

# YSA

## DISCUSSION BULLETIN

Vol. 9 No. 1

January, 1966

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2. Election Policy in 1948 by James P. Cannon  
(Report to the February Plenum of the National  
Committee of the Socialist Workers Party)
3. Summary Speech on Election Policy by James P.  
Cannon (Summary given at February, 1948 Plenum  
of the Socialist Workers Party)

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**YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE**

YSA, BOX 471, COOPER STATION, N.Y. 3, N.Y.

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## INTRODUCTION

The following presentation and summary were made by James P. Cannon at the 1948 Plenum of the Socialist Workers Party during the discussion of the Wallace third party. We are reproducing this discussion for the benefit of the YSA comrades during the pre-convention discussion.

There has been a great deal of interest generated in the anti-war movement in the last six months over the question of political action by those who are opposed to the war in Vietnam. As we draw closer to the 1966 elections the debate will become even more important. The Robert Scheer Democratic Party campaign in California, the CP's statements about running "peace" candidates in selected districts, either inside or outside the Democratic Party, and the Chicago and New York proposals for "independent political action" are good examples of the type of electoral action that will be suggested.

Unlike the 1948 period which Cannon is discussing, there is very little motion in the trade union movement. However, the reiteration of the class principles of our election policy should help to clarify our position on "independent political action" and our attitude towards the "progressive" formations represented by Wallace, the "independent political actionists", the CP, and others.

YSA National Office  
January 3, 1966

## ELECTION POLICY IN 1948

by James P. Cannon

(Report to the February Plenum of the National Committee  
of the Socialist Workers Party)

The approach of the 1948 national elections confronts the party with the necessity of making a decision on election policy. The new developments -- particularly the emergence of the Wallace party -- created some differences of opinion in our ranks. These differences must be discussed and clarified. I think we can best arrive at a correct decision on our election policy for 1948 if we re-state the fundamental considerations that have guided us in respect to the whole question of working class political action, and deduce our conclusions from this re-statement.

We proceed from a principled line. The basic aim of our principled line is to assist the development of independent political action by the workers and turn it towards a revolutionary culmination.

We are not the only tendency in the labor movement holding the view that the participation of the workers, as an independent force in politics, is advisable and necessary. There are two basic conceptions about the question of independent working class politics which is concretized broadly in this country in the proposal for the formation of an independent labor party.

There is the reformist conception that a labor party, by its very nature, must necessarily be a reformist party, and that reformism is a necessary and inevitable stage of the development of a working class political movement. Against that is the Marxist conception that a reformist stage of working class politics is not necessary and not preferable; we do not advocate that the workers pass through a stage of reformism on the road to revolutionary Marxist politics.

What we do advocate is the revolutionary party of the working class which formulates the program of its historical interests. And this line of ours -- the advocacy of revolutionary Marxist working class politics -- never changes. It persists through all stages of development of the movement. When and if the development of the workers along the lines of political action takes a different turn, a reformist detour, we never accept that as correct, but we adopt a tactical attitude toward it. We never lose ourselves in a reformist political movement of the workers and satisfy ourselves with it.

In adopting a tactical attitude ("critical support") toward a labor party, even though it may begin with a reformist program, our aim always remains the same; that is, to advance the revolutionary program of the working class and

to build the revolutionary party.

In the early years of the crisis of the Thirties the nature and tempo of the prospective development of the working class in the political sense remained undetermined. As we viewed the question then, there were two possibilities: (1) There might be a stormy development of labor radicalism that would find its expression in the growth of a mass revolutionary workers' party; or (2) the development might take place at a slower tempo, through a program of social reformism. But in any case Trotsky did not hesitate to predict that a mass workers' party was in the making; would be one of the fruits of the great crisis of the Thirties which for the first time shook up the American working class and impelled it toward political thought and action.

The Lovestoneites, at that time, jubilantly seized upon Trotsky's prediction as a confirmation of their theory; they equated a labor party with a reformist party, and they quoted Trotsky's prognosis as a vindication of their theory that this was an inevitable development. Trotsky objected to this interpretation. That does not necessarily follow, he said. It remains to be seen, he contended, whether the mass party of the workers, which comes out of the crisis, will be a revolutionary or reformist party at its inception. And he insisted that it was our task to advocate a revolutionary workers' party and oppose the conception of a reformist workers' party.

The crisis produced everything that was demanded and expected of it by the Marxist, if not in the exact form predicted and at the tempo expected and hoped for. The crisis unquestionably produced the CIO; that is, it prepared all the conditions for the tumultuous development of the industrial union movement with the beginning of the upturn of the production cycle. The CIO was not a traditional trade union movement, as known in America -- based on the crafts with their conservatism and special interests -- but a broad class movement based on the factory workers, the basic proletariat. It was a semi-political movement with profound revolutionary implications. Looked at correctly, we could say the CIO, from the moment it began to assume mass form, was an incipient labor party in itself.

### The Labor Party Movement

The rate at which the CIO developed, in relation to the numerical growth of the revolutionary workers' party, produced a tremendous disproportion between the size and scope of the movement of the Marxist vanguard and that of the awakening mass. The CIO grew stormily and embraced millions, whereas the Marxist party advanced slowly, inch by inch, recruiting members one by one. It was this disproportion between the rate of development of the revolutionary party, represented by the Trotskyist cadre, and the semi-political movement of the masses, represented by the CIO, that dictated for us a change in tactics on the question of a labor party

in 1938, on the advice of the Old Man. We had to adjust our tactics to the realities of the situation.

