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RESOLUTION ON W.P. ATTITUDE TO S.P. AND C.P. BY MUSTE

The Declaration of Principles of the W.P.U.S. contains the statement: "The founding of the New Party on the basis of the present Declaration of Principles is the one possible step toward revolutionary unity. A mere attempt to fuse the programs and tactics of existing parties would lead nowhere since careful analysis reveals their falsity and inadequacy. The Declaration also contains this statement: "Today, the existing Second and Third Internationals are bankrupt. The problem of international organization cannot be met by an amalgamation of the Second and Third Internationals or by an International based on a mixture of the bankrupt policies of the two. A new, i.e., a Fourth, International, based on the theoretic and strategic principles laid down by Marx and Lenin, representing the historic continuity of the international revolutionary movement, and applying these basic principles to the historic realities of the present stage of capitalist decline, must be built."

The decision to found a new revolutionary party and international is a serious matter. It is well known that the groups which merged to found the Workers Party came to this decision in the most deliberate and responsible manner. All the developments which have taken place in the months since the merger - the collapse of the N.R.A. and the sharpening of the class struggle in the U.S.; the growing seriousness and imminence of the war danger with the swift rearming of Germany, the piling up of armaments by all capitalist powers, the Italo-Ethiopian clash, the renewed aggression of Japan in China, etc.; the further development of the nationalist foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. culminating in the Franco-Soviet Pact and the imposition of an outright social-patriotic policy on the Parties of the Third International by the Communist (Stalinist) parties in the U.S. and elsewhere and the evidence of complete loss of faith in these parties by the working class furnished by the Saar plebiscite, e.g., the response of the workers to the founding of the W.P. and its activities in the class struggle - all these developments have strengthened our conviction that the establishment of the New Party and the raising of the banner of the Fourth International, was correct, necessary and urgent. Equally correct, necessary and urgent is it to proceed as rapidly as conditions permit to the actual constitution of the New International.

The swift pace of capitalist decline and the equally rapid accumulation of tensions in international relations make it certain that the masses will be unprepared to meet the approaching crisis and will suffer betrayal at the hands of the Second and Third Internationals with far more horrible consequences than were brought on by the betrayal of 1914, unless the new Parties standing on the program of revolutionary internationalism are built without delay into compact, effective, fighting units. The masses rally to an organization and a banner, rather than to abstract or disembodied ideas and programs. The emphasis must be on building in each country as rapidly as possible a revolutionary party, with a high morale, clearly differentiated from other parties, to which the masses come to look for leadership. Confusion as to which party to follow, confusion of banners, is the most serious danger today and may prove fatal to the working class in a crisis. Both the more advanced workers and the masses must get into the habit of looking away from the C.P. and S.P. and toward the W.P., away from the Second and Third Internationals and toward the Fourth.

The first line of strategy for the Party is, therefore, the building up of the Party organization itself. This includes recruitment of members, organization of branches and districts, improvement of the functioning of the branches and districts, improvement of the national apparatus, development of party morale and enforcement of discipline, the preparation and distribution of the official organs of the party and other literature. The P.C. has had these elementary but important tasks in mind. When the special problems arising out of the merger are considered, as well as the controversies over policy which have arisen, we believe that substantial progress has been made in the work of Party building. Nevertheless, much remains to be done and the various phases of work just mentioned must receive careful attention in the next period.

Closely related to this task of Party building is the projection of the Party, its members, branches, districts into the actual class struggle. A correct program on paper is not enough. The party must prove itself in action. Some resistance has been encountered among the members to the demand that the Party get into the actual struggle. In the main, however, the turn to mass work (trade union, unemployed, student, youth, defense) has been made. Furthermore, it has been justified by the events. The conduct of the Party in class conflicts (Fargo, Sacramento, Minneapolis, Waukegan, St. Louis, Toledo, numerous unemployed centers) has served to demonstrate its vitality and effectiveness and has increased its influence and prestige. In this field we must carry forward the line we have adopted with still greater determination and energy, and those members and branches who have not yet entered into mass work and the actual class struggle must make good this defect.

But this simple prescription alone is insufficient. In its approach to the workers the party confronts as opponents and rivals the S.P. and C.P. Look of them possesses a much larger membership, greater resources, stronger apparatus. Our road to the masses is obstructed by these parties at almost every turn. We must combat them in order to clear our own path and liberate the advanced workers from their influence which is negative and harmful.

The idea that the Workers Party can grow and become the mass party of the workers by simple "constructive" work in the class struggle, "ignoring" the C.P. and S.P. is decidedly false. Polemic is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It must deal in a serious and responsible manner with issues of theory, strategy and tactics. The Party must avoid giving the workers the impression that its chief delight is picking flaws in other parties or organizations. An unrelenting polemical campaign against the rivals of the party must, however, go hand in hand with direct activity in the class struggle. These two apparently different tasks are in reality two parts of one and the same task. We must win over the politically organized and more or less conscious workers at the same time we recruit and educate the unorganized. These two phases of our work influence each other reciprocally. The more politically unorganized workers we win to the Workers Party by our work in the class struggle the more we will impress the politically organized with the effectiveness of our program and action. And, conversely, the more class conscious workers we gain at the expense of the S.P. and C.P. the more successful will be our independent efforts in the class struggle.

In order to combat the C.P. and S.P. effectively a precise estimate of these parties and a correct attitude toward each of them is needed. Both parties represent varieties of Centrism and reformism, but they are by no means the same. Each constitutes a distinct problem and requires a distinct analysis.

The Declaration of Principles makes the following statements in the section on the Socialist Party: "The Socialist Party is not a party of revolution but of reform and pacifism. - - Though now as at other periods in its history the Party contains many militant and left-ward moving workers - - - the radical phrases of the centrist wing represented by the 'Militant' leaders serve as a cover for an essentially reformist attitude and a policy of capitulation to the right wing. The Party and the Second International with which it is affiliated therefore serve the purpose of hindering the consistent development of the workers to a revolutionary position."

These statements of the Declaration must constitute the basis for party pronouncements and activities not only because they stand as such until a convention decides otherwise, but because an analysis of the situation in the S.P., including recent developments, fully bears out their soundness. On the basis of the Declaration we set down the following propositions:

The Socialist Party is not a party of revolution. It is fallacious and dangerous to have the perspective that it can be made into a party of revolution. Since any dallying with this idea can only mean the preparation of a fresh betrayal of the workers by the S.P. and on the other hand delay in the building of a genuine revolutionary party, it must at all times be energetically combatted and no action can be tolerated which gives any countenance to this idea. This is all the more necessary because certain honest elements, as well as some less honest, repelled by the crimes and errors of the C.P. and C.I., advance the idea that the formation of the Third International was a mistake in the first place and that in view of the manifest bankruptcy of that International the logical course is to unite the working class again in the Second International and then work to make it revolutionary. For such attempts to raise the "credit rating" of the Second International and by the same token to discredit Lenin and the October Revolution the W.P. has nothing but condemnation and contempt.

