells them to decide for themselves which party to vote for, is a party which places itself in a ridiculous position. I shall always consider it my duty to tell the workers that the differences between parties are and which party they should vote for. The party position must assume that there are no differences between the Socialist Workers Party, the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party or that the differences between them are so slight that no choice can be made. In either case, the party leaders better give up the claim that they are experts on socialism.

The fact that the Committee has come out flatly in opposition to the Marshall Plan is another indication that between me and the majority of the party there is a wide gulf in approach to many important problems confronting a socialist party.

Were the party a mass party I would remain in order to influence a considerable number of socialists; were the party a propaganda group without demanding discipline in action I would remain, since then I could support the S.P. in spite of the decision of the majority. (This is exactly what I think the party should be.) I anticipate the argument that I should remain and try to change the party line by saying that I haven't the time nor am I in a physical condition to start a factional fight.

was discussed and decided. He did not even wait for the National Committee to present its position to him and to the rest of the membership so that he could argue out his own view within the party in which he had assumed the responsibilities of a leader. Even now he does not propose to join another party, and it is safe to predict that the efforts he announces he will make in behalf of the campaign of the Socialist Party will not be outstanding. Under such circumstances, it is utterly preposterous to abandon the organized Marxist movement in order to retire to the life of a private individual. The manner in which this has been done by Goldman cannot be described as anything but irresponsible and a mark of political demoralization.

The reference made by Goldman to his differences with the National Committee on the Marshall Plan, or to any other of the differences he may have had with the party in the past period, does not change this conclusion in the slightest degree, especially in view of the full and unrestricted right of discussion for which our party is deservedly famous.

Goldman's abandonment of our party at this time, a difficult time for all of us, is only an episode in the life of our party, which has survived much heavier blows than this can possibly be. In Goldman's political life, it is an episode that no revolutionist could be proud of. Our party, like the Marxist movement throughout the world, has passed through many stern years. We cannot even say that our difficult hours are already at an end. Those who have held tenaciously to the principles of Marxian socialism and to their confidence in the irrepressibility of the struggle of the working class, have had to fight against the backwash of defeat, confusion, reaction, disillusionment, abandonment of principle and abandonment of the struggle, desertion and even outright treachery. These have been not the least weighty elements of our times. But we too have been and remain an element of our times, and in them we represent the continuity, the indispensable link, with the great past of our movement and with its even greater future. We are those who are determined to continue unremittently our organized struggle for socialist principle not only until the ebb-tide of defeat is transformed into the sweep of victory but in order that this transformation shall take place. Maintaining the revolutionary party, building the revolutionary party, building its leadership - that is a long process and it does not unfold without a continually renewed selection. The tired fall away, the skeptics fall away, the cynics fall away - but their place is taken by the new and fresh elements, by those in whom the conviction is not dried up that so long as the working class exists there also exists the inexorable struggle for socialism and that for this struggle to be victorious, a revolutionary vanguard party must be built and consolidated.

Goldman has chosen this particular time and this particular way

to retire from our party. Neither does him honor. He is not the first; he may not be the last. The party as a whole, this time and at all times, will choose the road of building and consolidating the revolutionary movement with all the tenacity, resourcefulness and self-confidence which are the distinguishing characteristics of militant socialism.

Political Committee  
Workers Party

July 27, 1948.

"PARTY" OR "PROPAGANDA GROUP"?

The Position and Orientation of Our Party

By Max Shachtman

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Our aim is to become a revolutionary mass party, that is, a political vanguard organization capable of leading the working class to the struggle for proletarian power and the establishment of socialism. Between now and the realization of this aim a considerable period of time will elapse. The intervening period will undoubtedly dictate many changes in our movement, in the form and conditions of its existence. In order to realize our aim, we shall each time have to adapt our organization to these dictates in such a way as to reduce the difficulties we encounter to a minimum and to yield the most fruitful results from the advocacy of our political line.

Nowhere is dogmatism and inflexibility more absurd and sterile, and often even disastrous, than in the matter of organizational forms. We can recall, as one example, the passionate reiteration by the Oehlerites that the organizational independence of the revolutionary party is an inviolable fundamental principle of Marxism. Their otherwise excellent preachment suffered primarily from the flaw that there was not yet in existence a revolutionary party whose organizational independence had to be preserved against those who called it into question. The problem was precisely that of the next concrete step to take in order to move most effectively toward the creation of a revolutionary party.

That is the problem before us today. We are not yet a party. We aim to become one. In order to become one, we must have a correct orientation for the movement at each stage of its development. To establish the correct orientation, we must know not only what position we expect to have tomorrow but also what position we are in today.

The Marxist movement, even if we do not confine it to the Trotskyist movement but extend it to all those (save the outright reformists and the Stalinists) who claim adherence to Marxist politics, is reduced today to the state of a propaganda group. Nowhere in the world is it the political party of the working class. Nowhere is it even a political party of the working class, if by the term political party we mean, as we should, a vanguard organization able to speak and act in the class struggle in the name of a really significant section of the working class and with its conscious support. (The anarchists in Spain were a political party even if they refused to call themselves one; the Trotskyists in France who insist on calling themselves a political party are not one.) The Marxists are few in numbers and their organizations are small in influence.

Their weakness, in general, can be traced back to their mis-

takes only in the second, third and fourth place. The primary reasons for it must be sought in the objective situation. It is painful to have to repeat this simple and basic truth, but the recent outcropping of political astrologists and panacea-peddlers in the movement makes it necessary to do so.