The labor party, as Trotsky conceived it in our conversations with him in 1938, in its incipient stage, was taking shape before our eyes in the form of the CIO and its political action committees, etc. We had to recognize this. In order to avoid the isolation of the revolutionary vanguard from the living mass movement, we had to penetrate into its political manifestations, its political action committees, etc. The aim of our participation was and is to accelerate the political development of the CIO and fight for our program within it.

We do not and we never did support the "labor party" unconditionally. We will not do so in the future. We support it "critically." That, I think, should be emphasized at this juncture in our explanations to the party. Our fundamental aim is not in any way changed by the tactical maneuver represented by our critical support of a prospective labor party, or labor ticket, whose program remains yet undecided. Our fundamental aim at all times is to advance our own program and to build a revolutionary party. These fundamental considerations, which are truisms for all of us, should be restated as an introduction to the consideration of the new variants that have made their appearance in the American political scene.

The labor party movement is much stronger than its formal expression. The invincible strength of the movement for a labor party in America derives in the first place from the objective necessity for such a development. It is expressed by the constant spread of the sentiment in the ranks of the workers -- particularly in the more advanced section of the trade union movement, the CIO. This movement, the real movement, progresses steadily and rapidly. But the actual formation of a labor party, the formal organization, as we know, is retarded by the tremendous conservatism and timidity of the bureaucracy at the top.

This anomaly -- the tremendous lag between the objective prerequisites and the sentiment in the ranks for a labor party, on the one side, and the thwarting of its organizational expression by the combined bureaucracy on the other -- presents a danger to our party. The danger is that we may get impatient; that our fear of isolation may color our judgment in concrete situations, and impel us to seek shortcuts to a labor party, or some wretched substitute for it, over the head of the official trade union movement; that we should run after any bourgeois demagogue who exploits the radical sentiment of the workers which is denied expression in legitimate forms for the moment by the official policy of the bureaucracy. That is a danger.

Such folly could have only one outcome. The end result would be for us to compromise and injure the movement for

an independent labor party based on the unions. We would discredit ourselves. And worst of all, we could perhaps sow demoralization and disorientation in our own ranks. That is the most dangerous thing of all. The necessary condition for our effective participation in the political mass movement of the workers is that our own ranks be in order; that our members understand what they are doing, and regulate their tactical maneuvers always by subordinating them to principled considerations. Our ranks need no exercises in wild goose chases. They need, rather, education and hardening in the fight against bourgeois demagoguery and Stalinist treachery.

### The Aims of the Discussion

The Wallace movement, which has made its appearance early in the 1948 elections, presents to the party the first serious test of its immunity to these dangers I have mentioned. The discussion which has arisen over this episode -- that's what the Wallace movement is, in my opinion, not a great historical movement but an episode in the distorted development of the working class of America towards independent political action -- our discussion should serve a deeper purpose than simply that of making a decision on our election policy for 1948. It should serve to clarify the party and prepare it for the future. The discussion presents a good opportunity for us. Over half of our members are new. They have never had the benefit of the past experience and discussion of the labor party question. They still require education in the fundamental principles which govern our political tactics. And it is barely possible that some of our old members need a little re-education on these points.

Let us restate our basic premises: When we speak of developing the independent political action of the workers, our fundamental aim is to build the revolutionary party of the workers because that alone correctly and truly expresses working class independence. Our labor party policy is not a principle at all but a tactic designed to serve the larger principle, designed to advance class consciousness and provide an arena and a means of expanding and developing the revolutionary party and popularizing its program.

I mentioned before the well-known fact that our support of a labor party, leaving its program undetermined for the moment, is not unconditional. It is critical. Under the heading of our labor party policy we have certain minimum demands. There are two. One, we demand that the unions launch their own independent party under their own control. That is the first demand. Second, we propose that this party adopt our revolutionary transition program. But even under these conditions we will maintain our own party with its full program.

So we are not fanatical labor partyites at all. There are very serious limitations and conditions that we put when we say we want and will support a labor party. Now, what will we accept, at the present stage of developments, as a minimum condition for our critical support of a labor party -- or labor ticket? The minimum condition is that the party must be really based on the unions and dependent upon them, and at least ultimately subject to their control as to program and candidates. Under that condition, as a rule, and as things stand now, we will give critical support to the candidates in the election, even though the party does not in its first appearance accept a program that we advocate for it.

Under that limited minimum condition -- that it really represents the unions engaging in independent political action, and not some variation of bourgeois political action supported by the workers, we will give critical support to the candidates in the election. But we heavily emphasize the critical nature of our support, and we don't obligate ourselves in advance to give that in every case. It usually depends on the relationship of forces. You can easily conceive of a situation where our strength would be such, or the conditions of the issue would be such, that we find it more advisable to run a candidate of our own against a candidate even of a "genuine" labor party.