The S.P. cannot become a powerful force in the American scene. Its diverse and conflicting elements must either fly apart as the class struggle sharpens or else be held together on a purely opportunistic basis (keep the party intact so as to roll up a big vote or impress the trade union bureaucrats, etc.) If a Labor Party were to come into existence, the S.P. would doubtless join and that would be the end of any independent existence for it. Whether in a Labor Party or not, the chief impact of the S.P. on workers and other elements in the U.S. is through Hoan, McLevy and especially Norman Thomas. It serves, that is, to perpetuate illusions of pacifism and parliamentarism. All this constitutes a further reason why nothing should be done to bolster up and give a momentary appearance of virility to this disintegrating organization. Rather should revolutionists do everything in their power to hasten the process of disintegra-

tion so that the party may no longer confuse the workers and impede revolutionary progress.

Our merciless criticism of reformism and reformists does not mean that we espouse the C.P.'s "third-period" theory of social fascism and the destructive tactic of the "united front from below" which was associated with it. The position of the W.P. on the united front has been clearly defined in the Declaration of Principles and has frequently been exemplified in practice. We stand ready to engage loyally with the S.P. and any and all working class organizations in "an honest, straightforward, carefully defined united front of organizations on specific and immediate issues facing the workers."

As has already been indicated, the S.P. is not a monolithic party. It is necessary to define our attitude and relationship to the various trends and elements in the Party. The Old Guard (Jewish Daily Forward crowd, Rand School, New Leader, etc.) is avowedly anti-revolutionary, directly associated with the conservatives and even reactionaries in the unions, etc. The McLevy, Maurer, Hoan, Devere Allen, Norman Thomas right-centrist elements are essentially reformist and pacifist, some under cover of radical phrasology. Their criticism of the Old Guard is not based essentially on the issue of revolutionary principles. They never fought for a split with the reactionaries on a principled basis. The issue of "keeping the party together" and having it established that party decisions are not to be flaunted by the Old Guard, is ever now the chief concern of these elements. Moreover, at the Buffalo N.E.C. meeting of the S.P. when the open defiance of the Old Guard forced them into a disciplinary gesture, they swiftly struck a much more direct blow at the "left" by the rule against "advocacy of armed insurrection" in the party. Thus they put an end to the illusion that the S.P. is an organization in which "all views, reformist and revolutionary" may be advocated.

At various degrees to the left of Thomas stand the elements commonly known as Militants. To regard the entire wing of the S.P. to the left of Thomas as a "left wing" already crystallized or about to crystallize, and as clearly representing "a movement on the road to revolutionary Marxism", is an erroneous and very dangerous conception. We are not discussing here individuals or groups of individuals who may speak of themselves as "Militants" or who may be under their influence. We are dealing with a more or less organized force and tendency (Socialist Call, etc.)

Granting that it may be creditable that these elements were repelled from the C.P. under the Stalinist regime, it is still significant that they found the S.P. congenial for so long and preferred it even with the slimy Old Guard to it to the revolutionary groups. It is likewise indicative of the inherent centrism of many individuals among them that it is precisely now when the C.P. executes a 180 degree turn to the Right that they are strongly attracted to it. The Militants never conducted their campaign against the Old Guard primarily on clear issues of principle which would, of course, have involved a split with the Old Guard, but rather on the opportunist basis of getting control of the party apparatus in which case they indicated they were quite willing to have the Old Guard in the party with them. They have never worked out, and do not now give any convincing evidence of being ready to work out anything approaching a revolutionary program on such issues as the nature of the state, the method of taking power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the character and role of the revolutionary party, etc. They have not advocated withdrawal from the Second International of Vander Velde et. al. They hold ideas of "revolutionizing" the Second International or amalgamation of the Second and Third, etc. They did not make any vigorous struggle against the Buffalo decision forbidding advocacy of "armed insurrection" and even "Communists" among them such as Gitlow and Zam are participating in the expulsion of left wingers of the R.P.P.A. Most of them believe in a Labor Party. Many of them have shown activity in the trade union work and commendable militancy in strikes. Their leading elements tend, however, to find an economic base in second-line paid positions in the unions and to ally themselves with or to tolerate the top leadership in such unions as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, I.L.G.W.U., U.T. etc., rather than supplying positive leadership to an essentially rank and file progressive unionist movement against the bureaucracy. They have been vacillating and hesitant about collaboration with the W.P. in defense work, and in the unemployed field have repeatedly rejected sound proposals for unity pursued a disruptive and sectarian course, and chosen to regard the leading elements of the W.P. in the unemployed field as rivals rather than allies. In glaring contrast, they enter into collaboration with the A. F. of L. officialdom and seek to commend themselves to the unemployed workers chiefly on the ground that this officialdom has placed the stamp of approval upon them.

RESOLUTION ON W.P. ATTITUDE TO S.P. AND C.P. BY MUSTE -4-

Our policy toward the S.P. militants in the next period must be as follows;

We reject the conception that they represent virtually a crystallized left wing steadily approaching a revolutionary Marxist position and with which the W.P. may in the near future unite, so that it becomes a matter of indifference whether a militant and leftward moving worker joins the Militants or the W.P. The Militants as they stand constitute a confused, Centrist grouping, all the more dangerous because they use "radical phrases" and put up a left front.

While prepared at all times to collaborate in concrete situations with the S.P. militants, as well as others, in an honest and straightforward manner (as indicated elsewhere in the decisions of the N.C.) and furthermore seeking opportunities for such collaboration in order to be able to influence the workers without ideas, we reject as unrealistic the conception of a generally "friendly bloc" with the S.P. Militants as with a grouping approximating the political position of the W.P. Such a course could only serve to mislead and mystify the workers.

We can best help those Left-Centrist militants who are really seeking a Marxian position not by "softness" toward ideological or practical faults, but by the most severe and unflinching friendly criticism. The ability to accept and profit by such criticism is one of the tests of a revolutionist.

In the matter of withdrawing individuals or groups from the S.P. or C.P., no cut-and-dried rule which can be automatically applied to every situation can be laid down. In line with the analysis already given, the following considerations are to guide the Party committee in making decisions in concrete cases.

The primary consideration must be the bringing openly into the W.P. as rapidly as possible of all those who are convinced of its program and prepared to accept its discipline. There is no time to be lost in building up the Party. No available forces can be spared. The W.P. is the revolutionary Marxist party of the U.S. It is not a temporary set-up for bargaining purposes with another group or groups. The latter concept, whether it be consciously or unconsciously held, is defeatist. Nothing can more seriously weaken the Party at this stage of its development. The result of following out such a conception can only be to leave the masses in the rapidly developing crisis without the leadership of a revolutionary Party.

This does not imply going about and snatching recruits from other parties by any and every means. We seek to win workers on the basis of an understanding and acceptance of our program.

Neither does this imply that we hastily withdraw an individual out of an organization when a crystallization is taking place in a group to which the individual belongs - a crystallization which is proceeding steadily and in a definite direction and can therefore be expected presently to bring larger forces to the Party.

The idea that, apart from this, the coming of forces out of the S.P. into the W.P. would retard the revolutionary movement cannot be sustained. The example of honest and substantial elements breaking away from this reformist and bankrupt Party and the addition of forces to the W.P. would rather make a deep and salutary impression upon all honest elements in the S.P.

In dealing with the Militants we must work for a left crystallization on a Marxian programmatic basis with the perspective of splitting it off from the S.P. either with the RPPA forces if possible, or as a second layer following the RPPA split. To develop this crystallization which cannot take place without the guidance of the W.P., the WP has two important tasks to perform: criticism of the Militants on programmatic grounds and the issues of the day, and the building of fractions. It is understood that this is a statement of our perspective, not a formulation of the way in which leftward moving elements present their program in the S.P.