The objective situation, for us, is determined mainly by two factors: the profound decay of capitalist society and the degeneration of the Russian revolution. The astrologists, when they drop their eyes to the earth, deliver splendid speeches and write voluminous but excellent articles to show how widespread is the disintegration of capitalism, how it leaves poisonous deposits in every nook and cranny of society, how it subverts and perverts and prostrates even the working-class movement. But as their eyes approach the Marxist movement, which is obliged, after all, to live in the midst of this disintegration and which cannot, after all, be fully immunized against its effects, the astrologists promptly resume their star-gazing and insist that the Marxist movement is better off than ever or can easily be better off the minute their panacea is applied. Once more returned to earth, they can and do write eloquently about the rebirth and powerful upsurge of the Marxist movement produced by the great Bolshevik revolution, and about the devastation produced in the working class by the Stalinist counterrevolution. They repeatedly warn the workers against following the leadership of Stalinism (and, of course, reformism) because it has brought them nothing but a long series of demoralizing, debilitating and even paralyzing defeats. Their articles and speeches on this subject are as numerous as our own and in no way inferior. But no sooner done with than they raise their eyes to the stars again and proclaim that for the Marxist movement all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds, particularly if we agree to apply liberally and to the proper places their panacea, already mixed, bottled and neatly stamped with the proprietary firm name: Cannon & Co., Johnson-Forest & Stone, or I.K.D.\*

We start from the fact, disregarded by the astrologists, that the degeneration of the Russian revolution has resulted in an unprecedented defeat and decline of the Marxist movement and in its almost complete isolation from the class on which it must base itself, the working class, which remains almost completely under the sway of the bourgeois or Stalinist labor leadership. We add the no

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\*The reader will, I trust, take careful note: I write that the weakness of the Marxist movement must be traced back primarily to the objective situation and only secondarily to the mistakes made by the Marxists. I write that their mistakes take second and fourth place in explaining their weakness in general. In particular, however, that is, in concrete situations, exemplified by the national resistance movement during the war, by struggles against the Stalinist parties during and since the war, the mistakes in evaluation and in policy have been of decisive importance. The false evaluation of the present position of the Marxists in the working class also has an increasingly decisive bearing on the state of the movement. The "objective situation" has broad shoulders, but they should not be made to carry everything.

less significant fact, disregarded by the pessimists, that this same working class continues almost unremittingly, even though in an elemental way, without socialist consciousness or leadership, the struggle to lift itself out of the bloody chaos of social decay, and will continue to struggle because it is the only class whose conditions of existence dictate the fight against **its** conditions of existence. We conclude that all the prerequisites for the victory of socialism will be at hand again once the Marxists have succeeded in reestablishing their link with the working class and its actual movement in such a way as to restore its class independence and its socialist consciousness. The clearest and strongest expression of this restored independence and consciousness will be the building of the political party of revolutionary socialism.

The course which we have proposed to the Marxists and the Marxist groups wherever it is possible to pursue it, is well known. "Abandon all pretense of being a party of the proletariat, including the name 'party,' and become a part of the proletariat." In our view, this means that the Marxist groups should everywhere enter the broader democratic political movements of the working class and constitute themselves as the loyal left wing tendency. "Loyal," here, means the deliberate resolve to go through the experiences of the workers in these movements - again and again, if necessary; to build, strengthen and defend the common movement from all subversive attacks; to become the broad left wing which seeks to convert them into genuinely socialist organizations; and not to enter for the purpose of "raiding," that is, a Commando operation to capture a few militants and promptly withdraw them for the purpose of reconstituting the isolated and uninfluential sect.

Our proposal has not found universal support, least of all from the Trotskyist groups in Europe! The latter do not seem to have the faintest idea of the position to which the Marxists have been thrown back. To one degree or another they are intoxicated by their own phrasemongering, of the variety favored by Cannon or by his foster-son Johnson, by that "komshvantsvo" - communist braggadocio - which Lenin so warmly denounced and despised. They do not seem to realize that at least in one sense we have all been thrown back to the early days of the Communist Manifesto, the days when it proclaimed:

"Communists do not form a separate party conflicting with other working-class parties.

"They have no interests apart from those of the working class as a whole.

"They do not put forward any sectarian principles in accordance with which they wish to mould the proletarian movement.

"...communists form the most resolute and persistently progressive section of the working-class parties of all lands; whilst as far as theory is concerned, being in advance of the general mass of the proletariat, they have come to understand the determinants of the proletarian movement, and how to foresee its course and general results."

But accepted abroad or not, we have the duty to reflect upon our own proposal and to see what must be done to apply it ourselves, here, in the United States.

We are not, or are not yet, a party. Yet the name of our organization is the Workers Party. We have discussed this question many times. In our official documents, we have tried to make the matter clear. We have explained in the past that we call ourselves a party because the American working class has not yet formed an authentic party of its own, and because we want, by this title, to express our aim to become an organization worthy of the title. What we are in actuality, as we have stated on several occasions, is a propaganda group, or a propaganda group laying increasing stress upon popular political agitation.

Now, after eight years of independent existence (more than that, if we count our legitimate antecedents), we have still failed to build a party. This failure has contributed to a good deal of dissatisfaction, including self-dissatisfaction, and even pessimism among our comrades. Recruitment to the organization is difficult (it is less difficult than some comrades imagine, yet the fact remains that it is by no means easy). We have not succeeded in keeping in our ranks all those we did recruit. In some sections of the party there is stagnation and a mood of depression. Everywhere there is a searching for a means wherewith to overcome our isolation, for a road out of our present narrow and difficult existence.

We have failed to build a party. But it must be noted, first of all, that we are not alone in our failure. Let us leave aside, as a very special and unique phenomenon, the Stalinist party and confine ourselves to the non-Stalinist organizations. The oldest of them, the S.L.P., is a dormant sect, weaker than it has ever been since it was founded. The S.P., once a genuine mass party with a membership higher than that ever attained by any other socialistic organization in this country, is likewise a party only in name and a feeble propagandist group in reality, with a sign of life only during election campaigns. Its right-wing split-off, the S.D.F., is even smaller and weaker and less influential a group than its parent. The S.W.P., in spite of a strong and firm cadre to hold it together and drive it forward, in spite of some numerical progress, remains, for all its bragging, a tiny sect, with a membership no greater than it had on the eve of the war - a propaganda group and not a party. As for the smaller groupings -- Oehlerites, Fieldites, Marlenites, Weisbordites, etc., etc. - none of them has succeeded in organizing or maintaining even a propagandá group.