### Struggle Against the Bureaucracy

We must not forget that our labor party policy is a method of struggle against the trade union bureaucracy in all its sections, the so-called progressives as well as the reactionaries, the Stalinists as well as the red-baiters. This struggle against the bureaucracy, and all sections of it, will never cease or be mitigated until the whole gang is replaced by revolutionary militants. At times we shift emphasis from one side of our policy to the other. That does not change our basic line; it only makes it all the more important to keep the basic line in mind and regulate the tactical applications of our policy by it. Tactics must always serve the basic line, and never become a substitute for it.

For several years our agitation has put more emphasis on the demand for the formation of an independent labor party than on the program of such a party. But this way of presenting the question of the labor party is valid and applicable only for a given stage of development. We are not bound to it for all time. At the present stage in the struggle, when the whole bureaucracy without any exception, from the hidebound reactionaries of the AFL to the Stalinists, are blocking the development of independent political action in an organized form, our emphasis is placed most effectively upon the single demand: "Form an independent labor party and put up independent labor candidates." This



concentration on this single slogan, under present conditions, is the most effective way to advance the cause of class independence in struggle against the bureaucracy.

But if and when this slogan is realized, if, under the pressure of conditions and the sentiment of the workers, a labor party based on the unions is formed, or is about to be formed -- there can be no relaxation at all in our struggle against the bureaucracy. We will then simply shift our emphasis from the question of forming a party to the question of the program of the party. We will turn on the treacherous bureaucracy, with no less hostility, with the demand that the program of this party be not simply a refurbished version of bourgeois politics but a program of independent working class politics, and that means a revolutionary program. Our labor party policy does not contemplate a reconciliation with the bureaucracy at any time.

#### Local Labor Party Experiments

We have gone through some experiments since we adopted our labor party policy in 1938, and have made a number of local experiments in the application of the policy. These experiments are by no means to be taken as holy writ, as 'the law and the prophets.' They should be subjected, from time to time, to objective analysis and dissection as to whether we have been entirely correct or not in each case. No binding and irrevocable precedents have been established by our tactics in these local situations. In each of these cases we have concentrated on the primary task of getting the unions into independent political action regardless of what the program might be at the moment. And, in determining our attitude, we have usually put the substance ahead of the form.

In New York we supported Alfange, the Tammany hack on the ALP ticket. In Detroit we supported Frankenstein on a labor ticket which had an admixture of questionable politicians in it. We supported the Oakland Citizens' Ticket sponsored by the trade unions. In these cases we thought the preponderant substance was that of independent labor politics, although there were many flaws to be seen. We considered them hairline cases. There was not complete agreement in our ranks on any of these questions. In each case a decision could easily have been made one way or the other and good arguments found for it.

The majority of the party leadership, in considering these hairline cases, decided to give any incipient labor party movement the benefit of the doubt. They were not the pure and genuine labor party formations which we have envisaged and demanded, but the main substance of them seemed to be that. We decided to give the incipient movement the benefit of the doubt.

But as I said, these local experiments must not be taken to mean too much. In the Alfange case in New York, we gave a little bit. Perhaps a little more in the Frankenstein case. While Frankenstein was, in the essence of the matter, a candidate of the CIO unions, he was also a member of the Democratic Party and the Democratic local machine was mixed up in the thing. The Oakland affair was kind of a hodge podge movement with a preponderant labor base. We gave a little there with the idea that a good vote for the Citizens' Ticket would stimulate the movement for independent political action.

But to give a little is one thing; to give too much is another; and to give everything - that's something else. In our labor party agitation we have said, in effect: "We demand a genuine labor party based on the unions and controlled by them, with a revolutionary transitional program. But we will accept for the time, and critically support, a labor party launched by the unions, leaving the question of program open for debate within the party." But we must not jump from that strictly limited concession and, in our haste and impatience, work ourselves into a position where we appear to say: "We demand a genuine labor party, but we will settle for anything we can get."

That's the position we can move into if we get too ambitious to run ahead of the formal development of the movement itself and the official participation of the labor movement; if, failing to find a labor party or reasonable facsimile of same, we run around and grab anything we can get that looks like it may or might, someday, somehow, become a labor party. That would be a sure way to ruin the SWP. And it seems to me that the proposal to support the Wallace movement boils down to that kind of a formula - we will take anything we can get.

### The Nature of the Wallace Party

The Wallace party must be opposed and denounced by every class criterion. In the first place it is programmatically completely bourgeois, as all the comrades have recognized. Its differences with the Republican and Democratic parties are purely tactical. There is not a trace of a principled difference anywhere. And by principled difference I mean a class difference.

A reasonable argument could be made for the support of Wallace's movement in any circle of American capitalism. The fundamental issue that he is raising is the question of policy towards the Soviet Union. Wallace's policy can be just as much a preparation for war as the Truman-Marshall program. Just as much. It is a matter of opinion as to which is the most effective way of preparing war against the Soviet Union -- whether by an outward effort to reach agreement by concessions in order to prepare better and put the

onus of responsibility on the Soviet Union before the fight starts, or by the rough and tumble "get tough" policy of Truman and Marshall. At any rate it is a tactical difference within the camp of the bourgeoisie.

It would be very, very bad and demoralizing if we would allow for a moment the anti-war demagoguery of Wallace to be taken by any member of our party as something preferable to the blatant aggressiveness of Truman and Marshall. That would be nothing less than the preparation of the minds of party members for "lesser evil" politics - based on the theory that one kind of capitalist tactics in the expansion of American imperialism is preferable to another, and that the workers should intervene to support one against the other.