To those still convinced that they can work in the S.P., we say that it is their duty if they are sincere in their claim to be "revolutionists" to

Study the program of the W.P.

Elaborate their own program on all the essential points of revolutionary principle and strategy.

On the basis of principle to split with all reactionaries, reformists and centrists and to aim at unity with the revolutionists.

A distinction must be made between the S.P. Militants generally and the group formerly known as R.P.C. and now grouped about the R.P.P.A. On many of the basic points in a revolutionary program - the theory of the class struggle, the nature of the state, the method of taking power, the role of the revolutionary party, the dictatorship of the proletariat, etc. - this group has taken a clear and avowedly Marxist position. On other questions such as the developments in the Soviet Union, the Fourth International, etc., they have not yet taken what we can regard as a satisfactory position. They are prohibited from any open advocacy of fundamental revolutionary principles in the S.P. For the W.P. to permit these highly promising elements to remain in the intolerable position in the S.P. which they now occupy or perhaps to drift into the C.P. would be criminal.

Our perspective for the RPPA is a split from the SP as soon as the maximum crystallization possible under the perspective here set forth has been achieved, and their unification with the WP on a Marxian basis. To this end the RPPA must conduct a polemical struggle in its own ranks against Lovestoneite and Stalinist influence. The axis of the struggle should be the need for an independent Marxist party in the U.S. and the Fourth International. The struggle must be extended into the SP as a whole and should be especially directed against the Militants and serve as the main line of attack in preparing the split. It will also serve as the second line of attack in crystallizing a revolutionary current in the Militants.

This Plenum decides:

1. To propose to the R.P.P.A. joint discussion (in the press, through representative committees and in whatever ways may be agreed upon) on the essential points of a revolutionary program.
2. To propose to the R.P.P.A. collaboration in practical activities in trade union, unemployed, defense work, etc.

The P.C. is instructed to ascertain the most advantageous time and method for advancing these proposals and empowered to work out necessary details for carrying out this decision.

While the W.P. does not orient itself in this period primarily upon a policy of unification or merger, and certainly not with confused varieties of centrists still far from holding a revolutionary position, it stands prepared to discuss organizational questions in the frankest manner whenever and wherever a group or organization appears which holds a program of revolutionary Marxism and clearly accepts the necessity of new revolutionary parties distinct from the C.P. and S.P. and of the New, Fourth, International. Further steps to be taken by the leading committees of the Party in case discussion of program and practical collaboration with the R.P.P.A. proceed satisfactorily, will be governed by this consideration.

The long range perspective of the WP is to root itself among the broad masses of the workers as their revolutionary vanguard. In this process the WP considers negotiations with leftward moving centrists as a means of developing them to a Marxist level in theory and practice as a basis for assimilating them. The first is decisive, the second a tactical supporting means of augmenting the revolutionary forces on the basis of the vanguard party. The Plenum condemns the conception that the road to the masses is through the Socialist party only or chiefly.

Among the main weapons in the struggle to liquidate ^{the} influence of the S.P. and to accelerate the differentiations in the SP in a revolutionary direction are: (1) our press which must carry material to demonstrate the bankruptcy of reformism and the inadequacy of centrism and the superiority of Marxism; (2) the work of building fractions.

The Plenum instructs the PC to carry out the Declaration of Principles and this resolution which is a concretization of it, to conduct a systematic struggle against the SP along the lines of this resolution, and to establish a national SP committee under the direction of the PC.

Communist Party

The decline and degeneration of the Third International and its sections described in the Declaration of Principles have proceeded with startling rapidity during recent months. The Stalinist leadership now takes an open social-patriotic position, thus preparing the way, unless the new parties are rapidly built and consolidated in the New International, for a betrayal of the masses in the next war-crisis which will have far more ghastly consequences than the betrayal of 1914. The principle of party democracy has been even more ruthlessly violated than in the past though that seemed impossible, both in the S.U. and in Communist parties in other lands. A convincing example of the stultification in which the abrogation of party democracy results has been given in the acceptance of a 180 degree turn on the trade union, labor party, social fascist and united front questions by the C.P.U.S. without any party discussion and without the slightest revulsion being shown by the membership. Unquestionably membership in the C.P. has a corrupting and demoralizing effect upon the workers. Since the C.P. is incomparably more compact and disciplined than the S.P. it is much more difficult for criticism to reach and make an impression on the members. There are no such divisions as keep the S.P. in constant turmoil. The morale of C.P. membership and sympathizers is in fact for the moment high. This arises from the fact that with the new turn the Party has taken on a definite and plausible, though despicable role - the role, namely, of the Social-Democratic Party of the U.S., a party which makes revolutionary pronouncements and performs reformist deeds. It has naturally achieved a high degree of respectability for the time being in non-proletarian circles. It is stealing S.P. thunder in this way so that Norman Thomas is forced to write: "With a few shining exceptions practically everywhere the Party is losing, not gaining morale. -- Already to an amazing extent, we have lost what I may call the cultural field to the Communists in spite of their appalling mistakes."

Under these circumstances, the question of the crystallization of some wing of the C.P. with which unification might occur or of "going into the C.P." does not arise for discussion at all. It is a serious error, moreover, to draw the conclusion, as some comrades appear disposed to do, that the W.P. is not making and cannot make an appreciable impact upon the C.P., that we cannot expect to recruit from C.P. ranks, or that from a revolutionary standpoint the general run of C.P. members is inferior to the S.P. membership.

The C.P. has clearly indicated that it regards the W.P. as its most dangerous foe. It constantly carries attacks on us in its organs and meetings. It is compelled to defend itself against our criticisms on the Labor Party, the regime of terror in the C.P.S.U., the Franco-Soviet pact, etc. Does all this indicate that we are making no impression upon the membership and sympathizers of the C.P.? The question answers itself.

The records show that we have recruited steadily from the C.P. (New York, Philadelphia, Akron, California, etc.)

Workers have generally speaking joined the C.P. because they wanted to be in a revolutionary party, the party of the October revolution and of the Soviet State (as they believed), the party of action. Members have joined the S.P., generally speaking, because they wanted not to belong to a revolutionary party and wanted to vote a new social order into existence. Not a few who joined the C.P. have been utterly and permanently demoralized. There are, however, many healthy, vigorous elements in the Party, fairly well informed on Marxist theory and experienced in the class struggle. On the one hand, the W.P. will continue to set forth the most merciless criticism of the policies of the Stalinist regime and to expose their disastrous effects on the working class. We shall force the C.P. more and more openly to appear for what it is - hopelessly social-democratic and incapable of any revolutionary action.

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RESOLUTION ON ATTITUDE OF W.P.U.S TOWARD S.P. AND C.P.
JUNE 1935 PLENUM OF N. C. BY CANNON AND SHACHTMAN

(Defeated. Details of votes in Plenum minutes)

The most important and indispensable instrument of the revolution is the independent party of the vanguard, based upon the program of revolutionary Marxism and able to exert a leading influence on the workers' mass movement. The organization independence of the party of the revolutionary vanguard, once it has assumed the proportions of a real movement, is a principle. Wherever objective circumstances compel the participation of revolutionary elements in reformist or Centrist parties, as factions within them, it must in every case represent a transitional period of preparation for the constitution of their own completely independent party.