If this list is compiled, it is not for the purpose of drawing consolation from it for ourselves, for if anyone needs consolation there is none to be drawn from it. It is compiled in order to emphasize the fact that for all the political differences that exist among them, and for all the importance that must be attached to these differences, all these socialist or socialistic ("Marxist") groups are subject, to greater or lesser degree, to the same social

conditions. If we fail to understand these conditions, we shall seek the reasons for our failure where they are not to be found; we shall choose a road which does not lead forward; we shall find an explanation that does not explain. And on top of everything else, we shall fall into the category of the astrologists and panacea-peddlers who know exactly what is "wrong" with the Marxist movement in this country and why, but who cannot, for example, explain why only the American proletariat has, until now, failed to organize a political party of its own!

If we have failed to build a party, we have, however, succeeded in establishing and consolidating a propaganda group. This group represents a distinctive and clear-cut political tendency in the working class. It is recognized and known as such in all informed political circles, among all politically educated persons in and around the labor movement, among all politically-thinking workers, radical intellectuals and "even" in governmental circles. And this holds true not only for the United States, but abroad as well. Correspondingly, we have succeeded in establishing a popular press which is inseparately associated with our political tendency. We have succeeded in maintaining a theoretical organ which, for all its limitations, is the only serious Marxist journal in the U.S., in fact in the English-speaking world (the social-democrats and reformists do not even pretend an interest in Marxian theory; the Cannonite journal is read only by those who are curious to see if the current issue differs in any respect from the preceding issue). We have worked out rounded, coherent and systematized positions on the basic political problems of our time, internationally and at home, which are the organically-acquired possession of several hundred militants, which are propagated continuously among thousands, which are clearly known to these thousands and exert a significant influence upon their political thinking and action. On the basis of these positions, we have played a modest but significant and at times extremely important role in the development of the trade union movement of the country. In decisive sections of that movement our role is known, recognized and accepted. We have demonstrated by eight years of practise that it is not only necessary but possible to maintain a centralized Marxist organization in which the widest and most genuine democratic procedure and relations exist, in which the widest and freest discussion is not only "tolerated" but encouraged, in which unhampered ideological and intellectual intercourse is honored without impeding but rather facilitating the "regular" work of the organization. All this has gained us a genuine respect and prestige which is precious capital. We can say without unseemly boasting that we represent today the truest link with the great past of Marxism.

We have failed to build a party. We have failed to act as a party (except episodically, occasionally, under most exceptional circumstances) because we cannot act as a party. We cannot play the role which is incumbent upon a party and natural to it. But we have acted as a propaganda group, and to the extent that we have been and in general can be effective it has been when we did act as a propaganda group.

It is time we recognized this fact. It is time we abandoned all claim to being a party at the present time. This means, among other things, abandoning the name "Workers Party" and adopting in its place a name that clearly expresses our real character and our real function. The reasons we have given in the past for our name do not sufficiently justify its continued use by our present organization. With regard to the first reason we have given in the past, our aim of becoming a party does not need to be expressed in our name; it can be better expressed, where that is necessary, in a dozen other ways. With regard to the second reason, it should now be clear that the American working class is on the eve of establishing a great political party of its own. We must see this and prepare for it. We must acknowledge our real character. The change of our name is an important step in that direction.

If we reflect upon it we will see that the name "party" now gives us very few of the advantages that go with such a name and many disadvantages.

From their own experiences or indirectly, the workers know what is a party and what is not a party. The more advanced workers know this particularly well. Even those who have very little political experience know from their daily struggles that in order to "accomplish something" they need large and powerful organizations which they find today in their trade unions. They cannot be convinced that we are already a party.

Practically every active comrade of our organization knows from personal experience that in trying to recruit a worker he is obliged, at one point or another, to emphasize that in reality we are not a party and must not be expected to function or act as one. Our comrades may not use exactly these words, but whatever the words they use it is this thought that they convey to the interested worker. Every one of our comrades knows that the closer a worker comes to joining the Workers Party the more clearly and anxiously, so to speak, is he warned against any illusions about the strength, power and capacities of the organization he is about to join. In sum and substance, the arguments we present to a militant in favor of joining us are, 99 times out of 100, arguments for joining a propaganda group and not a party. Every comrade who recalls this will also recall that in many if not most cases, the recruits we fail to hold in our ranks drop out because, at bottom, they do not find in our organization the kind of life and activity which they could rightly expect to find in a genuine political party.

We call upon the workers to form a Labor Party and at the same time we call upon them to join another party, our own. Properly understood, there is no conflict in this "dual" appeal. In one case, we are urging the already existing unions to form a political organization. In the other, we are urging the advanced militant to join a revolutionary socialist organization based upon individual membership. But what we understand clearly is not always understood clearly by others. What is plain to us very often appears to be too subtle or even confusing to others. By declaring frankly

that the American working class does not yet have a party of its own; that we ourselves are a militant socialist propaganda group; that our central immediate political aim is to help establish a working-class party in this country and to advocate in it a program and leadership such as it should have - we will help reduce the present difficulty and confusion to a considerable degree.

It is easier (and more in harmony with reality) to propagate the idea of a Labor Party if we are members of a propaganda group instead of another "party." Once a Labor Party is formed we will undoubtedly be able to function inside of it much more effectively as members of a propaganda group than as members of what many Labor Party members, including the best of them, will inevitably regard both as an "outside" party functioning within "their" party for God-knows-what reasons and as a "rival" party. Unless we hold the opinion that we will become a big political force within the immediate future, before a Labor Party takes shape, it is better to anticipate the situation than to have it run into us. It is better to make the change now, in advance, than at the very last moment and in confusing haste.

It is easier to function in the unions in general as members of a propaganda group than as members of a party, especially a party that is only so called. Here too, properly understood there is no conflict between membership in a revolutionary party and membership in a trade union - quite the contrary. But the fact is that many of the best militants in the unions have been imbued with deep prejudices against members who belong to an "outside political party." While this is utterly unjustified in general, it is entirely understandable in particular. Concretely, it represents a sound reaction of the militants to the disgusting maneuvers and pirouettes of the alien Stalinist party which these workers recognize as being interested only in exploiting them for the reactionary ends of the Kremlin. In any case, the prejudice is not only there but it has been extended to all "outside political parties." Here too we suffer, at least in part, from the crimes of Stalinism. The prejudice is, in certain quarters and to a certain degree, a barrier to our work among the trade union militants. If we were really a party, we would have to and we would be more easily able to meet this prejudice head-on, as it were. But since we are not a party in reality, why, if there are no other overriding considerations, should we not abandon a designation which creates an unnecessary barrier between us and the militants, even if the barrier is only a foot high?

