

Party to Act On Defense

The founding convention of the Workers Party unanimously adopted three resolutions on defense questions, including one endorsing the idea of setting up a broad, militant labor defense organization. It is interesting to note a leading comrade of the W. P., James P. Cannon, was secretary of the International Labor Defense from the time of its founding until the Stalinist regime transformed it from a class instrument into a puppet of the Communist Party. Other W. P. leaders have been active in defense work.

The resolutions adopted at the convention are the following:

RESOLUTION ON MOONEY

In the history of the American class struggle there has been no more striking illustration of capitalist oppression and class justice than the case of Tom Mooney now completing the eighteenth year of his martyrdom in San Quentin Prison in the State of California. Imprisoned there at the behest of the capitalist class of California, after his life had been saved through the intervention of the organized revolutionary workers of Russia who demanded his freedom, he has steadfastly refused to concede to the proposal that he obtain liberty at the cost of whitewashing the criminal conspirators of the judiciary who placed him in jail.

Tom Mooney's freedom will be realized solely through the organized expression of that profound indignation felt by all workers that one who should be at liberty and leading in the struggles of the day, is kept in confinement year after year. The organization of a great campaign for the liberation of our class brother is a solemn duty and a vital need of the whole class. The Workers Party of the U. S., at its founding convention, pledges its unremitting efforts in a struggle for the liberation of Tom Mooney.

To Tom Mooney himself this convention sends its warmest comradely greeting and a solemn pledge of solidarity.

RESOLUTION ON HOLSTEIN

The founding convention of the Workers Party of the U. S. has been informed of the plot instigated by the capitalist class of Minneapolis acting through the labor-hating Citizens Alliance and Police Chief Bloody Mike Johannes, to railroad militant trade unionists to their death in order to deal a blow to the trade union movement of Minneapolis and especially to General Drivers Local 574.

To Emanuel Holstein, falsely charged with murder, and whose only crime has been that shoulder-to-shoulder with thousands of his trade union brothers he has gone forward on the picket line to defend the rights of labor and to gain for himself, his family and his class brothers a standard of living above the starvation level, we send greetings and a pledge of solidarity.

To the Trade Union Defense League of Minneapolis, organized to defend Happy Holstein, we pledge our untiring support.

This Convention gives to the N. C. of the Workers Party of the U. S. the mandate to communicate immediately with the Trade Union Defense League and with Happy Holstein and to arrange measures whereby we can assist in his defense.

RESOLUTION ON LABOR DEFENSE

The founding convention of the Workers Party of the U. S. takes note of the fact that the rising tide of labor struggles is logically accompanied by a wave of persecution of labor militants and revolutionaries throughout this country. Hundreds of workers are today in prison or jail, or so threatened, solely because of their political or economic views or activities in the labor or revolutionary movements. It is only a few weeks since a close friend of our movement, Antonio Bellussi, was deported from this country by the "liberal" Roosevelt regime because he is a confirmed fighter against Italian Fascism and its offshoots in this country. Today members of our party active in trade union struggles in Minneapolis are in danger of arrest on a frame-up charge of murder inspired by the labor-hating Citizens Alliance of that city. Not long ago comrades A. J. Muste, James Cross and H. Mayer were indicted in Belleville, Ill. and Comrade Louis Budenz and others in Toledo, Ohio, for the crime of assisting workers in a strike struggle. Comrades Cannon and Shachtman were jailed in Minneapolis. Delegates to this convention have failed to reach their destination because the police of various cities have arrested and detained them.

While the heaviest blows of the capitalist oppressors naturally fall upon the most revolutionary elements of the class and particularly members of the revolutionary party, these blows are also directed against all militant and class-conscious workers and in times of great crisis against all elements of the population who dare to express opinions or engage in actions inimical to the interests and plans of the capitalist exploiters and their executive committee, the government of the U. S. and its subdivisions.

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Workers Party of the U.S.--Declaration of Principles

The American Workers Party and the Communist League of America have united on the basis of the following Declaration of Principles to form the Workers Party of the U.S.A.