In the face of the disintegration of the international labor movement the revolutionary elements inside the bankrupt parties of reformism and Centrism as well as the politically unaffiliated militants, all move, by the logic of the situation, toward the same goal - the unification of the revolutionary forces in each country into independent parties and their union into a New International.

In the United States the selection of the revolutionary militants and their independent organization have advanced faster and more favorably than in any of the larger capitalist countries. The Workers Party is already the nucleus of an independent revolutionary party in a country in which the great bulk of the working class is as yet politically unorganized, while neither the C.P. nor the S.P. has a serious mass organization or influence. The Workers Party begins with a scientific program, it has experienced and tested cadres, superior in many respects to those of the Stalinist and Socialist parties, and the relation of forces between it and its rivals is far more favorable than in practically any other country. In addition, it operates in a period of rapidly developing class struggle with an awakening working class which is not fettered by social reformist or Stalinist traditions. The independence of the Party in this situation gives it tremendous advantages in all its activities. If the party follows a correct policy, avoiding sectarian rigidity as well as opportunism, it has an excellent prospect to grow rapidly and become the leading party of the workers. This, however, is not guaranteed in advance. Everything depends on the leadership, the policy of the party and the intelligence with which the policy is applied.

The main lines of strategy leading toward the rapid development of the mass influence and organization of the party are: 1) energetic direct participation in the class struggle and direct individual recruitment; and 2) a correct estimation of the Stalinist and Socialist parties and a tactic toward them which will aid the revolutionary elements in their ranks and under their influence to find a common platform and unite with us. Our aim, in this regard, can only be the unification of all revolutionary elements into a single party.

Direct participation in the class struggle, propaganda, agitation and recruitment, are indubitably the most important means of developing the Workers Party as an independent force, and eventually, as the leading influence in the workers' movement. The major part of our energy and resources must be devoted to this field. The workers, including those at present under the influence of the C.P. and the S.P. will judge our party first of all by the showing it makes in actual tests in the class struggle. It is necessary to prove in action that we not only have correct principles but that we also know how to apply them realistically. The conduct of the party in class conflicts where it has had an opportunity (Minneapolis, Toledo, unemployed movement, labor defense, etc.) has already served to demonstrate the vitality and effectiveness of the party and has increased its influence and prestige. An increased and more energetic participation in the class struggle is the first directive for the work of the party in the ensuing period.

But this simple prescription alone is insufficient. In its approach to the workers the party confronts as opponents and rivals the S.P. and the C.P. Each of them possesses a much larger membership, greater resources, stronger apparatus, traditions, etc. Our road to the masses is obstructed by these parties at almost every turn. We must combat them in order to clear our own path and liberate the advanced workers from their influence which is negative and harmful.

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In order to combat the C.P. and S.P. effectively a precise estimate of these parties and a correct attitude toward each of them is needed. Both parties represent varieties of centrism and reformism, but they are by no means the same. Each constitutes a distinct problem and requires a distinct analysis.

The so-called Communist party is in reality neither Communist nor a party. It is a completely bureaucratized and venal apparatus depending entirely on the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union and entirely subservient to the oscillations of the Soviet foreign policy. Its membership, deprived of any real participation in party decisions and drilled in the sole ideas that discipline means slavish obedience to commands from above, is systematically prevented from crystallizing any kind of independent political thought. World-shaking events pass over the heads of this so-called party without serious repercussion in the ranks. The Communist party is a reactionary force in the labor movement against which we must conduct a most irreconcilable struggle on every front. Far from being the most advanced workers - - a conception mistakenly held by some comrades and proceeding from old memories rather than present realities - the adherents of the C.P. are as a rule, the least susceptible at the present moment to the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. The Stalinist workers can and will be won to our views, but only on the condition that we supplement for them the lessons of events with the most unrelenting criticism and exposure of the treacherous course of Stalinism.

The Socialist party, on the other hand, presents a decidedly different picture, which determines for us a distinctly different attitude. While it has in its ranks a substantial section of incorrigible petty bourgeois and Right wing elements, it has won large sections of radical workers repelled by Stalinism. This influx of new proletarian elements, plus the sharpening of the class struggle in the United States and the reaction to the catastrophic bankruptcy of social reformism in the recent European events, have produced a deep ferment in the ranks of the S.P. and an unmistakable movement to the left of large sections of its membership. Fundamentally, this represents a movement on the road to revolutionary Marxism. The fact that up to now this movement has been canalized and distorted by the Centrist leaders only bears witness to its immaturity, but it does not signify that the movement is either accidental or unreal. The more open becomes the reconciliation between the temporary Centrist leaders and their right wing brothers-under-the-skin, the wider will become the gap between the workers who genuinely seek a Marxian movement and the leaders who obstruct it. This contradiction creates the condition for the rapid development of a broad and authentic Left wing movement in the Socialist party, rich in possibilities for the future. It is an essential part of our revolutionary work to aid the development of this Left wing with the object of uniting with it in a single independent party.

The immature Left wing in the S.P. confronts three dangers which we must help it to overcome. 1) Ignored and left without the assistance which it requires, the movement can be disoriented and demoralized by the Centrist misleaders, and as has been the case with similar movements in the past, its forces will be dissolved, being reabsorbed in part by reformism and in part falling into passivity; 2) Reacting violently to reformism and judging the C.P. by outlived Left traditions and the usurped glory of the Russian revolution, the Left wing socialists can easily fall victim of Stalinism and thereby unwittingly obliterate every progressive feature of their movement, as has happened in one degree or another in Austria, England and France; 3) The Workers Party, becoming infected with organizational sectarianism and growing impatient for speedy, even if small results, fails to see the potentialities of the broad movement in its process of development and systematically withdraws individual militants who come under the influence of our party, thus leaving the movement as a whole without the Marxian leaven and thwarting the development both of this movement and of the Workers Party itself.

These dangers can be averted and the Left wing movement in the S.P. can be innoculated against Stalinism and reformism and come to revolutionary fruition only on the condition that the Workers Party gives real aid and encouragement to the movement and thus facilitates its normal evolution toward the position of consistent Marxism and unification with us in a single party. For this, an unceasing criticism and exposure of the Right wing and its Centrist allies, and a constant friendly pressure upon the Left wing to separate itself clearly from all other currents and develop a thoroughgoing political platform of its own, is quintessential. In addition, those Left Centrist militants who are really seeking a Marxian position must be aided by friendly criticism, and collaboration wherever possible, to formulate their program and conduct their struggle with the object of advancing the interests of the mass movement and simultaneously of influencing the socialist workers by our ideas.

Our tactics with regard to the Left wing socialists must be adapted consistently and in every field to the conception that, once they have broken irrevocably with social reformism in all its varieties, they will unite with us into a single revolutionary party. Our main strategic aim must be to help this movement mature and to hasten this unification.

This tactic, which is clearly indicated by the whole situation, cannot be pursued in an atmosphere of hysteria over the non-existent danger that a realistic consideration of the dynamics of development in the Socialist party represents the preparation of "capitulation to the SP" - a propaganda assiduously disseminated by Budenz on the one side, and Zack, Oehler and their group on the other. Their conception, which contents itself with repetition of standard formulae and ignores all new and living phenomena in the ranks of the S.P., is sterile and sectarian to the core. With tactics based upon such conceptions, we can at best recruit individuals for a futile sect; we can never bring to our side the potential mass movement of revolutionary socialists. The Plenum therefore categorically rejects this sectarian conception, and authorizes the Political Committee to proceed in its policy with regard to the S.P. in line with the analysis outlined above.