If I read the documents correctly, the argument is made by the Chicago comrades that the capitalists do not support Wallace and therefore it is not a capitalist party. I think it is quite correct that all, or nearly all, of the monopoly capitalists at the present moment oppose Wallace. That is not decisive at all as to the class character of the party. The class character of the party is not determined by the class that supports the party at the moment but rather by the class that the party supports. In other words, by its program. That is the decisive line.

When Marx and Engels, practically standing alone, wrote the Communist Manifesto 100 years ago they announced that they represented the working class of the entire planet. And they did, even though the workers were not yet aware of it. What kind of a party is the SWP, if we put the criterion: "What sections of the working class support it at the present time?" No doubt Wallace can muster a much larger section of the working class at the moment than we can. Truman, with the help of the labor bureaucracy, can get even more. Yet we maintain that we are a working class party. We go further and say we are the only working class party because we are the only one that represents its historical interests in its program. The fascists have to hustle a long time before they get much support from monopoly capital. That doesn't change their nature. That doesn't change their class character as a capitalist agency.

The class character of the party is determined first by its program; secondly by its actual policy in practice; and thirdly by its composition and control. The Wallace party is bourgeois on all these counts; by its program, its policy and practice, its composition and control. The contention that the party is controlled by the Stalinists and the Stalinist unions, in my opinion is radically false. That's the deceptive appearance of things. This accusation is made in the anti-Wallace press, and is screamingly emphasized by the Stalinophobes. If I am not mistaken, some references of that kind have slipped into the Militant. I believe some of our comrades who are advocating critical support of Wallace share this view. In my opinion it is completely false.

The control of the Wallace movement rests in the hands of Wallace and those he supports. He determines the candidates and he determines the program. To talk about getting into the movement to change its program and get another candidate -- that's absurd! The program and the candidate are presented to you in a finished package: Wallace for President, and Wallace's program. He made a speech in Cincinnati where he took up the challenge. He said: "Yes, I accept the support of the Communists, but when they come into our movement they don't come in to support their program -- they support our program." He was quite right.

Of course, you have only to look around to see that the bulk of Wallace's organized support at the moment is Stalinist - the Stalinist party, Stalinist-dominated unions, Stalinist front organizations, etc. But these Stalinist unions in the Wallace movement function as supporting organizations and not as controlling powers. They roughly play the same role toward Wallace's wrapped-up, pre determined program as the PAC and the Political Committee of the AFL will play in the Truman movement. The essence of the matter is the same. The candidate is not decided by the PAC or by the AFL committee. The candidate is already decided. It is going to be Truman, or some other Truman. The program and policy are decided. The political committees of the AFL and the CIO are merely supporting organizations for the Democratic Party. They represent far more workers than the Stalinists in the Wallace camp, but that still doesn't make the Democratic Party a labor party.

The same is true about the Wallace movement. Get into the Wallace movement and change its program and candidate? Even from a practical point of view it seems to be completely utopian. The whole movement is organized on the basis of the candidacy of Wallace and his program. To join the formation and holler for a different program, a different man -- this seems to contradict the whole premise of the movement. They would say to you: "If you're not a Wallace man, why do you join the Wallace movement?" It would be a very difficult question to answer.

The Wallace movement has another ugly side to it. It appears as a one-man Messiah movement. He is the head of a "Gideon's Army" throwing the bible at his adversaries. That, it seems to me, is the worst kind of substitute for independent political action by the workers' own organizations. Wallace's Messiah movement is a diversion and an obstacle in the way of a labor party. Support for it cannot be considered for a moment. On the contrary, it must be exposed and fought.

Instead of worrying about the Stalinists rehabilitating themselves by jumping on the Wallace bandwagon, we should open up an attack against the Stalinists for another betrayal of the working class movement. They are just as much betrayers of the labor movement as the chiefs of the CIO and AFL.

They are sacrificing the class interests of the workers and their instinctive movement for an independent party of their own, to serve the conjunctural aims of Kremlin diplomacy, which coincide for the moment with the Wallace program.

### Prospective Political Developments

I read in one of the documents from Chicago an assertion to this effect that by some process the Wallace movement can, or must, or will develop into a genuine labor party. This is predicated on the theory that, under the conditions of monopoly capitalism, a third party must be either a labor party or a fascist party. This contention seems to me purely arbitrary. Why must it be so? Many variations are possible under conditions of the crisis of American monopoly capitalism. All you have to do is to look at the example of France.

France was stabilized for years, if not decades, in the pattern of certain traditional parties, the outstanding one being the Radical Socialist Party with its demagogic appeal to the petty bourgeoisie and its practice of serving the interests of French imperialism. This party was good enough for "normal" times. But under the stress of the war and the defeat and the crisis that followed the war, this party was smashed to smithereens. And a set of new bourgeois political formations arose, "democratic" as well as pre-fascist.

Why can't that happen in America? The traditional two-party system in the United States has been very well suited for normal times. The ruling capitalists couldn't ask for anything better than this system which absorbs shocks and grievances by shifting people from one bourgeois party to another. But that system can blow up in time of crisis. The aggravation of the crisis which we all see ahead can shake up the whole American political situation, so that the old two-party system will no longer suffice to serve the needs of the American bourgeoisie.