THE DECLINE OF CAPITALISM

Capitalism in the stage of decline and decay as a world system, subjects the masses everywhere to insecurity, misery, Fascist terrorism and war. The present world crisis marks much more than a depression or dip in the business cycle. Under the capitalist system of social and political relations the productive machine can no longer function effectively. Its operations are directed not to fulfillment of human needs but to the making of profits for private individuals and corporations. It cannot expand the productive forces further—it contracts them. It cannot feed the masses—in the very midst of plenty it starves them.

IMPERIALISM AND WAR

Seeking new outlets for uninvested capital and new possibilities for capital accumulation, as well as cheap raw materials and profitable markets for the goods which their own population could not purchase, the capitalist nations entered the imperialist stage of their development. Having divided the world among themselves the struggle for new capitalist outlets, for raw materials and markets now becomes daily more intense. Driven by the lash of the crisis the capitalist nations are plunged into economic, tariff and exchange struggles and armament competition among themselves. The capitalists strive to shift the burdens of the crisis and the decline to other classes, especially the working class and the colonial peoples. The period of the decline of capitalism is accordingly marked by a series of the mightiest struggles in history, imperialist wars, wars of liberation of the colonial peoples, and the revolutionary struggle of the working class for its own emancipation.

FASCISM

In its early progressive period capitalism fought against feudal and clerical reaction, and relied for its victory upon the support of the workers and farmers. In the period of capitalist decline the owning class cannot maintain a measure of profits and its position of privilege save by constantly reducing the standards of the dispossessed majority and presently plunging them into war. When the social crisis thus generated approaches a climax, and the working class, as the result of the lack of a strong revolutionary party, fails to act decisively for a revolutionary solution, it suffers internal demoralization and loses the confidence of the middle class masses ruined by the crisis. Under the domination of finance capital, fascism then succeeds in mobilizing the desperate middle class elements and even certain demoralized sections of the working class on a reactionary basis. "Stabilization" is thus temporarily achieved by the destruction of the workers' organizations, the wholesale murder of working class militants and the suppression of all forms of independent class expression.

Under Fascism democratic rights are suppressed, all the forms of democracy are abandoned. The trade unions and all other independent organizations of workers and farmers are smashed or compelled to become a passive part of the state machinery. The right to strike is abrogated. The standard of living of the masses is steadily driven downward. Open terror is exercised not only against avowed revolutionists but against any workers engaged in a militant struggle for their own defense. Fascism sows division among the people by appeals to the basest racial prejudices and nationalistic passion. Thus capitalism allies itself in its period of decline with everything that is archaic and reactionary and threatens to drive whole nations back into barbarism and savagery.

AMERICA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

With the war, the United States rose to the position of the leading imperialist power in the world. It assumed this leading role at a time when capitalism everywhere was in decline and conflicts between the great Powers were therefore intensified. American imperialism cannot expand further, or even maintain its existing world position, without cutting deeply into the share of world power now in the hands of the other imperialist nations, as well as into the living standards of the millions in the U. S., Latin America, Europe and Asia whom it exploits directly or from whom it exacts tribute. In extending its power throughout the world, U. S. capitalism thereby introduces the instability of the capitalist world system into its own foundations. The economy and politics of the United States depend more and more upon crises, wars and revolutions in all parts of the world. These circumstances profoundly shake all the classes in the country, change the relations between them, sharpen and accelerate political differentiations, and open the way for a stormy revolutionary development of the working class. In the very nature of the power of U. S. imperialism, its those irrepressible conflicts that herald its collapse.

THE ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

The Roosevelt program is essentially that of monopoly capitalism, concentrating power and wealth in the hands of a decreasing few financiers and industrialists. It fosters an open alliance between industry and finance and the government. It strengthens monopolistic tendencies in the form of codes and cultivates the view of the state as umpire in conflicts between capital and labor. It seeks to tie the trade union movement to the capitalist state machinery, breaks strikes under the pretext of impartial composition of differences by government boards, and attacks militant workers and their organizations. Its vast military program is designed both as an instrument against dissatisfied sections of the population at home and as an agency of American imperialism interests against those of other nations in the wars which are inevitable so long as capitalism endures.