The Left wing sentiment and movement in the Socialist party today is vague, confused and unorganized; in other words, it is merely a movement in the earliest stages of its evolution, which is far from having developed with logical consistency to the position of revolutionary Marxism. It only expresses the desire on the part of thousands to break with bankrupt reformism and to adopt a Marxian position. This movement cannot and will not develop to that goal spontaneously, automatically, by itself, and most certainly not under the direction of its present Centrist leadership which will seek to bring it back to the stagnant pool of reformism once the "storm" has subsided. Precisely because of this, it is the task of the revolutionary Marxists organized in the Workers Party to give leadership and consistent direction to this movement; to shape its course and accelerate its development.

It is the task of the conscious revolutionists, i.e., the Workers Party, to give consciousness to this Left wing movement. Bolsheviks do not leave things to automatic "processes" or "wait for developments." They go out to meet the task, to initiate movements, to spur them on and to shape them toward a goal. We cannot content ourselves with the repetition of the well-established fact that there is as yet no fully crystallized Left wing in the Socialist party. Our task is to recognize the potentialities of the movement which does exist, to crystallize it and develop it. The policy of running away from this problem, of turning one's back on the fermenting situation in the S.P. in unholy fear of contamination, is not the policy of self-confident Bolsheviks. Despite its appearance of revolutionary intransigence, this policy is in reality a policy of sectarian passivity and conservatism.

Our objective with regard to the S.P. is not merely to build up the Workers Party in the direct sense of winning recruits to it, but also to deal a powerful blow to the bulwark of reformism and Centrism represented by the S.P. and to clear the road for the revolutionary party. From this point of view also it is false to withdraw individuals or small groups from the Socialist party in order to make a show of quick results for the Workers Party. The correct policy is to aim at as deep a split as possible in the present Socialist party so that when a Marxian group does break away to unite with us, it will have conducted itself in such a manner that it will leave our reformist rival not only as a discredited organization but also as a greatly weakened one. (over)

Resolution on attitude of W.P. toward S.P. and C.P. by Cannon and Shachtman

Premature withdrawals of revolutionary militants before they have utilized the fullest possibilities to increase their numbers, can only have the effect of adding inconsequential numerical forces to the Workers Party, without seriously undermining the Socialist party and its bureaucracy, but on the contrary, liberating the latter from the internal difficulties created by a revolutionary opposition. Furthermore, given the present relationship of forces between the two parties, untimely withdrawal would deprive the Workers Party of revolutionary allies in the reformist camp who would be in a position to help us block the hostile maneuvers of the Right Centrist bureaucracy of the S.P. against the Workers Party in numerous fields (united front, unemployed, labor defense, etc.).

The withdrawal of a dozen members from the YPSL at the time when the latter organization was in the deepest ferment as a result of their head-on collision with the New York Right wing bureaucracy (which ousted it from its headquarters in the Rand School) must be recognized as a serious error which confirms, by its negative results, the falsity of the tactic. The formal addition of a few members to the Workers Party in no way compensated for the loss of a revolutionary leaven in the New York YPSL. The contention that the comrades who withdrew from the YPSL in such a situation were already isolated and discredited only testifies to the false tactics employed by them, but in no way justifies the action. A correction of their tactics along the lines of the conceptions outlined in this resolution would have enabled them to break through their isolation and expand their influence in the YPSL in a comparatively short time.

The contention that these comrades should have been withdrawn in order that we might "make a showing" is likewise invalid. Our aim is not to "make a showing" which has little significance - as is shown by the fact that the dozen who withdrew brought no one else with them - but to create a movement. The new policy of the Stalinists of sending members into the S.P. and YPSL shows a keener appreciation of the situation on their part than was shown by us in the instance cited.

The united front tactics of Bolshevism have for their aim to develop the broadest possible anti-capitalist mass movement and at the same time to put the revolutionary elements in a position to extend their influence beyond the circle of their immediate following. The Workers Party, as well as the mass organizations under its influence and control, must follow a deliberate and consistent policy of the united front, especially with regard to the S.P. and the organizations under their influence. We say "especially the S.P." because, in line with the analysis presented in this resolution, it offers to a far greater extent than the C.P. the possibility of fruitful results from the united front, both from the standpoint of developing a real mass movement and of winning support for our position. This conception does not, of course, exclude united front agreements with the C.P. and its organizations - on the contrary, we must have a consistent and positive policy also in this regard - but subordinates it decidedly for the reasons given in our analysis of the two organizations.

To evade or oppose or have an ambiguous attitude toward the united front with the S.P. and its organizations, on the ground that they are or may be "encroaching" upon our movement, or that because of their numerically greater forces, they might have an organizational preponderance in the united front, only displays a lack of Bolshevik self-confidence or a misunderstanding of the Bolshevik aims of a small organization in a united front with a larger one. Equally erroneous is the idea that we should break off the united front because the reformists or Centrists try to exploit it for their own advantage. We do not enter the united front because we "trust" the reformists or Centrists, but in order to establish contact with the workers under their influence, to win them away from reformist policies, and eventually from their reformist organizations and leaders.

That is why we conceive the task of the united front and the task of building up our own strength, influence and organization as one single task, and not as two separate ones which conflict with each other. The false conception of the united front reaches its logical absurdity in the proposal of Comrade Stamm and others that equal representation between two such numerically disproportionate organizations as the W.P. and S.P. be laid down as a precondition for the united front in the field of labor defense (P. C. minutes June 3, 1935). This ridiculous ultimatum, which flows out of a systematic sectarian conception, is good only for one thing: to isolate the Workers Party within its present narrow circle, and to give the Right-Centrist leaders of the Socialist party a good pretext for evading the united front ~~from~~ with us.

Resolution on attitude of W.P. toward S.P. and C.P. by C. and S.

The question as to whether or not the Left wing can "reform" the Socialist party is an academic question, the answer to which is not decisive for our strategy. It requires consideration, only because it has been raised in our internal discussion as an argument against those who calculate upon the need and possibility of developing a strong Left wing movement in the Socialist party. By the "reform" of a Socialist party one can only mean that a left wing in that party gains a majority in it and adopts a revolutionary program. To state categorically that this is "impossible," is theoretically false, as has been shown by historical experience in several countries during the post-war period (France, Germany, Italy, United States) and only quite recently in Germany and in Holland (S.A.P. and O.S.P.)

Certainly, the prospect of repeating this experience in the S.P. of America of today, is remote. The Workers Party does not base its strategy on the assumption that the Socialist Party is going to be transformed into a revolutionary party. Nor has the Workers Party any need of orienting itself in such a direction. As an independent party it has the duty to build itself up as the party of revolutionary Marxism, to recruit in its own name and under its own banner, to work out its course free of any illusions about reformism or Centrism.

But the problem lies in the fact that the leftward moving workers in the Socialist party, by their very position and stage of development, see the situation and the problem differently and must of necessity employ a different tactic. In order to influence them further in a revolutionary direction, we must see them as they are. What is of decisive importance for our understanding of their position, so that we may be able to give them the necessary aid, is the fact that the leftward moving workers in the S.P. for the most part believe that it is possible to reform the S.P. and for that reason are unwilling at the present time to join the Workers Party. They want to test out the possibility of reforming the Socialist party in their own experience. The attempt to put to them, as the decisive revolutionary criterion, the demand that they leave the S.P. and join the W.P. therefore fails, at the present stage, and if we insist upon it, can only shut us off from further opportunity to influence them.