It would be nonsense to argue that a change in our name and a complete clarification of our role and attitude in the present working class movement will immediately solve our problems - the problem of working as revolutionists in the unions, for a Labor Party, in the Labor Party of tomorrow, the problem of recruiting workers and keeping them after they are recruited, and so on and so forth. No such contention is being made. What I do assert is that the changes I propose are not only necessary but that they will facilitate the solution of our problems, to a different degree in each case.

It would likewise be nonsense to conceive of this proposal merely as a question of a change in our name. It implies a change - or if not a change, then a clarification or a fuller and deeper understanding - of our conception of the position we occupy in the working class today, of our conception of our present role and task.

What has been quoted above from the old Communist Manifesto must be understood as applying to the United States as well as to Europe. It must become central and decisive in all our activity and in our attitude toward all the organizations and actions of the actual movement of the working class - today, one hundred years after the Manifesto was written!

Every trace of a sectarian attitude, of a sectarian or disdainful criticism of what we consider the mistakes of the real movement of the working class, must be eliminated from our press, our propaganda and our agitation. As always, we will retain the fullest and strictest independence of our Marxian program and conceptions. As always, we will retain the fullest cohesion and independence of our organization. But precisely on that basis, we must endeavor unremittingly to become an integral part of the working-class movement, no matter how primitive in form, and of the activities of the working class, no matter how inadequate they may be from the socialist standpoint. We must speak and act in such a way that the workers, especially the more advanced workers, regard us not as people outside of themselves but as an organic part of their movement, their life and their struggles, distinguished from the rest only in that we are the loyal left wing of the working class, its most advanced section. Our press has already gone a long way toward establishing this relationship toward the working class. With the clearest consciousness of the problem, our press and the organization itself must go the whole of the way.

The frank recognition that we are a propaganda group, a thorough understanding of the reasons for it and of the role we are called upon to play, does not mean the transformation of our Workers Party into an "educational circle" or a "discussion club." We cannot aim to be a more radical variety of the old Brookwood Labor College or Rand School. We are a militant and revolutionary propaganda group. As such, we will most certainly lay more stress upon Marxian political education and understanding. Our ability to provide it will be one of the main appeals to militant workers and serious young students whom we will better qualify for their socialist tasks, whom we will qualify in a manner such as no other organization can offer.

But that is precisely because as a revolutionary propaganda group our aim is actively to propagate the program and leadership of Marxism in the ranks of the working class. Our group must become the organizer and educator of intelligent, capable and active leaders of the working class. Because we are not academicians or adherents of an educational circle, we understand (or we should understand) that an indispensable part of Marxian training is active and continuous participation in the actual movement and struggles of

the working class, for which no book learning can possibly substitute. If we have a clear conception of our task, we will have no difficulty on this score.

Our task is the advancement of the political independence of the working class on a socialist basis and under socialist leadership as the prerequisite for a workers' government and socialism. Our central immediate political aim is the establishment of an independent labor party by the American working class. In the very course of pursuing this aim we advocate the socialist program and leadership for this party (even though we are fully aware of the fact that the one will come much sooner than the other). This being the case, the actually existing movement upon which we hope to base the labor party, namely, the powerful trade unions (indeed they become more than ever before and more consciously than ever before) the concentration point of our organization and the activities of our members. (To concentrate means to devote one's main attention, not all one's attention.) As a propaganda group, we must stimulate and encourage among all our members the ambition to become the outstanding participants in the unions of today and their political party of tomorrow, the ambition to become the spokesmen for the socialist program, the ambition to become the socialist leaders of the working class movement, both economic and political. As a propaganda group, we must train our members so that they can best realize this aim - not as unassociated individuals but as disciplined members of our socialist vanguard organization.

It is therefore inconceivable that this proposal, made as it is actually made, should be interpreted as a relaxation of our attention to work in the trade unions, to say nothing of an abandonment of this work. With such an interpretation, it would be infinitely better if the proposal itself were abandoned -- immediately! To all those who understand the proposal as it is, and who therefore understand the position and the problem of the Marxists in the United States today, our slogan is: "Build the revolutionary socialist party of tomorrow by becoming a socialist leader of the working class movement of today!"

The leadership of our present movement, in the broadest and deepest sense of the term, should and will be based upon those comrades who take this slogan seriously and carry it out with determination. It is they who will constitute the leadership of the coming revolutionary party, too. He who fails to show either the ability or the willingness to teach and lead workers in a socialist way is hardly indicated as the one to teach and lead a socialist organization. It will not be the happiest day for our movement when it cannot find any place whatever in its ranks for "philosophizers" (every comrade will understand what is meant by this term!). It will be a sadder day by far when the "philosophizers" make up the leadership and set the tone for the movement.

The formal constitution of our movement as a propaganda group would require a considerable modification in the application of our concept of an "all-inclusive revolutionary party." I repeat: in

the application of our concept. There is no reason for abandoning it. It is entirely correct and we must continue to counterpose it to the sterilizing concept of a monolithic party. But it is entirely correct for a party.

In a party, as we conceive it, there would be room under one roof for tendencies such as are represented by us, by the Johnsonites, by the Cannonites and even by elements to the right or left of them. (It is extremely important to add: for such a party to be constituted and maintained, it would be indispensable that not only we hold this concept but that it be held by the other tendencies as well. It is precisely, or at least primarily, because the Cannonites rejected our concept of a revolutionary party that the attempt at unification failed of achievement.) This point is stressed not because it is of practical significance today, but because it will surely be of practical significance tomorrow, when the situation makes it possible to constitute a genuinely revolutionary socialist party and therefore necessitates putting our concept of such a party to the test. For a propaganda group, the application of our concept is necessarily modified.

Some comrades seem to advocate the establishment of a loose, "all-inclusive group for the propagation of socialism," with a very loose discipline. Their idea has little if anything in common with the one presented here. In the first place, such an idea is a practical impossibility, for a common propaganda organization between us and, for example, the reformists, is unrealizable. In the second place, if it could conceivably be established, it would either fall apart in a month or the efforts of each of the mutually exclusive tendencies in it would cancel themselves out. The importance and value of our political existence and activity lies precisely in our conception of socialist program and policy as distinct from those of the other socialistic groups or tendencies. There are already enough organizations advocating socialism "in general." Our task is to propagate our ideas, our conceptions, our program.