The Democratic Party is a badly shaken organism already. The whole structure can fly apart in times of crisis. It is quite evident now that the AFL CIO scheme to deliver the labor vote once more to the Democratic Party is meeting strong resistance, even if this resistance is more passive than active. That seems to be one of the undisputable factors of the present political situation. The AFL and CIO chiefs may raise five, ten or even fifteen million dollars for the election campaign. But there is no confidence among them that they can get out the labor vote for Truman as they did for Roosevelt.

The less it becomes possible to mobilize the workers' votes for one or the other of these two old bourgeois parties, the more impelling and powerful will become the urge of the workers to found a party of their own or to seek a substitute for it. That mood of the workers will create a condition

wherein American capitalism will objectively require a pseudo-radical party to divert the workers from a party of their own. This development, in my opinion, will most likely precede the development of a mass fascist party. America will most likely see a new radical bourgeois reform party before the development of American fascism on a mass scale.

That is what really happened in the Thirties, in a peculiarly distorted form. Roosevelt revamped the Democratic party to serve the role of a pseudo-radical, "almost" workers party. By that he choked off entirely, for the period, the development toward an independent labor party. The Roosevelt "New Deal" became a sort of American substitute for the social program of the old social democracy. Is a repetition of that performance likely within the framework of the Democratic Party? I doubt that very much. I think there can be only one Roosevelt episode. The whole trend since his death has been in the other direction.

Next time, the role played by Roosevelt -- which was a role of salvation for American capitalism -- will most likely require a new party. In the essence of the matter that is what Wallace's party is. Wallace is the, as yet, unacknowledged, candidate for the role of diverting the workers' movement for independent political action into the channel of bourgeois politics dressed up with radical demagoguery which costs nothing. That is what we have to say, and that's what we have to fight -- vigorously and openly, and with no qualifications at all. We have to be 100% anti-Wallaceites. We have to stir up the workers against this imposter, and explain to them that they will never get a party of their own by accepting substitutes.

### Our Task in 1948

The arguments presented by the comrades for joining the Wallace movement and giving critical support to the Wallace candidacy are unfounded. I recognize, as does everyone else, that their proposal is prompted by an ambition to avoid isolation, to penetrate deeper into the mass movement and to gain something for our party and its program. We all recognize that. But from the point of view of principle, as well as practical possibilities, their arguments cannot be sustained.

Likewise, the argument that some comrades in the trade unions want to get into the new party in the expectation that they will find an arena for revolutionary work there. Such sentiments have to be taken very seriously, but to our way of thinking they are not, in themselves, an adequate reason for the party to decide to join the Wallace movement. The best Trotskyist trade unionists are sometimes mistaken, and they are certainly mistaken in this instance.

There is both a positive and a negative side to many of the first reactions from comrades deeply involved in the trade

union movement. The fear of isolation, the ambition to get deeper into the mass movement -- this is surely a positive quality. But the tendency of trade union comrades to adapt themselves a little more and more, and a little too much, to the current level of the mass movement -- a tendency ever present in trade union work, with all its daily pressures -- is negative. It requires from the political leadership of the party not acquiescence, but correction. The task of the political leaders of the party is to stand somewhat above the factors which are secondary, local and transitory; to see the problem as a whole and decide from fundamental considerations.

The problem for us in 1948 is a serious one. If we decline to support the Wallace movement and don't run our own candidate, our criticism will not be very effective. We would appear to have nothing to offer. To run our own candidate is a task of tremendous scope for a party of our size. It will require the most extraordinary efforts to get on the ballot in enough states to make a showing. On the other hand, if we surmount these difficulties, which I think we can; if we nominate our own candidates for President and Vice-President, and other offices in the states -- we have a good chance to lift the party up a stage higher and put it on the map politically on a national scale.

We are confronted with the necessity to decide the question, and not turn back from the decision. If we nominate our own candidates as against Wallace, as against all others, we also have an excellent opportunity to carry on the most effective kind of education in the party as to the real meaning of class politics. From all these considerations we should reaffirm the resolution of our August Plenum and decide firmly, that at all costs and at whatever effort and sacrifice may be required, we are going to have our own Presidential candidates in 1948.

SUMMARY SPEECH ON ELECTION POLICY

(Feb. Plenum 1948 of the Socialist Workers Party)

by James P. Cannon

The differences which have arisen cannot be taken lightly. For some time I have felt that our rather one-sided emphasis on the necessity of forming a labor party, without at the moment stressing too much the program and our fight against the bureaucracy, may have given rise to some illusion and conciliationism in the ranks of the party, particularly among the newer members, as to labor partyism and labor reformism. It seemed timely to take the occasion of our election campaign to clarify and straighten out such possible misunderstandings. But, anticipating a more or less easy struggle against a conciliationist understanding of the labor party movement, we run head on into a dispute over bourgeois third partyism. That is a far more serious matter. Some of the arguments we have heard must arouse the greatest disquiet as to what is going on in the ranks of the party, in their thinking.