It is highly significant, in this connection, that while the C.P. or Y.C.L. members who are converted to our position readily leave these organizations as individuals to join us (the bureaucratic regime of Stalinism deprives them of any hope of "reforming" their organizations) - members of the S.P. and the YPSL on the other hand, even when they are convinced of the correctness of our program, as is the case with many of them, are unwilling to leave their organizations on the ground that they can make our ideas prevail within them. Illusions or not - such are the facts. If we want to play a serious leading role in the development of the Socialist left wing toward unification with us, we must proceed from facts.

Furthermore, the theoretically unfounded assertion that it is "impossible" in any case to "reform" the Socialist party, and the insistence that the Left socialists adopt this point of view in advance, is in practice nothing but a command to them to discontinue their activity inside the Socialist party. It is possible for them to work, to gain a hearing, and shape a movement inside the S.P. only on the basis of an ostensible program to revolutionize the Socialist party. Otherwise, they have to appear only as a fraction of the Workers party, that is, as the agency of an outside organization. This automatically prejudices the members of the Socialist party who, like all organized workers, have a certain patriotism for their own organization (otherwise, they wouldn't belong to it!) and instead of attracting them toward the revolutionary group - repulse them from it,

This, unfortunately, is the way in which our 12 comrades in the New York YPSL conducted themselves and is the principal reason for the barren results of their work. We must adopt a different policy in the future. It is false through and through to obscure the task of educating the awakening socialist workers by seeking to impose artificially upon them from the outset, an organizational conclusion which their experience has not yet verified. Our first task is to imbue the Left socialists with the ideas of revolutionary Marxism, to convince them of the necessity of a break with reformism and Centrism and of the unification of all revolutionary Marxists in a single party. It is putting the matter incorrectly to say that the masses rally to an organization rather than to ideas. On the contrary, the masses - and most particularly the conscious and politically alive masses - rally first to ideas and programs and then draw the organizational conclusions, that is, they then rally to the organization which best represents these ideas.

The forces now organized in the Workers Party represent the fundamental nucleus of the revolutionary Marxian party, but it is not yet the party in the real sense of the word, i.e., it is not yet the mass party. The broad perspective for the period ahead of us, with which we must imbue our entire movement, is that we are going to extend the basis of and build the revolutionary mass party of the American working class, together with the Left Socialists who develop in our direction and the now unorganized workers whom we recruit by means of our independent activity in the class struggle.

Our basic aim with regard to the Left currents in the Socialist party is therefore not to recruit them directly into the Workers Party, as individuals or small groups, but rather to push a mass movement of hundreds and perhaps thousands of socialist workers on the road to revolutionary Marxism and to unite with this movement in a single organization which will become by the fact of this unification, the basis of a mass revolutionary party. The eventual name of this party is not a fundamental consideration, any more than it was in the case of the fusion between the C.L.A. and the A.W.P. What is decisive is the program and the leadership of the party. The Workers Party will have no reason to insist on its own name as a precondition for unity, if its principle line and the decisive influence of its cadres is assured for a different one.

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JUNE 1935 PLENUM RESOLUTION ON THE SP AND CP - By Weber

1- The WP of the US has been created out of the fusion of two revolutionary currents of the labor movement, as the American weapon for the creation of the 4th Int. It is the primary task of this party to become a powerful force acting independently in the class struggle. Through its correct and militant guidance of the working class in an increasing number of their struggles the Party will be enabled to attract new members and extend deep roots in the masses. Only through such activities, participated in by all its members can the Party become a disciplined Marxist organization, capable of assimilating new forces and guiding them in the practice of revolutionary Marxism.

2- The attractive power of the Party depends not only on its ability to function independently in the class struggle, but also on the struggle it wages against enemy organizations. It is the function of the WP, as the Party participating in the building of the 4th Int. ultimately to regroup all class conscious revolutionary elements now scattered in other organizations under its own banner. In this connection it is necessary to define unambiguously, with utmost clarity, our attitude towards the two larger organizations, the CP and SP. Both these organizations are enemies of the WP and this must be the guiding concept reflected in our press and literature. The 4th Int. is premised on the complete bankruptcy of the 2d and the 3rd.

3- The CP is completely under the domination of a corrupt bureaucracy, itself tied hand and foot to the interests of the Stalinist apparatus and to Soviet diplomacy. It cannot in any sense be considered an independent revolutionary Party of the working class. It is actively engaged in a process which can only result in liquidation of itself into a reformist labor party and all its policies are framed accordingly. The fact that it carries on no discussion in its ranks and expels those who would enter into such discussions, makes it difficult to break away large fragments of this Party by fraction work in its ranks. It is not entirely excluded that at a later stage of its betrayal of the working class, splits may develop that can be utilized to attract dissenting elements en bloc to the WP. We must continue the relentless exposures of the betrayals of Stalinism, as exemplified most recently in the Franco-Soviet pact.

4- The SP of the US has gone through the first stage of a process of disintegration, the logical outcome of which would be a split in its ranks. This is the inevitable fate of a reformist Party in the epoch of capitalist decay when the policies of reformism are revealed in all their impotence in the face of the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat. The European debacle reveals once more the fatal consequences of the attempt of the workers to utilize social democratic parties, steeped in the methods of parliamentarism, without clear revolutionary goals, to overthrow capitalism. This has had its repercussions within the ranks of the SP here. A movement of serious proportions has started leftwards but without Marxist guidance, this movement has been arrested midway by the Centrist misleaders who want unity at all costs, with the reactionary Right wing. At present, there exists a split, with little prospects of an immediate split. The Centrists have given valuable time to the Right to reform their ranks and to start a vicious offensive against the Right and Left Centrists. In this situation the WP ~~must~~ must actively intervene, win to its complete program an active nucleus in the left forces of the SP, and direct the work of this nucleus under the guidance of the P C. It must be made clear in this work, that our ultimate aim is to split away the largest possible sections of the left forces to join the W P. The precise tactics to be applied cannot be laid down in advance. They must depend on our further experiences, on the rate of development in the SP and on the objective situation. The next violent swing to the left in the SP, may depend on further striking events here or abroad, but we must be ready to take full advantage of them. Our aim is to break the hold of reformism on the advanced workers completely and once and for all.

5- We reject any concepts destructive of the attractive powers and the very basis of the WP which would make of our Party a mere bargaining force, a temporary stopping place. The glitter of numbers does not warrant at any time the practice of opportunism as against revolutionary politics. This weapon of ours, the WP, has been gained at great effort and must be our first care. It is the foundation stone of the mass revolutionary Party. As such, we must add to its influence and strength and make its independent Marxist basis crystal clear. Only in this way can the WP be made a polarizing center for the uniting of revolutionary workers under the banner of the 4th Int.

6- The manner in which our work in the SP is carried on will be of decisive importance to the future of the WP. We can only work from our own foundations outwards, and not in ways that will defeat our own purposes by creating the impression among those whom we are trying to attract to our ranks that it does not matter whether they join our ranks or not. We stress that this outlook for the Party is not by any means based on some false concept of organizational fetishism but on the contrary is a matter of orientation for the Party, which can ~~be~~ determine the success or failure of our task of extending the influence of the WP. The Plenum instructs the PC to work out tactics in our relations with the SP in accordance with this outlook. Our position for the maintenance and building of the WP must be so clear and unambiguous, we repeat, as to prevent any steps or acts that could lead to the liquidation of our Party.