THE ONLY WAY OUT

There is only one alternative to capitalism—to crises of cumulative intensity, growing unemployment and impoverishment, Fascism, war and chaos, ending not only in final collapse of the capitalist system but in a relapse into barbarism. That alternative is to wipe out the central contradiction of capitalism, to take the ownership and control of the natural resources, the productive plant and the agencies of distribution and communication, out of the hands of private individuals and corporations, to use and operate them for the fulfillment of human needs and not for private profit, to build a socialist society. Thus and only thus can the masses in the modern world achieve plenty, security, peace and freedom.

THE WORKING CLASS AND ITS ALLIES

The central position among the social forces which must be depended upon to destroy the capitalist economic system and the capitalist state and effect the transition to a scientific socialist economy, belongs to the working class. It will, however, need the support of other sections of society who are also exploited or oppressed. Sections of the middle class, the debt-ridden farmers, the Negroes as a persecuted

race, the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the American Empire—these are the allies of the American workers fighting a common foe. It is only in the social revolution that all groups of workers and producers, all the oppressed sections of the population, can find deliverance from insecurity, want and tyranny.

THE CAPITALIST STATE AND DEMOCRACY

This deliverance can come only as the result of victory in a revolutionary struggle. The belief that we live in a free, democratic society in which important economic changes can be effected by persuasion, by education, by legal and parliamentary methods, is an illusion. Such a belief must be an illusion in every capitalist society, and, in fact, in any society which is divided into socio-economic classes. Freedom can be realized only in a society based upon the economic and social equality of all individuals composing it, and no social and economic equality can obtain so long as the means of production and distribution, by which members of society live, are outside the control of society as a whole. Capitalist society, in which a small minority owns and controls the means of production, means and must mean capitalist dictatorship. The political forms of capitalist society (monarchy, democracy, military dictatorship, fascism) are only the means by which the actual dictatorship of the controlling minority expresses itself. The state or government is thus the political instrument through which the owning class exercises and maintains its power and suppresses the working class. As the necessary political phase, therefore, of the change of ownership and control of industry, the workers in the cities and on the land must take control of state power by revolutionary means.

CONQUEST OF POWER—THE WORKERS' STATE

The opportunity for the workers to take power will come in the course of the disintegration of material life and of culture under capitalist dictatorship. The masses will find themselves faced with growing hunger, impoverishment, curtailment of social services, and the threat or actuality of fascism and war. Taking advantage of the growing discontent generated by the crisis of capitalism, led by the revolutionary party and supported by ever larger and more significant sections of the population, the workers will take power and put an end to the destructive course of capitalist dictatorship.

The fundamental mass instrument of this struggle for power, forged in the course of united actions of the workers, will be the Workers' Councils (Soviets). The Workers' Councils, representing the interests of the majority of the socially productive elements of the population, are the organs which mobilize the workers for the revolutionary assault as well as the organization form of state power after the victory. It is through them, not through the existing governmental apparatus, which represents the interests only of the capitalist minority, that the workers will overthrow the capitalist class and take power. The workers will abolish the whole machinery of the capitalist state in order to render it incapable of counter-revolutionary activity and because it cannot serve as the instrumentality for establishing a new social order. Its place will be taken by the workers' state, based on the Workers' Councils. The workers' state, while assuring and continually extending far more genuine and substantial democratic rights to the masses than ever accorded to them under capitalism, will function as a dictatorship of the working class against its enemies.

ROLE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

For the victory of the workers a revolutionary political party is all-important and indispensable. The class war is fought by class armies. The working class as a whole—to say nothing of its necessary allies in other sections of the population—is not characterized by firm homogeneity. It is divided by conflicting philosophies, by separatist interests of caste, religion, nationality, race, sex, age. Without the revolutionary party its most valiant struggles fail to achieve lasting results. The working class as a class, as a whole, cannot directly plan and guide its battles. For that a staff, a vanguard is necessary—not imposed from above, without the possibility of control and verification from the ranks, but rising from the ranks by tested ability and common approval. This is the revolutionary political party. It embraces the most advanced, the most militant, the most devoted workers, unites them firmly on the basis of tested principles, and welds them together in rigorous discipline.

