

ional forces. No single important phase of the civil war can be separated from international considerations.

This is equally true whether we approach the Spanish events from the point of view of Franco, or of the Popular Front Governments, or of the revolutionary workers and the struggle for socialism. Thus the Spanish events provide one more decisive testing ground for the two existing Internationals of the working class. The answer to the test is unambiguous: The Spanish events prove beyond any remaining doubt the hopeless bankruptcy of the two existing Internationals.

Within Spain, the Socialist and Communist Parties, in harmony with their parent Internationals, have pursued a basically identical policy of class collaboration. Under the slogan of the Popular Front, they have attempted to confine the struggle of the workers within the framework of capitalist democracy, subordinating their policies to the demands of the Foreign Offices of England, France and the Soviet Union, and to their own "democratic" bourgeoisie; and they have systematically suppressed and in the end executed those who stand for the perspective of the workers' revolution. Outside of Spain, by advocating and upholding the treacherous "non-intervention" pact, the parties of the two Internationals have played the game of Stalin-Blum-Eden.

During this same time, the two Internationals and their constituent parties have, under the slogans of "collective security" and "defense of democracy against fascism", passed over to an open policy of social-patriotism. This is most strikingly symbolized by the voting of the war budget in France by both the Socialist and Communist Parties in January of this year—an act which at the time of the last war took place only after the war had been declared.

#### The Two Bankrupt Internationals

Throughout the world, the two Internationals and their Parties have undertaken the systematic persecution and destruction of the revolutionists and the revolutionary organizations. The Soviet Union is only the most striking and terrible example. Within Spain the two parties jointly carry out the persecution. In France and its colonies, it is the Popular Front Government, supported by the parties of the two Internationals, which jails, tortures and executes revolutionists, suspends the revolutionary press, and sends its police and Mobile Guards against striking workers. Throughout the world, the parties of the two Internationals conduct their campaign to drive the revolutionists out of the labor movement, in order to try to remove the last obstacle to their plans of betrayal to the coming war.

No illusion about the possibility of "reforming" the existing Internationals can any longer be retained. "Reform" is excused both politically and organizationally: politically, by the crystallization of the Internationals on the basis of class collaboration and social-patriotism; and organizationally by the iron monolithism of the Third International and the purely bureaucratic structure of the Second. There are, it is true, large numbers of workers now adhering to the parties of the Internationals who can be won to revolutionary Internationalism, and perhaps even entire party organizations; but these, as well as now unaffiliated workers, can and will be won only by resolute break, both political and organizational, with the two existing Internationals.

The break cannot be left as a mere negative act, but is inseparably bound up with the positive task of the regroupment of

the revolutionary forces in a new, Fourth International, based upon the theory and practice of revolutionary Marxism. This is the immediate and inescapable task imposed by the demands of the present, following equally from the lessons of the past and the perspective for the future. This task cannot be put aside. The hollow argument that the bulk of the militant workers still remain within the old Internationals, and that therefore the time is not yet ripe for the new International, is only a cowardly attempt to slough off responsibility on to the backs of the masses. The fact that the bulk of the militant workers still adhere to the existing Internationals, only strengthens immeasurably the argument for the new International. For the masses, in so far as they adhere to the existing Internationals, far from being led in any degree toward the workers' revolution, are thereby tied hand and foot to the bourgeoisie, and prepared for slaughter in the coming imperialist war.

It is the new International which alone can blaze the trail for the masses toward power and toward socialism. From the very first days, a genuine and functioning International center can alter powerfully in favor of the workers the balance of forces. How great a role it could have played in Spain, where the absence of such a center has rendered vain so much sacrifice, has meant that the magnificent heroism and militancy of the Spanish workers has been left the prey of traitors and cowards, with no pole of firm and unswerving revolutionary perspective around which to crystallize.

#### Right wing and Fourth International

Once again, we find that the fundamental question of the new International, posed in all its immediacy by history itself, is directly related to the internal crisis in the Socialist Party. The spearhead of the attack of the Right wing is formed by the International question. The culminating charge of the Right wing against the Left is that the adherents of the Left are Fourth Internationalists. This was the main theme of the address of Levenstein to the Special Session of the N. E. C., in which he demanded the expulsion of the Left wing en bloc because it believed in the Fourth International. For months in Local New York, all applicants for Party membership even suspected of sympathy to the idea of the Fourth International have been rejected by Altman's membership committee. Thomas utilizes his public column in the Call to polemicize against the Fourth International, and to declare the incompatibility of belief in the Fourth International with membership in the Socialist Party. At the Special Session of the N. E. C., proposals were made to exact a loyalty oath from all members pledging allegiance to the Second International, and rejecting the Fourth.