Bourgeois Parties Are Not Our Arena

It would be explained this way, that some comrades have unthinkingly made a "shift" from our fundamental line. The slogan: "Build An Independent Labor Party"! is a slogan for the class mobilization of the workers. In some incomprehensible way this seems to have been transformed in the minds of some comrades as a mere demand to break the two-party system of the capitalists. This is not the same thing at all. It means merely a bourgeois party shake-up and not a class alignment.

Now, a break up of the two-party parliamentary system in America is undoubtedly a good thing. It destroys the fetish of the trade union bureaucracy to the effect that it is impossible to operate on the political field outside the traditional pattern. Splits in the two old bourgeois parties are bound to shake up the labor bureaucracy, loosen things up and create a more favorable situation for agitation for the formation of a labor party. But this break-up of the two-party system and splits in the bourgeois parties come about under the pressure of social crisis. These are not our tasks. Bourgeois parties are not the arena for our operation. Our specific task is the class mobilization of the workers against not only the two old parties, but any other capitalist parties which might appear.

If it is contended that this can be done by joining the Wallace movement and supporting Wallace, you have to recognize



what are the conditions for an effective participation in the Wallace party. Condition No. 1 is that you have to support Wallace's candidacy for president. That's the condition. It is absolutely futile to say you will go in to fight against Wallace's candidacy. This is not a movement to organize a new party and then debate as to who will be the candidate and what will be the platform. The candidate is already selected, and his platform is already announced.

Here is an advertisement in today's New York Times, which in one phrase characterizes the whole movement. They are asking for money to support Wallace's candidacy. There is a picture of Wallace. It is signed by the "National Wallace for President Committee," Elmer Benson, Chairman. This advertisement epitomizes the whole movement. How can anyone talk of going in there to fight Wallace, when his weapons are surrendered at the very moment of joining? One can only go in there to support Wallace for president. The "National Wallace for President Committee" makes this very clear in its advertisement.

You are a little bit mistaken when you speak about the "hybrid" nature of the Wallace party. I grant you that in the composition of the forces in the movement there is a certain heterogeneity. But the basic character of the Wallace party is fixed, for this election at least. I'll come again to the question of its future possibilities. For this election its character is fixed. It is a Wallace program. There is nothing "hybrid" about that.

The opposing comrades admit that we would have to pay a price to work inside the Wallace party. The admission price is just simply this: Get in there and rustle votes for Wallace for president. If you won't pay that price you cannot get in. You have no grounds even to haggle, because it is a Wallace for President movement. That is a price we cannot pay, because it is a price of principle. It is against our principles to solicit votes for bourgeois candidates under any circumstances. It vitiates the whole concept of independent working class political action.

It is wrong to assume that the Wallace party has a great future -- that it is certain or nearly certain to become the future labor party. And it is doubly wrong to say, "This is the last chance to get in," or something approximately of that sort. A mass labor party in the United States, by its very nature, couldn't be a closed corporation. Even if we grant the assumption -- and that is granting far too much -- that in its further evolution the Wallace party will develop into a labor party, we can join, leave, or rejoin the party at any time we see fit, provided we have real forces in the unions. Hillman, chief founder of the New York ALP, fell out with the party in the 1942 state election. The Amalgamated withdrew and supported the Democratic candidate against Alfange, the ALP candidate. Then, sometime later, Hillman returned to the ALP and became the head of the party. This presented no difficulties to Hillman because he wielded the

power of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

Influence in mass parties is not determined by how long you have been there, but how much force you have. If we are in the unions and have forces there, we will be a power in any labor party formation that arises, the moment we join it, roughly in proportion to the strength of our forces in the unions and the general propagandistic power of our press.

#### A Split-off from the Labor Movement

We can't be isolated if we are in the unions. That is where the mass of the workers are today; they are not in the Wallace movement. This simple fact deserves some consideration by the comrades who are concerned about isolation. The Wallace movement is not only a split-off from the Democratic Party in the political sense. In the labor sense, it represents a split-off from the American labor movement as it is constituted today. The argument that we have to get into the Wallace movement in order to be with the masses runs into a contradiction. The real mass movement, the official labor movement, is not there. The mass of the workers are against Truman, or at least indifferent to him, but they will not join the Wallace movement over the head of the unions. They see it as a split-off; only the Stalinist-controlled unions -- and they are a small minority -- line up in the Wallace camp.

Some of the comrades here, and I sensed something of the same sentiment in Los Angeles, are enamoured with the idea of getting closer to the Stalinist workers and influencing them. That is all right as far as it goes, but it would be very foolish for us to put all our eggs in that one basket. The Stalinists represent a very small sector of the American labor movement. When the labor party movement really gets under way in this country it isn't going to be a Stalinist movement; it is going to be composed of this great mass of American workers who are standing aside from the Wallace movement, even though not sympathetic to Truman. They want to move officially through their unions, which are not Stalinist unions now and will not be tomorrow.

Comrade Clarke reminded me that in the Thirties the only really militant and aggressive force fighting for industrial unionism was the Trade Union Unity League of the Stalinists. They hollered for it while the AFL bureaucrats remained stagnant and resistant to every idea, every current. Under the pressure of the developing crisis, when the masses really began to move, the industrial movement started right out of the official AFL and by-passed entirely the split-off movement of the Stalinists. Something similar can safely be predicted on the political field.