The revolutionary struggle of the workers can be victorious only on the condition that the Marxist party has gained the confidence and support of the majority of the working class and leads it in the attack. The united front of different parties and organizations of the workers, welded together in the Workers' Councils, can mobilize the workers and conduct partial actions even when the revolutionary party is yet supported only by the minority. Its leadership in the Councils, however, is a prerequisite for the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist regime and the consolidation of the workers' rule.

The revolutionary party likewise of necessity leads the working class in the consolidation of its power after the victory, in the organization of socialist economy, in the suppression of internal counter-revolutionary enemies, and in wars of the workers' states against capitalist states. The role of the party as the leader of the class continues until all forms of class organization, including the state and the party, are finally dissolved in the classless society.

THE WORKERS PARTY OF THE U. S.

The Workers Party of the U. S. is founded on the great principles of revolutionary theory and practice stated by Marx and Lenin and tested by the experience of the class struggle on an international scale, above all in the Russian Revolution of 1917 (the "October Revolution"). The Workers Party conducts as its duty the realistic application of these principles to the present historical situation. Since its primary task is the defeat of the enemy at home—the overthrow of the capitalist government of the United States—the Workers Party will seek, first and foremost, to demonstrate to the working class of the U. S. and its allies that the application of the principles of revolutionary Marxism is the sole means for the fulfillment of their historical needs and interests. Proceeding from these principles, the Workers Party of the U. S. will use the revolutionary potentialities of American tradition and history, and adapt its tactics to the concrete situation and the relation of class forces in the United States.

The Workers Party is a voluntary organization of the class conscious vanguard whose members are united by a system of ideas set forth in this Declaration. Its organization principles are: democracy, centralization and discipline. Freedom of discussion of party problems and freedom of criticism, including the criticism of the leadership and its policy, is the inalienable right of every party member. The leadership, from the lowest unit up to the National Committee, is freely elected by the membership and subject to its control and removal.

The party Convention is the highest authority of

the party; its decisions are binding on all members. Every member is obligated to observe discipline in action. The administration of the party is centralized. Lower units are subordinate to the higher units. The National Committee as the representative of the entire organization, elected at the Convention, has full authority to act for the party and to enforce discipline of subordinate units. Party members working in non-party organizations are subject to the control and direction of the respective party bodies.

At all times and under all conditions the Workers Party maintains its organizational and political independence. In relations with other political organizations, in united front actions or other forms of cooperation, the party, while obligating itself to discipline in common action, reserves its right of criticism and rejects in principle all "pacts of non-aggression".

FOUNDATIONS OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

The most important of the economic measures to be taken by the revolutionary government in its initial period is the appropriation and socialization, without compensation, of all monopolies in industry and and: all mines, factories and shipping; all public utilities, railroads and other organized means of communication; all banks, credit agencies, gold stores; and all other supplies and services that the revolutionary government finds it necessary to take over in order to lay the foundations of a socialist society. This socialization of the means of production and exchange injures only the small handful of financiers, landlords and industrialists whose private control of the resources of the country is the source of hunger, unemployment and insecurity for the great bulk of the people. The policy of socialization pursued by the Workers' State will make possible the guarantee to every willing worker of a well-paid job, security against unemployment, and insurance against industrial risks, old age, and sickness. There will be no need for the Workers' State to impose arbitrary and oppressive measures upon small individual proprietors and farmers. The example of the social and personal advantages of the socialist organization of production, and assistance from the workers' government, can be trusted to lead them to voluntary collectivization. Socialism will release the productive forces to serve the needs of men, and will enable production to be planned rationally in terms of actual social requirements. It will allow the utilization of every technical improvement. The leisure and educational opportunities which will accompany these material advantages, together with removal of the dead-weight of the perverted capitalist culture, will offer every individual possibilities for the fullest creative development.