The mass expulsions in New York were largely based on the charge of expressing belief in the Fourth International. There is a certain irony in reflecting that this same Second International, to which the Right wing is now so eager to profess devotion, refused to endorse the 1936 independent election campaign of the Party, is in the closest relation with the Social Democratic Federation, and holds and pursues policies on every important question directly opposed to the avowed policies of the Party adopted at the Chicago Convention.

The International question is neither abstract nor postponable. It is given in the circumstances of world politics, and in the conditions of the crisis in the So-

cialist Party. The Fourth International is not in the least a mere phrase to conjure with. It is the perspective which sums up all the great problems of our time; the slogan which in condensed and concentrated form draws the full conclusion of revolutionary Marxism to the experiences of the present epoch. To those who direct their attack against the Fourth International who defend and support the Internationals of treachery and betrayal, the revolutionary Left replies proudly and defiantly by unfurling, at the head of its column, the ideas, the banner, and the goal of the Fourth International.

#### (4) Farmer-Laborism

The fourth of the key political questions forming foundation stones of the present crisis in the Party is the issue of Farmer-Laborism. We refer not to the question of a Labor Party or Farmer-Labor Party in the abstract, but to the very concrete problems of the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation of Wisconsin and the American Labor Party of New York: that is to say, to the La Follette and the La Guardia movements.

The labor movement in this country has, during the last two years, surged forward. The chief symbol of this upsurge is, of course, the C. I. O. movement. Never before in this country, and at no time anywhere else in the world, has there been anything quite comparable to the C. I. O. movement. In gigantic strikes and demonstrations and organization drives, the American workers have been displaying an unprecedented militancy and class solidarity.

As yet, the conscious political expression of this upsurge has lagged far behind its direct action on the field of the class struggle. The profound problem for the bourgeoisie and for all of its hangers-on is to try to make sure that this class militancy finds a political outlet in channels altogether safe for capitalism; as, conversely, the problem for Marxists is to direct it along a revolutionary perspective. In 1936, by a variety of devices, the bourgeoisie was successful in chaining the class militancy of the workers to the sugared demagoguery of Roosevelt, and the Roosevelt machine. In the bulk, the workers have still not broken fully with these chains.

Nevertheless, the possibility of this break already gives rise to nightmares in the minds of the bourgeoisie, the liberals and the reformists. A new straightjacket, knit firmly on the capitalist looms, must be made ready. And such a straightjacket they find at hand in the conception of what they call a Labor or Farmer-Labor Party.

#### Labor Party—Real and Ideal

It is not necessary to discuss the "ideal" Labor Party, made to order in the minds of dreamers, or to determine whether it is a "good" or "bad" thing for the workers. The revolutionary Left wing has a clear answer to the theoretical question. The only Labor Party which meets the requirements of Marxists is the revolutionary party; and, while permitting under certain given conditions critical support of or even participation as an autonomous organization in a Labor Party having the backing of the majority of the organized working class, revolutionists do not believe that it is ever their proper business to "advocate" or "build" a reformist party which will prove to be their most bitter rival. But the theoretic question is not here at issue. It is the specific question of La Follette and La Guardia. The movements backing them are not dreams, but the genuine, homespun authentic American type of "Farm-

er-Labor" and "Labor" Party.

And what sort of movements are they? About this no elaborate argument is needed. Are they "anti-capitalist"? Not one of their leaders would dream of pretending so. They are dedicated heart and soul to the preservation of capitalism. Are they against imperialist war? Quite the contrary, they are busily preparing a mass base for the coming "defensive" war. Are they "free of all entanglements with capitalist parties" (a foolish question enough, when they are themselves capitalist parties)? How absurd: their chief task in 1936 was to gather votes for Roosevelt. Do they run genuine representatives of the proletariat for office? La Follette and La Guardia are the answer.

The Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation and the American Labor Party are both vicious muddles of class collaboration, Popular Frontism, outworn Populism and atavistic liberalism, the docile instruments of labor bureaucrats and careerist "progressive" capitalist politicians.