### The Experience of 1924

We had an experience in 1924 in this country of a third party headed by Senator LaFollette, which was quite different from the Wallace movement in this respect - that it had a much broader base of support in the labor movement. Instead of merely one small sector of the trade union movement supporting it, as is the case with the Wallace party, LaFollette's party was supported officially by the AFL and by the Railroad Brotherhoods, and even by the Socialist Party, which gave up its traditional independence. The Communist Party ran its own candidates and for the first time put itself on the national political map. The Socialist Party traded its independence for the privilege going along with this bourgeois movement supported by the workers. They broke for the first time their traditional principle of no combinations with bourgeois parties and no support of bourgeois parties. That was an important stage in the degeneration of the American Socialist Party. They gave a finger to the LaFollette movement; eventually the bulk of the Social Democrats gave their whole hand to Roosevelt.

This election will probably demonstrate the incapacity of the trade union bureaucracy, even though it is completely united, except for the Stalinist splinter wing, to mobilize the trade union votes for Truman. From present indications, Wallace will get four or five million votes, possible more. Millions of workers, trade unionists, won't vote for either Wallace or Truman -- they will stay home. It will be demonstrated that the labor bureaucracy can no longer corral the labor votes for the Democratic Party. The market value of the Democratic Party will sharply decline. The ruling capitalists are not satisfied merely to have reactionaries in power. They want some political mechanism to control working class votes, especially now that the workers are organized. Out of that new situation may come a split in the Democratic Party and the development of a new bourgeois party, more "radical" and more attractive to the masses.

It can be the Wallace party, or another. Is there anything about Wallace that is too terrible for American capitalism to contemplate? It all depends upon how hard they are pressed, how deep is the crisis. The Wallace program today is no more radical than the Roosevelt program of the Thirties, which rendered great service to American capitalism. We should not accept the theory that this party must, or almost must, become a labor party.

### Impending Developments

In the terrible crisis that is impending in America there are possibilities for all kinds of political manifestations, from the most revolutionary to the most reactionary. We must not get mixed up in bourgeois politics of any kind. We must not let our party become involved in any kind of substitute

for genuine working class action. All of the activities of our party must be compressed within the framework of the class line. We must have in view the perspective of the terrific social crisis that is impending, when things will move at such terrific speed that some of the comrades who are impatient today may be left behind. We must foresee the possibilities of a rapid radicalization of the American working class, which will almost overnight confront us with a genuine class movement on the political field, ten or one hundred times more powerful in its sweep and scope than this movement of Wallace and the Stalinists.

The industrial union movement arose out of an objective need in 1933-34. By 1938 -- four or five years -- a great transformation of the position of the factory workers of America had taken place -- from atomization to organization. Why shouldn't we expect that the political development of the American workers will find its formal organization and expression perhaps even more rapidly, and in a shorter time and on a broader scale? That is what we should count on and look forward to, and accept no substitute in the meantime.

The party must be vaccinated against illusions and a certain conciliation toward bourgeois third partyism. By conciliation I don't mean, of course, that any comrades renounce our class politics. But in their eagerness to get into something, to avoid isolation, they seem willing to support a poor substitute and give it all the benefits of all the doubts. We ought to make a firm decision on the Wallace question. Then we should proceed from there to utilize the party discussion, prior to the convention, to clear up the illusions and conciliaticism toward labor party reformism; and to make more precise our explanations of what we mean by critical support of a prospective labor party, what its limitations are, and what our attitude toward it is.

We have to make it clear to our members that our labor party slogan is by no means a substitute or acceptance of less than we have demanded in our full program, but a weapon of revolutionary agitation. And we have to put the full content of our program into this election campaign. We have to explain over and over again that the whole aim of the labor party slogan is to develop a class line of politics. That is the most important thing to make clear. It is far better to lose a little opportunity here and there for a tactical experiment, than to engender any confusion in the minds of the party members as to what we are really aiming at.

#### Lessons from the Bolsheviks

The Bolsheviks, who were our teachers, were very adept at maneuvers. But as Trotsky explained in his great work -- The Criticism of the Draft Program -- the Bolsheviks

didn't begin with maneuvers; they began with intransigence, with granite hardness, and educated their cadres so that they grew up to the ability to carry out maneuvers without losing themselves in them. This great work of Trotsky's was directed against the Stalinists, who had taken out of Leninism its maneuverist tactic at the expense of principled firmness. But the Bolsheviks never tried to solve fundamental problems -- that is to say, problems of class antagonisms -- by means of maneuvers. That cannot be done. We know where these maneuvers of the Stalinists, which violated class principles, finally landed them.

The maneuvers of the Bolsheviks were always within class lines. I don't know of any effort made by the Bolsheviks to maneuver within the parties of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary their whole tactical line, maneuverist as it was, was to make a sharp cleavage between the working class organizations and those of the bourgeoisie. What was the meaning of the great slogan, "All Power to the Soviets?" What was the meaning of the slogan, "Down with the Ten Capitalist Ministers?" Or, later, Trotsky's slogan for France: "A Blum-Cachin Government!" And still later the slogan: "A CP-SP-CGT Government!" They were all class slogans designed to split the workers' parties entirely away from all collaboration with bourgeois politicians.