THE GOAL OF A CLASSLESS SOCIETY

The elimination of all socially useless and parasitic classes and groups will proceed simultaneously with these material and cultural changes. The entire population will be transformed into a community of free producers owning the total productive wealth and resources of society. The need of coercion and repression of socially alien classes will disappear with the disappearance of these classes. With it will vanish the need for a state machinery—even the workers' state. The noblest objective of the human race, the classless communist society which inaugurates a new era for all mankind, will be realized.

The working class can build a complete socialist society only on the basis of world division of labor and world cooperation. The Workers Party aims not merely to lead the working class of the U. S. in revolution but to unite with the workers of all other countries in the international revolution and the establishment of world-socialism. Modern forces of production have compelled capitalism itself to transcend national boundaries. Imperialism, itself a predatory force, cannot, however, achieve a harmonious society. World-socialism is the only solution for the conflicts and disorders in the modern world, as well as for the major contradictions within a single nation. A socialist society will utilize rationally the natural resources and productive machinery of the earth in the interests of the people of the earth, and solve the conflict between the efficient development of productive forces and the artificial restrictions of national boundaries. It will grant the rights of free cultural self-determination and self-development to all nations and all individuals. World-socialism will remove the causes of international wars that under capitalism now seriously threaten to send mankind into barbarism or complete destruction.

CRITICISM OF EXISTING PARTIES

The founding of the New Party on the basis of the present Declaration 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.

a. Socialist Party

The Socialist Party is not a party of revolution but of reform and pacifism. The fundamental error of all wings of the party is their false conception of the nature of the state and of the colonial question. From this flow its parliamentary illusions, its notion that the workers can achieve power within the framework of existing state forms, its fetishism of capitalist democracy, its policies of class collaboration, and betrayal of colonial revolts and revolutions. It is affiliated and gives allegiance to the bankrupt Second International, which bears the responsibility for supporting the last imperialist war, and whose leading section, the German Social-Democracy, openly aided the capitalists to suppress revolutionary uprisings of the workers and made possible the triumph of Fascism in Germany. The Socialist Party conducts no struggle against the reactionaries in the trade union movement and important sections of the Party are directly associated with these elements. Though now as at other periods in its history the Party openly spurns and combat all revolutionary tendencies. 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. The genuinely revolutionary workers in the Socialist Party can carry out the implications of their position only when they break with the reformists and social patriots and unite with the Workers Party and the New International.

b. The Communist Party

The adoption of a nationalist, and therefore non-revolutionary theory and practice, associated with the abandonment of the principle of workers' democracy in the Third International and its sections, constitutes the root cause of their decline and degeneration. Having left the firm ground of revolution-bankrupt. The problem of international organization

ary principle, the Stalinist bureaucracy of the C.P. S.U. which mechanically dominates the Third International and its sections, has everywhere followed a centrist zigzag policy, which in the U. S., for example, has ranged from opportunistic efforts to cooperate in the formation of the LaFollette "Third Party" of middle-class radicalism to partisan exclusiveness and ultra-leftism.

No semblance of party democracy obtains in the international or its sections. They have sponsored divisive tactics in the trade unions and other mass organizations, the policy of building dual sectarian unions, the theory of social fascism and the tactic one day of the united front from below, and the next day of purely formal united fronts "only from above" in which "non-aggression pacts" with reformist parties are concluded. They have resorted to low, vicious tactics in the labor movement, time and again ordering their members to break up meetings called by other labor organizations, and to beat up spokesmen of other viewpoints. In their own ranks, dissident opinion is stifled and bureaucracy reigns supreme.