An organization constituted for this purpose cannot be all-inclusive in the sense in which we put forward the idea of an all-inclusive revolutionary party. It does not follow that it is to be so exclusive as to allow in its ranks only those who are in complete and unquestioning agreement with every point in its program. In general, it is difficult and even misleading to try to define such concepts in rigid or abstract terms. The best way remains illustration.

Our propaganda group should be closer in type (not identical with, not mechanically modelled after, but close in type) to the old pre-war Bolshevik group. Contrary to the falsifiers of its history, this group had its right wing and its left wing and, of course, it enjoyed the fullest ideological freedom in its ranks. But the wings nevertheless were part of the body of Bolshevism, all sections of which were clearly enough distinct from, let us say, Menshevism.

Our group should be closer in type (again with the amplifications above) to the old Communist League of America. Contrary to the present Cannonites who have distorted its history and flouted its tradition, it allowed a wide range of differences even on extremely important questions, it allowed the existence of tendencies, it allowed the widest discussion. In it, at least for a considerable period of time, were the Oehler tendency, the Weisbord grouping, the Field grouping. In it were groups which rejected the theory of Russia as a workers' state, some holding it was a "Stalinist state", others that it was a capitalist state, still others that it was a "feudal" state. In it were a pro-Labor Party and an anti-Labor Party tendency. But all these were nevertheless Trotskyists, and were encompassed in the general political and theoretical and organizational framework of Trotskyism. With all the necessary changes required by the difference in the situation and in the movement, that is the type of organization our propaganda group should be.

Correspondingly, our conception of the cadre undergoes a modification in application. We spoke before of a cadre within an all-inclusive revolutionary party. The propaganda group as a whole is in its very nature a cadre organization. I hope that at this stage of the political education of our Workers Party, it is not necessary to spend much time to say that a cadre organization does not mean one in which differences of opinion, on important questions or on less important questions, are not tolerated, in which party democracy is restricted, in which political discussion is banned or restricted, and so on. The old Bolshevik organization and the old C. L. A. were cadre organizations each in its own way. Their very program constituted all the "restriction" that was necessary. We need and want no greater limitations than they had. If anything - given the state of the movement and of its problems - we can, and I hope we will, do with less.

The question of the kind of discipline we should maintain is also raised by the proposal for the open proclamation of our movement as a propaganda group. In this connection, it may be well to note that the C.L.A., which was a highly integrated organization, with firm disciplinary provisions and a fairly high standard of membership activity, rarely invoked formal discipline, even for activity requirements, and rarely found it necessary to invoke it. If a general formula were to be set down, it would run something like this: The need for formal discipline stands in inverse proportion to the morale of the membership and the voluntary discipline it displays. If formal discipline must be invoked to obtain a high level of activity from the membership, it is because the political understanding or the morale of the membership is at a low level. In that case, it is much more important to raise the understanding and morale than to invoke formal discipline.

High morale is dependent upon conviction. Political understanding is primarily the responsibility of the leadership. These important commonplaces hold no less for a propaganda group than for a political party. All political movements are troubled by the prob-

lem of the disparity between the high level of activity of the best members and the low level of activity of those who are far from the best. In our movement the disparity is notoriously great. The reasons for this have been set forth so many times, and so indisputably, that it is not necessary to repeat them here.

What should now be clear, in any case, is this: we cannot dispose of the problem of the not-very-active members simply or primarily or basically by a rigorous policy of dropping them from the rolls. It is a policy for the last resort and should be employed only as such. It seems to me time we called a halt to this self-irritating, time-wasting, interminable and not very fruitful discussion about the problem. It is the task, first of the leadership and following them of those comrades who want to devote their lives to the active and disciplined struggle to build the socialist movement, who are not devoured by skepticism or paralyzed by terror at the "misery of our times," who have unimpaired convictions about the revolutionary capacities of the proletariat and the tenacity to continue working until these capacities are fully unleashed, who have confidence in the program of Marxian socialism - it is their task to set the pace for all others to follow. It is up to them to establish the highest activity and discipline standards for all by example, to resist the demoralizing influences that assail our movement from without and from within, too. Discipline is valuable, necessary and irreplaceable, but only as a subordinate accessory to the work done, the morale displayed and the atmosphere of seriousness created by the real builders of the movement. It is only they who can quicken the activity of the laggards and, by raising them up to their own level, enhance the morale of the whole movement. The leadership not only has the task of being in the forefront of those who set the example, but of deepening and extending the political understanding of the membership. It should make this clear:

We face great and significant political developments in the American working class. It will, once it starts moving, make tremendous and perhaps spectacular strides forward, this time in the political field as it did earlier with the formation of the C.I.O., in the economic field. We have an immense and encouraging task before us, which we welcome with unlimited enthusiasm and confidence; to stimulate and help organize the political party of the American working class from the very beginning and at the same time to work and fight within it (it will be a fight) for the socialist program and the socialist leadership. We have less than little time to debate this with cynics and other morally exhausted people. Our time and energy are precious. We must utilize them carefully and to the utmost. We must build our movement and prepare it to meet its great tasks with eagerness and zeal.

We have nothing but contempt for illusions about what the Marxist movement is today; and little but compassion for those who require illusions in order to continue a political life. But if we know what we are today, we also know what we must become tomorrow.

Today we are a propaganda group. There is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of in acknowledging this fact. There is nothing in this to moan and whimper and despair about. The invidious charge that may be made: "You are retreating!" is so much rubbish and not worth listening to. What we are doing is to follow the good old advice of saying what is.

We are not a party, so let us stop calling ourselves a party and trying to act like one. We are a propaganda group, let us say so and act like one to the best of our ability. As such, let us enter deeply into the mass movement with our men and women and our ideas.

We are working to build a great party of labor with a revolutionary socialist program and leadership. We set about the task without preconceived dogmas about how this party will finally come about, without a narrowly-prescribed road that we insist the working class must tread at all costs.