Support of these movements at the present time in actuality represents the perspective of the liquidation of independent working class politics. That is the long and short of it. And it is, again, not in the least an accident, that the Right wing of the Party is made up of those who in practice are the ardent and eager supporters of these two movements. They support them exactly because they are for the liquidation of independent revolutionary working class politics.

The Wisconsin organization of the Party has already largely dissolved itself into the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation. Wisconsin "socialists" run for office not on the Socialist but on the Federation ticket. Raskin frankly declared at the Philadelphia N. E. C. meeting that if forced to choose between the Federation and the Party, the bulk of the Wisconsin members would choose the Federation. Hoan's eyes placed greedily on the U. S. Senate see the seat not with a Socialist but with a Federation label. The Party as an organization becomes more and more of a burden to Wisconsin; and in fact is still retained only as a means for maneuvering within the Federation.

#### Right wing for La Guardia

Months ago, spokesmen of the Left declared that the Altman group in New York was headed straight for support of La Guardia through the American Labor Party. At that time, the charge was dismissed, in the usual manner, as "slander". All sections of the Party will take it more seriously today. On July 12th the City Central Committee held a meeting to consider the question of the autumn elections. The Altman majority motion (the summary for which was delivered by Thomas, though Thomas is not a member of the City Central Committee), proposes a full slate of Socialist candidates; but included is the following paragraph:

"2. Our candidate for Mayor against La Guardia may be withdrawn if in the course of discussions with the A. L. P., and in the development of the campaign it becomes apparent that such action will strengthen the labor movement and our hope of usefulness in building a national labor party."

Does anyone doubt the meaning of this paragraph? If so, those doubts would have been removed by attendance at the July 12th meeting. It was made entirely clear that the majority resolution meant, concretely, support of La Guardia. La Guardia!—candidate and member of the Republican Party; institutor of the Sales Tax; breaker of a

hundred strikes; favorite of the Citizens' Budget Commission—that organization of the big property owners in the interests of "efficient government"; whose police have developed the most accomplished technique in this country for "the preservation of law and order"; whose own pet, the Independent Subway, is the last of the big traction systems to hold out against unionization; whose agreement with the bankers on New York City finances differs from Tammany's only in being more acceptable to the bankers.

The direct relation of this issue to the Party crisis is apparent on the surface. The autumn elections are fast approaching. Wisconsin wants to rid itself of even nominal attachment to a party which includes revolutionists in its ranks. Altman and Thomas know that they could never put across their capitulation to La Guardia without the suppression and expulsion of the Left wing. This is an additional and compelling reason for the haste and the brutality of their campaign. And, in general: the Right wing stands for the expulsion of the Left as an indispensable step in its liquidation of the Party as an independent political force.

The attitude of Clarity on this question is equally revealing. Clarity stands, in theory, for a "genuine" Labor Party—that is, for the dream of a Labor Party in their own heads. Consequently, they are always left in confusion by the disparity between a real, flesh-and-blood Labor or Farmer-Labor Party (such as the Farmer-Labor Political Federation or the American Labor Party) and their dream. They recognize and state there is something rotten in such movements as these. But what to do about it? To do anything would mean to undertake a sharp political offensive against the Right wing; and this the whole nature of Clarity's politics forbids.

#### The silence on Wisconsin

Thus they endure in pained silence Wisconsin's "unsocialist" behavior, and Raskin's and Biemiller's taunts and contempt. In New York they introduce as a counter-motion to Altman's a motion of their own which is full of radical phrases, but yet does not specifically renounce support of La Guardia. In their speeches, of course, they condemn Altman and La Guardia roundly. But their mode of procedure permits them to capitulate "gracefully" in the end, with their tracks covered by the radical phrases.

The issue is well worth pondering. Is this what the membership is building a Party for? To support La Follette and La Guardia (or, as it might read, Azana and Companys and Chautemps)? Let this much be clear: this is not the kind of Party which the Left wing proposes to build. Our aim is to achieve the workers' revolution, not to put salve on death sores of capitalism.

...

These four, then, are the central political questions which lie back of the present crisis in the Party. It is they that control and determine the course of the organizational struggle. This must never for a moment be forgotten. The fight of the Left wing is not basically a fight for posts or "constitutional rights" or new committees. It is in general, a fight for revolutionary Marxism; and, in particular, a fight for solidarity with the Spanish Revolution, for the heritage of the October Revolution against the Kremlin hangmen, for a revolutionary International, and for independent workingclass politics. This is the real meaning of the fight.