The C. I. and its sections are completely and mechanically dominated by the bureaucracy of the C.P. S.U. As the revolutionary tide temporarily subsided in other countries, the Russian workers were obviously confronted with the need of concentrating upon the tremendous task of laying the foundations of a socialist economy in the Soviet Union, in expectation of decisive aid from the workers in other lands when the next revolutionary wave raised them to power. At this juncture the leaders of the C.P.S.U., however, instead of pursuing the work of laying the foundations of a socialist economy in the U. S. as one significant part of the movement for world revolution, adopted the position that a socialist society could be built in the Soviet Union alone (the theory of "socialism in one country") even though revolutions did not take place in other countries and that the building and defense of "socialism in the Soviet Union" is the first and well-nigh exclusive task of the entire world revolutionary movement. In the process of mechanically imposing this position upon the Communist parties of other countries all semblance of party democracy was wiped out. These parties, instead of concentrating their attention and energies primarily upon advancing the revolutionary movement and seeking the overthrow of the capitalist state in these countries, became little more than agitational groups dedicated to so-called "defense of the U. S.", pacifist agitation "against war and Fascism", etc.

This degeneration of the Communist parties everywhere and their diversion from the task of achieving the revolution in the capitalist countries, weakened the real defense of the Soviet Union and contributed to the defeat of the workers in other lands, as was so tragically demonstrated by the collapse of the C. P. in Germany when Hitler came to power. The effective defense of the Soviet Union today and the support of those revolutionists in the U. S. who fight for the reform of the Soviet State and the revival of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin's time based on the principles of revolutionary internationalism and workers' democracy depend therefore upon the building of new revolutionary parties in the capitalist countries and a new revolutionary international. To accomplish all these objectives we devote ourselves with all our energies to the building of the new revolutionary party in the United States.

c. Centrist Political Groupings

The Workers Party of the U. S. firmly opposes centrist organizations and tendencies on the national and international fields, which try to reconcile or to find a middle-of-the-road position between revolutionary Marxism and reformism. While ready to cooperate with organizations and groups evolving from reformism or centrism to revolutionary Marxism the Workers Party will not tolerate any conciliation with reformist or centrist policies.

d. Labor and Farmer-Labor Parties

At present the Farmer-Labor party movement in this country is weak and inconsequential. It is, however, possible that there will rise into being a fairly "radical" farmer-labor movement, or some combination of farmer, labor and middle class movements, which will seek to reform capitalism.

The workers' revolutionary movement faces a complicated problem in dealing with such developments. It is the task of the revolutionists to build their own party, not to engage in building up any party of reform. In the period of capitalist decline, so-called reformist parties cannot pretend to the progressive role they have played decades ago. Political and economic concessions can now be wrested from the capitalist class only by means of the most resolute and militant class struggle. Besides, any party which purports to represent two or more classes on an equal footing, or to direct its appeal "to all classes", is essentially a middle class party doomed to irresolution and surrender to the big capitalists in every decisive test. We do not believe that the American working class must inevitably pass through a protracted experience with reformist parties. It is entirely possible that it will either skip this stage, or else concentrate it within a brief period. Another dangerous aspect of middle class reform movements, in the present period, is the fact that they easily fall prey to those demagogic appeals, chauvinistic slogans and reactionary ideas of class harmony which are the hallmark of the fascist movement. However, the membership of these groups represent real blocs of social unrest and of potential antagonism to the existing order. The Workers Party will work out its tactics toward these groups and movements in the light of its basic principles. The masses in the movements must be won to support the revolutionary movement. The revolutionary party will show them by theory and historical example, and above all by its own activities that the actual consequences of the policies of reform movements, here as in all other countries, are directly opposed to their avowed aims, that they act to preserve capitalism, and hence are inimical to the interest of the workers. In order that it may effectively perform this task the revolutionary party must at all times maintain its own political and organizational integrity and independence.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

The workers' revolution by its very nature is international in character. Beginning in one or more countries it must be extended progressively to others until it embraces the entire world and establishes socialism as a world system. The revolutionary party must therefore be an international party with sections in every country. We are therefore committed to the formation of new revolutionary parties throughout the world and their union in a New International. The needs of the working class movement in earlier periods of capitalist development led to the formation of the First and later the Second International, and demanded the establishment of the Third International when the Second betrayed the working class in the war and post-war crisis. Today the existing Second and Third Internationals are