JUNE 1935 PLENUM RESOLUTION ON S.P. WORK - by Muste

Quote the sections of the Declarations of Principles on

- a) SP-CP
- b) 2nd and 3rd Internationals
- c) The WP as basis for revolutionary unity.
- d) The organizational and political independence of the Party.

The manner in which our work in the SP is carried on will be of decisive importance to the future of the WP. We can only work from our own foundations outwards, and not in ways that will defeat our own purposes by creating the impression among those whom we are trying to attract to our ranks that it does not matter whether they join our ranks or not. We stress that this outlook for the Party is not by any means based on some false concept of organizational fetishism, but on the contrary, is a matter of orientation for the Party which ~~can~~ can determine the success or failure of our task of extending the influence of the Workers Party. Our position for the maintenance and building of the WP must be so clear and unambiguous as to prevent any steps or acts that could lead to the liquidation of our Party.

The purpose of the work in SP is to increase the influence of the WP over the leftward moving elements in the SP and their crystallization on a revolutionary basis.

The Plenum decides: 1) to propose to the RPPA joint discussions (through representative committees, in the press, and in whatever ways may be agreed upon) on the essential points of a revolutionary program; 2) to propose to the RPPA collaboration in practical activities, in trade union, unemployed, defense, Negro work, etc.

The PC is instructed to ascertain the most advantageous time and method for carrying out these proposals and empowered to work out necessary details for carrying out these decisions.

Among the Militants we must work positively for a Left crystallization on a Marxian programmatic basis. To develop this crystallization which will not take place without the guidance and pressure of the WP, the WP has two important tasks to perform: criticism of the Militants on programmatic grounds and on the issues of the day, and the building of fractions.

It is understood that the Plenum is opposed to any premature withdrawal of individuals or groups from the SP or YPSL.

(Add last 3 paragraphs of Cannon Resolution on Work in SP Res. as whole not carried. Cannon res. referred to, was adopted.)

RESOLUTION ON ATTITUDE OF WP. US TO S.P., C.P. etc. June 1935
Plenum of NC by J. West. (Consolidated with Cannon-Shachtman
Resolution and Defeated. Details of votes in Minutes of Plenum)

West moves that the following be adopted by the National Committee as a statement on the perspective of the relation of the Workers Party of the U.S. to the other working class parties and groups in the U.S. and that the Political Committee be instructed to proceed henceforward in the light of this perspective.

The aim of the Workers Party of the U. S. is to build the new revolutionary party of the working class in the U.S. and to take an active and integral part in developing and forming the new revolutionary International, which is made historically necessary by the bankruptcies of the Second and Third Internationals and their respective national sections.

The problem of building the party of the New International in the various countries does not present itself in one and the same form everywhere. Different strategy and tactics must be used, as dictated by specific national conditions - by the degree of capitalist disintegration, the presence or absence of Fascism or the threat of Fascism, the development of the working class and its organizations, the condition of other working class parties. Consequently, there is no formula to be followed.

Conditions within the United States made possible the launching of the new revolutionary party in this country in December, 1934, through the merger of the American Workers Party and the Communist League of America into the Workers Party of the U.S. Through this act, and by the terms of the Declaration of Principles adopted at the initial convention, the Workers Party of the U.S. committed itself immediately and concretely to the task of building the new revolutionary party in this country as an autonomous organization, independent of all existing parties, groups and organizations.

In the light of this commitment, the central task of the Workers Party on the national field is seen to be the drawing of individuals to membership, and in general the strengthening and extension of its own autonomous organization as the vanguard of the American working class in the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of U. S. capitalism.

Nevertheless, this central task cannot be undertaken intelligently and effectively without a clear realization that in carrying it out, the Workers Party does not merely launch its attack against the class enemy, but likewise enters into bitter and indeed mortal competition with the other parties and political groups of the working class.

The existing parties and groups of the working class within the U.S. may be divided into three categories: (1) the numerous small and comparatively uninfluential groups such as the Proletarian Party, the American Labor Party, the Weisbordites, etc.; (2) the Communist Party; (3) the Socialist party. Though all three categories together contain only a small minority of the U. S. workers, it must be remembered that this minority comprises a large percentage of the politically awakened and class conscious workers. It is this fact that makes the establishment of a correct perspective with reference to them of major importance for the future of the Workers Party. Each category must be estimated separately in order to arrive at the proper policy with respect to it.

(1) Generally speaking, the Workers Party need take no special steps toward the small political groups. Its aim should be to win the best of their members as individuals, and to do so as rapidly as possible. If necessary, under exceptional circumstances, one or the other of these groups might be accepted as a body for membership in the Workers Party, and provisions could be made for allotting such a group proper organizational standing. Under no circumstances, however, should this involve any negotiations on program or principle, nor should protracted discussions of any kind be entered into.

(2) The relation to the Communist Party at the present time is dictated both by the political degeneration of Stalinism and by the organizational set-up of the Stalinist parties - above all, by the bureaucratic "monolithism" which characterizes them. The organizational aspect makes it idle at present to dream of upsetting the Communist party seriously "from within", of building up fractions inside the Communist party or of expecting in the near future any important split of which one branch would represent a Marxist direction. Consequently, the Workers Party at present must aim, both by polemic and by the example of its activities in the class struggle, to accomplish the following with respect to the Communist Party: (a) first of all, by exposing the degenerate character of the Communist Party, to prevent leftward moving workers from entering it, and to direct them

instead into the ranks of the Workers Party; (2) to win individual members of the Communist Party; (3) to isolate the Communist party so far as possible from the American working class; (4) to lay the basis for later major disturbances within the Communist party, realizing that these will almost certainly have to wait for actualization until some extraordinary national or international event.

(3) The case of the American Socialist party is far different from that of the Communist Party. Equally - though of course differently - degenerate in political principle, there is no organizational resemblance whatever. The membership of the Socialist party is extremely variegated, and the Party istorn within by the bitterest factional struggles. Up to the present, no genuine left wing has crystallized within the party, but there are many individual members, particularly among the youth, who are moving rapidly leftward; and there are many others who would do so if they were ~~afforded~~ offered any clear guidance. At present the fate of these leftward moving individuals is a hopeless one: some go to Stalinism, mistaking it for the genuinely revolutionary current; many are deceived by the leaders of the Militants into believing that they should remain and fight for the unity and regeneration of the Socialist party; and others, growing weary, drop out of the movement altogether.

For the Workers Party to confine its perspective with reference to the Socialist party to that of winning individual members would be a political blindness, a complete failure to understand the actual situation, and would moreover succeed in winning only a very few individuals. In contrast, the perspective of the Workers Party must be: (1) Crystallize the left wing within the Socialist party; (2) in the course of a fight by the left wing for Marxist principles, have the left wing split from the non-Marxists; and (3) have the left wing merge with the Workers Party. The conditions of merger, from the side of the Workers Party, would be: (1) A Marxist program, though not necessarily the Workers Party Declaration of Principles in precisely its present form; (2) complete break with the Second International and declaration for the Fourth International. Organizational questions, name, press, etc. would be matters for negotiation.

The success of this perspective requires a continued sharp and unyielding criticism of social reformism in all its phases.