The work of building the revolutionary socialist party in this country will be done. Our program will make its way in the political movement as it gets under way. Our militants who have confidence in the program and in themselves will also make their way in the movement. In that program and its bearers, we have all the sufficient assurance that we can proceed to the next step in our chosen task.

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CORRECTION

The "Statement on the Italian Elections" published in the last issue of the PARTY BULLETIN (Vol. III, No. 3 - July 1948) contains an error. The third sentence in the third paragraph was deleted from the statement by the National Committee of the Workers Party at its plenum. The sentence which was deleted reads as follows: "In the absence of a revolutionary party, we generally support the reformists against the Stalinists."

The reason for the deletion of this sentence was simply that in the absence of a detailed motivation for the line contained in it, the bald formulation might be misleading.

- Editor

MOTIONS ON THE QUESTION OF THE NEW  
JEWISH STATE, THE PALESTINE WAR,  
PARTITION

Adopted by the National Committee  
of the Workers Party at its Plenum  
in July, 1948

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1. The National Committee approves the position adopted by the Political Committee on the above questions at its meeting of March 25, 1948, as set forth and elaborated in the programmatic article "How to Defend Israel" in the July 1948 issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.

2. The National Committee approves the special motion regarding the question of federal union in Palestine set forth below.

3. The National Committee instructs the Political Committee to draft a new resolution on Palestine and the Jewish Question, for submission to the coming national convention, incorporating the above motions in the context of the general line of the 1946 document.

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Special Motion on the Question of Federal Union for Palestine

1. The basic aim and perspective which we put before the peoples of Palestine, Jewish and Arab, is the fight for the reunification of Palestine through a revolutionary struggle from below by the masses against their respective ruling classes, pointing toward the creation of a revolutionary constituent assembly on the basis of universal democratic suffrage.

2. The best variant which such a reunification could take would be the formation of a unitary state. In any case such a unitary state, on the basis of the specific national problems, would have to make special provision for guaranteeing the full national rights and status of each people within it. In this sense -- and only in this sense of the word -- it would be a bi-national state. We reject any interpretation of "bi-national state" which implies the absence of majority rule, over and above the guaranteeing of national rights.

3. This best variant was possible as long as the country remained unified, albeit under British imperialism. Under this set-up, the rise of a Jewish-Arab revolutionary movement against the common master held the promise of eventuating in a unitary state.

4. A new and much less favorable situation has been created with the partition and the outbreak of the Jewish-Arab war, with its exacerbation of national antagonisms. We therefore project, as a step toward complete reunification, the slogan of federal union

of the two peoples in Palestine. The exact form of such federal union need not be blueprinted in advance. The looseness or tightness possible for such federal union will depend especially on the progress made in cementing cooperation between the masses of the two peoples in the course of struggle. Our proposal along these lines for Palestine is therefore similar to the way in which we put forward the idea of federal union in the case of partitioned India.

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NATIONAL ELECTION POLICY OF THE PARTY

Statement of H. D. Coleman

After hearing a report on the discussion at the plenum on the question of the presidential election, and carefully studying the statement in LABOR ACTION, I came to the conclusion that I could not support the position adopted. It seems to me that critical support of the SP candidate is clearly indicated in the present situation. The position adopted, like the position on the Marshall Plan, is a futile attempt to hold to ways of thinking that have no life in them any more. Still I could understand the "No Preference" position as an unavoidable compromise, and I did not feel that individual party members would be strictly held to put into effect an unworkable resolution.

The difficulty for the individual member lies in a certain ambiguity in the resolution (the statement in LABOR ACTION). It is not clear to me whether the position adopted permits individual members to abstain from voting and make public the reasons for such abstention, or urge others to abstain. As between voting and abstaining from voting, the choice does not seem to me to be one of great importance, in the given circumstances. But I prefer to vote, and it is perfectly clear that the party urges me and everyone else to vote - for one of the three socialist candidates. Unfortunately, I cannot vote for each one nor can I vote for a meta-physical, truly Hegelian, ticket combining all three socialist candidates without including any one of them. I shall vote for one of them (that is, Thomas), and moreover, I am obliged to explain to my friends why I am voting for Thomas, why I prefer Thomas. My friends are interested in what I am going to do, not in what the WP as an organization has to say about the situation. The Wallace movement has given the question of who to vote for an importance it has not had for a long time, at least in the minds of our contacts.

I cannot simply repeat "No Preference." That answers none of my friends' questions and strikes them as political irresponsibility. The stratagems that AFL and CIO bureaucrats resort to, with the worst of motives, are not sufficient. Among my uninformed friends, I am the political expert and I have to behave like one. Genuine abstentionism is often justified, and would be more easily explained than the policy adopted - a concealed abstentionism that hides behind abstractions and generalities. It is the double-talk on the Marshall Plan all over again! In both cases, a retreat to the old "radical isolationism is very bad, but that is no argument for the present position.

In any case, I have preferences - very strong preferences - as between the three parties and their candidates. I am sure this is true of other party members. The fact that I cannot endorse any of the three party programs is not decisive. The SLP is a petrified, crackpot sect that no sane person would vote for if

there was any other choice whatsoever. The SWP is a corrupt, semi-Stalinist sect that I do not believe I would vote for under any circumstances. (It is remarkable that comrades who were enthusiastic over the prospect of "unity" with this outfit not so long ago, are now willing to relegate the SWP to the position of one of three alternatives in the election. Nothing much has changed in the SWP in the past couple of years. If they were good enough to dominate the "united" party, why aren't they at least good enough to support as first choice in the election?) The SP alone remains. Its programmatic feebleness does not prevent it from being the logical focus of socialist efforts in the present election. Its "broad" character, its "popular" tradition, though they may not stand up too well under close examination, are advantages for our present purposes.

I don't intend to campaign for the SP. It is wholly unlikely that I would even be given the opportunity. But I shall vote for the SP, and, more important, I shall tell my friends why they should vote for the SP. This is absolutely inescapable for me as an individual, regardless of how the party position may be interpreted. I would make a fool of myself if I attempted to handle the situation in any other way, and I do not intend to do so. My personal course of action cannot, therefore, represent a policy of "No Preference." But it seems to me that the "No Preference" policy must inevitably work itself out in this way in each concrete situation. I assumed that my attitude was, in this sense, not out of line with the party position - that in this matter, as in many others, practical policy would prove more reasonable than the text of a resolution. Goldman's letter of resignation raises considerable doubt in my mind, however. The position of the party needs to be clarified.

July 31, 1948.

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Letter from Max Shachtman to H. D. Coleman

August 4, 1948

Dear Comrade Coleman:

The Political Committee last night discussed your letter and the statement which you attach to it. I welcome the opportunity to elucidate and clarify the position taken by the National Committee on the party policy in the presidential elections.

First, you speak of the decision made by the Plenum as having perhaps been an "unavoidable compromise." You are not the only one to hold this view. There is no basis for it; it is entirely false. Prior to the meeting of the Plenum, many comrades in the leadership and in the ranks of the party had discussed informally the question of the party position in the elections. Some comrades came to the conclusion that we should advocate a policy of abstention. Rightly or wrongly, this is a policy which we have followed

before. There cannot be any objection to it in principle because there is no question of principle involved. However, practically every comrade will grant that when we have no candidate of our own party to present, it is always preferable, if possible, to propose a positive policy to the workers whom we reach, that is, to advocate voting for an actual candidate in the field. We should advocate a policy of abstention only when it seems to us impossible for reasons we deem good and sufficient to endorse the candidate of another party. Among the comrades who did not want to advocate abstention, there were very few who were able to arrive at a firm position in favor of the candidates of any of the three socialistic parties - the SP, the SLP, the SWP. It is hardly necessary to add that none among us advocated support of the Wallace ticket. Some comrades leaned toward support of the SP candidates; others said that rather than vote for the SP they would prefer to vote for the SWP slate; still others advocated voting for the SLP. The way in which this difference of opinion developed was very interesting and significant. In no case were the comrades able to declare that they agreed with the program, the aims and the activities of the party whose candidates they inclined to support. In every case, the principal argument given by the comrades was that voting for the party toward which they inclined was the most effective way of registering a socialist protest vote. What was not demonstrated and what in the opinion of the plenum could not be demonstrated was that a socialist protest vote registered in the column of one of these three parties could be considered significant or, if you wish, significantly enough different from a socialist protest vote registered in the columns of the other two parties.

Nobody is so ignorant as to be unaware of the important differences which exist among these three parties, or of the fact that our opposition to each of them is of a somewhat different kind. But that is much too narrow a point of view to take. From the point of view of our program and our aims, two conclusions are evident:

One, the differences that exist among these three parties, although important, are not of such importance as to warrant or even make it possible for us to declare to the workers that any one of them is so much superior to the other two as to dictate to us a policy of preferring it to the other two. The "advantages" of each of these three sects are by and large cancelled out by their "disadvantages."

Two, in the end result, that is when the election is over, every reasonably intelligent political person who wants to show what the total socialist or socialistic protest vote is in 1948 will not say that it is represented by the vote cast for any one of these three parties but will automatically proceed to add the votes of all three parties. That is what all of us will do after the election and by the very fact that we do this we will be showing that in actuality there was no sufficient ground for advocating support of one of these sects as against the other two. Regardless of what Norman Thomas and his tiny group actually are politically, the fact undoubtedly is that the bulk of the votes cast for his candidacy will be votes for socialism, at least as these particular voters under-

stand it. On the whole, the same will hold true for the votes cast for the SWP candidates, and the same holds true even for the SLP, about which it can be said ten times over that it is a "crackpot sect" but which you cannot say "no sane person would vote for," because either there are tens of thousands of insane socialists or else there are tens of thousands of socialists so discriminating about their party support that they have preferred the SLP in past elections to the SP.

The situation would be different and so, I think, would be our decision, if it could be demonstrated that one of these three groups was the natural or logical or indicated basis for the coming mass political movement of the American workers. If this could be shown, it would be our duty to strengthen this group, to popularize it, to support it to the exclusion of the others. But nobody demonstrated this and nobody even tried. The mass political movement of the American workers will certainly not take shape around any one of these groups (nor our own, for that matter), with any of these groups as its basis or its rallying point or as its core. Like ourselves, these groups will have a future only to the extent that they are able to help form this mass movement, that they are able to participate in this movement, that they are able to influence this movement which will be formed largely without them and, in a certain sense, even against them.

These are very briefly the reasons why the party cannot say to the workers that it supports one of these sects in the elections to the exclusion of the others. To the party it is a matter of indifference which of these three socialist groups the worker casts his vote for. In all three cases, the vote will have a sufficiently similar significance to be added equally into the total of this year's socialist protest vote. To choose one of them only would put us in the position of defending the program or activities of that particular group as being so much superior to those of the other two groups as to warrant its support in the election to the exclusion of the other groups. I do not think this can be done.

I hope this makes it a little clearer to you that the position of the Plenum was adopted as an independent position standing on its own feet and not as an attempt to patch up divergent views by a "compromise." We do not adopt our political positions in that way - we have not ever done it and I hope we never will.

Because of the very nature of the position, the question was raised in the Plenum of what vote would be cast by the individual members of the party. The Plenum decided that it could not have two policies on this question, one for the workers who do not belong to the party and the other for party members. It therefore decided to leave the question of just which of the three socialist candidates the party member would vote for as free and unpreferred as in the case of the worker to whom we present our position. However, it was pointed out that the position of the party would be nullified and even made a mock of if in the election campaigning and propaganda conducted by party members every comrade were to

feel himself free to "interpret" the party position in accordance with his own inclinations. The Plenum therefore decided that every member of the party would follow the same policy as the party as a whole, as the party officially, as the party press. It became clear in the Plenum discussion that any other procedure would not be serious.