In the light of this perspective, the attempt to win individual members from the Socialist party would become the exception rather than the rule, and would be made only when the given number could no longer function effectively within the Socialist party, when the psychological effect would serve best the general perspective, or under similar circumstances. The main task of those under Workers party influence within the Socialist Party would be to drive forward, in a clear, direct and uncompromising manner, the long range program.

RESOLUTION ON ATTITUDE OF W.P.W.S. TO S.P. AND C.P.
June 1935 Plenum by Oehler, Stamm, Basky. (Defeated)

The struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the building of the 4th International, the key question of our time, must be carried on in struggle against the Second and Third Internationals. Their capitulation allowed Hitler to come to power and laid the basis for the demoralization and disintegration which is permeating the working class movement of the entire world. The course of both Internationals runs deeper into the mire of social patriotism.

But the crisis of capitalism, reflected in the working class movement and its two principal parties, pushes layers of workers outside and inside these parties to the left and even entire parties. Thus notwithstanding the impossibility of reforming either of both bankrupt Internationals singly or thru their fusion, their further development under the impact of the crisis opens up possibilities of winning large numbers of the workers in them for Marxism, the revolution and 4th International.

The basic requirements for the realization of this task aside from favorable objective conditions on a Marxist world program, a politically and organizationally independent revolutionary world organization and sections, a merciless struggle against opportunism in all its forms, especially of its worst form, social patriotism, a merciless criticism of centrism in all its varieties, fraction work in these internationals to correlate inside the pressure brought to bear outside by the independent revolutionary organization, and where possible collaboration in the class struggle in the trade unions, unemployment work, labor defense, etc.

If these tactics are systematically applied through splits from the two old internationals the 4th Internationalist forces will gain new adherents and be able to fuse with them on a Marxist programmatic base. These same tactics applied to centrist parties outside the two internationals can yield the same fruitful results. Generally speaking, the fusions in Holland and the U.S. are examples of the application of this organizational perspective.

It is with these considerations as a basic guide that we approach the problem of our attitude toward the S.P. and C.P. in the U.S.

The long range perspective of the W.P. is to root itself among the broad masses of the workers as their revolutionary vanguard. In this process the W.P. considers negotiations and collaboration with leftward moving centrists either in the S.P. or C.P. as a means of developing them to a Marxist level in theory and practice as a basis for assimilating. The first is decisive, the second a tactical supporting means of augmenting the revolutionary forces on the basis of the vanguard party.

The Plenum condemns the idea that there is any road to the masses outside of building and rooting the vanguard party in the masses. It condemns the idea that the road to the masses politically and in daily class struggle activity is through the socialist movement.

Among the chief weapons in the struggle to liquidate the influence of the S.P. and C.P. and to accelerate the differentiations in the S.P. in a revolutionary direction are: (1) independent activity in the class struggle; (2) United Front Activity; (3) our press which must carry material to demonstrate the bankruptcy of reformism and the inadequacy of centrism and the superiority of Marxism; (4) the work of building fractions.

The Workers Party is based on revolutionary Marxism (the Declaration of Principles) and carries on the struggle for the October Revolution, for its preservation and extension. To this end the W.P. must combine the theories of Marxism with elementary propaganda suitable for American conditions in order to win the masses, and lead the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. The W.P. as the Declaration of Principles clearly states, must maintain its political and organizational independence.

The characterization of the C.P. in the Declaration of Principles has been proved anew by the recent developments. Its bureaucratic monolithism makes it apparently impregnable. But molecular processes are at work in it. As the full weight of the social patriotism of the European Communist parties sinks in in the CPUSA the WP should be able to attract the best elements in the C.P.

The Plenum condemns the failure to conduct a systematic political struggle against the C.I. and the CPUSA in the party press and thru mass meetings, forums, leaflets, etc. on the burning issues of the day. It condemns the policy of "no united fronts with the CP." It condemns the failure to prevent the inroads of Stalinist influence in the WP (Dixon City, Pa., NYC). It instructs the PC to wage the most relentless political struggle against the CP and to proceed immediately to liquidate politically Stalinist tendencies in the WP on the basis of the external struggle and the ideological clarification of the membership.

The characterization of the Socialist party in the Declaration of Principles stands: it is a party of reform and pacifism. Its right wing is as corrupt and reactionary as any right wing in the European social democracy. The Militants are led by right centrists moving now to the right. Only the RPPA current approaches a genuinely revolutionary programmatic position, but is still unclear on a number of important questions (organic unity, the labor party, attitude toward the C.I.) However, the latest developments in its thinking reveal it as moving toward our programmatic position, opening up the possibility of collaboration and fusion with them.

Our perspective for the RPPA is a split from the SP as soon as possible consistent with the idea of taking out the maximum number of workers on a clear Marxist programmatic basis; and the unification of this force with the W.P. To this end the RPPA must conduct a polemical struggle in its own ranks against Lovestonite and Stalinist influence. The axis of the struggle should be the need for the Fourth International and an independent Marxist party in the U.S. The struggle must be extended into the SP as a whole and should be especially directed against the Militants and serve as the main line of attack in preparing the split. It will also serve as an auxiliary line

of attack in accelerating the differentiation in the Militants. We must assist the process by critical articles in our press and through mass meetings, etc. when the occasion arises. We should propose to the RPPA discussion of the questions on which there is still unclarity, and collaboration in the trade union, labor defense, etc. work.

With respect to the Militants we must work for a left crystallization among them on a Marxist programmatic basis, with the perspective of splitting them off from the SP either with the RPPA forces if possible, or as a second, larger split following the RPPA split. To develop this crystallization the WP has two important tasks to perform for the present: criticism of the Militants on programmatic grounds and the issues of the day and the building of fractions.

The Plenum condemns the total failure to conduct a struggle against the SP on political lines in the party press and in action in most fields of party activity. The Plenum condemns the tail endism to the SP in the NY unemployed work, the May 30 youth demonstration conference, the capitulation to the socialist and trade union bureaucrats in the NY May Day demonstration.

The Plenum condemns the slogan addressed to the Militants adopted at the Pittsburgh Plenum: Break with the reformists and unity with the revolutionary forces. This has been the line of the party since and is responsible for the widespread idea in the SP that it is not necessary for revolutionary socialist workers to leave the SP since unity with revolutionary forces is possible on the basis of the SP if the right wing is expelled. This line has contributed to the failure of the Militants to develop further to the left and the present evolution of large numbers of them to the right. It has helped the leadership of the Militants against their rank and filers who were moving to the left toward a revolutionary position. It also helped them in their struggle against the RPPA. Outside of the SP it has developed the idea that it is immaterial which party a worker joins since by either route he would be united soon in one party with revolutionaries. This line has acted as an obstacle to the recruitment of workers from the SP and also from outside of it.

The Plenum condemns the "extension" of the liquidation of the external struggle against the SP and in part the CP into the WP itself in its ideological life through the failure to initiate and organize discussion on the issues involved as a preparation for and accompaniment of the external struggles; and also of the liquidation in practice by default and by motion of our national departments: language, trade union, educational, Latin American. The Plenum holds Comrades Cannon and Shachtman responsible as the leaders for the orientation of the W.P. toward the S.P. during the past period.

The Plenum instructs the PC to carry out the Declaration of Principles and this resolution which is a concretization of it, to conduct a systematic struggle against the SP along the lines of this resolution and to establish national SP and CP committees under the direction of the P.C.

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