At the same time, members of the Plenum pointed out that there are or can easily arise instances where party members have very close contacts who may insist, for one reason or another, upon pressing our comrades for a statement on which of the three candidates he personally will vote for; and that a refusal on his part to express himself would create unnecessary difficulties. Every policy, especially a correct one, should be applied with at least a grain of common sense. It would be preposterous to construe the party policy in such a rigid, dogmatic and nonsensical way that a party member is prohibited under any and all conditions from informing his contacts as to how he personally will vote and giving a careful and intelligent explanation of his reasons. His personal inclinations are in no way in conflict with the party decision. I might point out, as a matter of fact, that we have not even dreamed of placing a ban upon party members to prohibit them from informing close contacts of their views even when they are in conflict with the official party position. As you must know, comrades who have disagreed with the party position on the Russian question or on the labor party question have never felt anything but free to express their disagreement to contacts and other close political friends. Why should anyone feel anything but free to do the same thing in the present case when there is no such conflict with the party position?

But, just as in the two cases mentioned, it would be utterly contrary to proper party procedure if any comrade were to carry on a campaign or an agitation in public for his personal point of view in such a way as to contravene or nullify the position of the party. All that is really required when confronted with such "complex" problems is the intelligence that all of us possess and a good sense of party loyalty.

These modest qualities preclude the raising of the question of what "I as an individual" can do or am going to do "regardless of the party position." That seems to me not only false but absurd, above all in the case of a difference of opinion over such a question as this. I must say that while Goldman's resignation did not really surprise me, the grounds which he gave for it made me feel pretty sad and pretty sick. That a man of his political experience and intelligence should break with his party over a question such as this, no matter how much he may have been convinced that the party position was wrong, shows the state of demoralization and disorientation that some people have reached in the movement today. You would think that the conflict was over supporting a proletarian revolution or not supporting it, rather than over what is, after all, the pretty small and episodic question of whether we support one of these miserable sects or all three of them, and that in the

1948 elections in which, alas (this is our common misfortune), the socialistic vote all over the country will not run into the millions. How is anybody to take such grounds for a resignation seriously? How is anybody to take such people seriously?

I am not sure what you propose to do now with your statement in the light of this letter. If you still want it to appear in the PARTY BULLETIN, it will, of course, be published automatically and immediately for the consideration of the party membership. Along with it I would propose to publish this letter to you. Please let me know your decision.

With best Party greetings,

Max Shachtman

P.S. You may notice that I am not saying anything about your "side remarks" on the Marshall Plan or on the question of our unity policy toward the SWP. They belong under a different heading. If you are interested in discussing them again, that can be done under those different headings and in a different place.

M.S.

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Letter from H. D. Coleman to Max Shachtman

August 7, 1948

Dear Comrade Shachtman:

I am happy to see that you unwillingly agree with me that the policy of the individual party member in the presidential elections must, in many cases, work out exactly as I indicated in my statement. Your indignation at the idea that the position of the party might be considered a compromise between different viewpoints in the party is difficult for me to understand. However, compromise or no compromise, your summary of the conclusions of the National Committee as to the impossibility of distinguishing between the three socialist parties convinces me of nothing except that the National Committee is still bogged down in the idea that the Workers Party is the future party of the American working class. I don't think that you produce a single sound argument for the "No Preference" policy. The statistical truism that the total socialist vote will be the total vote for all three parties does not impress me. I want my vote to demonstrate something more than that.

By a process of elimination, I find that the SP is the only party that we in the WP can vote for. "Nobody is so ignorant as to be unaware of the important differences which exist among these three parties," yet our policy, in fact, wipes out these differences. I certainly do say that there are tens of thousands of insane socialists, if you will not hold me to a narrow definition of insanity.

The Stalinist movement is the first proof of it. The core of the Stalinist party is politically psychopathic, and the same thing is true of the SLP and the SWP. The political line of these latter two organizations cannot be analyzed in "reasonable" terms. People who tag along with them, even in the passive fashion of our National Committee, may be suspected of possessing that peculiar glitter in the eye which I have heard you describe so vividly as the true sign of the genuine crackpot. Having with difficulty preserved some shreds of political reputation and a precarious mental balance after seventeen or eighteen years in the movement, and now finding that my stubborn, backwoods resistance to Bolshevik-Leninism has spared me the political demoralization that affects many of the comrades, I do not intend to placidly minimize the invincible political stupidity and crackpotism of the SLP and SWP just because the total socialist vote will be tabulated in three columns of the World Almanac.

The SP clearly doesn't represent the future party of the American working class any more than the WP does, though it is more than likely that the SP will make more of a contribution to it than we will, for good or bad. But I can't understand why our support of the SP in the elections, even if it should allow them to gain a few members that they might not otherwise get, would commit us to support of everything the SP stands for. If we couldn't make our position clear, we would be a pretty helpless bunch. The SP is certainly a tiny organization; but by reputation and tradition it represents far more than the SLP and SWP. Are we no closer in fundamental outlook to the SP than to the SWP and SLP? It seems to me that anyone who believes that has been asleep for several years, and no talk about a "Third Force" will cover up the fact. We may laugh at the SP's preachers and social workers, but the SP has a connection with the real world that is entirely lacking in the case of the other two. (So far as the SLP is concerned, it is a novel sensation to find oneself even theoretically envisaging such a connection.) In the political terms that some people think in, these considerations may be unimportant. They are not, for me. Our job is not to follow along after the socialist voters, sane or insane, who do not really understand what they are voting for. We should be able to give some leadership and direction even to this scanty crowd - the lack of numbers never worried us in the past.

As to what I can do as an individual party member, given the present party position, you appear to accept, with your customary fluent verbalization, the course of action I outlined. Your appeals to "intelligence" and "good sense" are beyond criticism. But when these "modest qualities" result in so many exceptions to the rule, I don't take the rule very seriously. It is not a question of privately informing a few close contacts of how one votes and why. It is not at all a question of disagreements with party policy discreetly admitted to selected contacts. Such an approach to the problem as the latter would surely be ridiculous in the extreme. It is a matter of stating plainly and in some degree publicly how socialists should cast their ballots. This has to be done as a demonstration of political responsibility; and in recognition of

the vital importance, at this stage of the development of the WP, of showing what political tendencies we disassociate ourselves from. I can only influence a handful of people. But even if I only speak in a small discussion group, the discussion is public, and the "No Preference" policy is just so much wind. I may state the party position as a formal "introduction" to what I have to say about voting for Thomas. I gather that that is all you suggest, in practice. The party position then sounds a little ridiculous, but that is entirely the fault of the National Committee.

H. D. Coleman

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