What was the meaning of Trotsky's irreconcilable struggle against the people's front combinations? Here in one "people's front" was the whole working class of France -- the Stalinists, the Socialists, the trade unions, and they included even the anarcho-syndicalists, plus the bourgeois party of the "Radical Socialists." Trotsky said, "All very fine except for one spoonful of tar that spoils the whole barrel of honey. The bourgeois party. Break with them and make a united front of workers' organizations." He took the same position on Spain. What does all this rich instruction mean for us, translated into American terms? The very least it means is this: If our teachers opposed any collaboration with any section of the bourgeoisie even for single actions, they would most certainly reject such collaboration in a common party.

Here, as in Europe, the Stalinist policy is not the workers' united front, and not a labor party in the sense that we understand it, to develop the independent class action of the workers. It is people's front combinations for pressure on the bourgeoisie for momentary concessions to the Soviet bureaucracy at the expense of the class interests of the workers. We have to fight that and by no means join it or take such a position where we could be considered as giving partial support. We are against bourgeois parties from A. to Z.

I understand some comrades were not satisfied with the

explanation I made in my presentation as to what a bourgeois party is and how the class character of a party is determined. I said, it is not determined by the class which supports the party at the moment, but rather by the class which the party supports; that is to say, by its program. That is the basic meaning of a political program, the support of one class rule or another. The class character of a party is also determined by its actual practice. We would not take the formal program of any party by itself, separated from its daily policy and practice, as the sole criterion. Another factor to be considered is the composition of a party. A bourgeois party of the classical type is easily recognized because it has all three of these qualities -- it is bourgeois in program, in practice, and in composition.

### The British Labor Party

But then the question is raised -- the fact that the question is raised shows some confusion on the question of the labor party -- comrades ask: "Well, what is the British Labor Party?" If we judge it by composition alone, we must say it is a "workers' party," for it is squarely based on the trade union movement of Great Britain. But this designation "workers' party" must be put in quotation marks as soon as we examine the program and practice of the party. To be sure, the formal program and the holiday speeches of the leaders mutter something about socialism, but in practice the British Labor Party is the governing party of British imperialism. It is the strongest pillar holding up this shaky edifice. That makes it a bourgeois party in the essence of the matter, doesn't it? And, since 1914, haven't we always considered the social democratic parties of Europe as bourgeois parties? And haven't we characterized Stalinism as an agency of world imperialism?

Our fundamental attitude towards such parties is the same as our attitude toward a bourgeois party of the classical type -- that is an attitude of irreconcilable opposition. But the composition of such parties gives them a certain distinctive character which enables, and even requires, us to make a different tactical approach to them. If they are composed of workers, and even more, if they are based on the trade unions and subject to their control, we offer to make a united front with them for a concrete struggle against the capitalists, or even join them under certain conditions, with the aim of promoting our program of "class against class." We try to make them an arena for revolutionary agitation. We try to push them into class actions against the bourgeoisie. But we do not paint them as genuine organs of the working class in the political sense. That would be a great mistake. It is especially important for us to keep these considerations clearly in mind with the perspective of an American labor party.

If there is one thing that is fairly certain, it is that

the trade unions in this country will be obliged to go into politics on their own account, and most likely they will first experiment with a labor party. We may be confronted, in the first stage of this great development, with the attempt to form a labor party of the British type. It is by no means excluded that the present bureaucracy, or another, more adept at demagogy but no less conservative in practice, could form and head such a party at its inception.

If our members are led to think that a labor party per se is the goal of our endeavors, then our party can easily lapse into reformism and lose its reason for existence. No, we must define our attitude precisely in advance of such a possible development and permit no misunderstanding. We would oppose such a "bourgeois workers' party" as ruthlessly as any other bourgeois party, but our tactical approach would be different. We would most likely join such a party -- if we have strength in the unions they couldn't keep us out -- and under certain conditions we would give its candidates critical support in the elections. But "critical support" of a reformist labor party must be correctly understood. It does not mean reconciliation with reformism. Critical support means opposition. It does not mean support with criticism in quotation marks, but rather criticism with support in quotation marks.

It would be a good thing to read over again Lenin's advice to the British communists back in 1920. He explained that they ought to support the labor party candidates for Parliament. But he said, "Support them in order to force them to take office so that the masses will learn by experience the futility and treachery of their program, and get through with them." It was not solidarity with the labor reformists but hostility which dictated the tactic that Lenin recommended. I think his advice still holds good. The labor party is not our party and will not be our party unless it adopts our program. Otherwise it is an arena in which we work for our program.

And if we take such a critical and hostile attitude toward a "genuine" reformist labor party, one based on the unions and controlled by the unions, what attitude should we take towards this Wallace-Stalinist set-up? That is not the beginning, or the promise, or even the pretense of being a labor party. There is no ground to give it any kind of support, "critical" or otherwise.

### The Danger of Disorientation

The comrades have emphasized that they do not advocate the politics of the "lesser evil," and I do not mean to say that they do. But that is the possible implication of their position. And what is only implied in the position of party leaders can be taken literally and exaggerated by the party

ranks. That is what we are worried about. The carefully guarded formulations of the Chicago leaders can be "freely translated" to authorize such concessions for participation in this movement, that party members can lose their bearings and a Wallaceite wing can make its appearance in the Socialist Workers Party. I would consider that the greatest disgrace -- and the greatest loss. All the little temporary advantages you might gain by supporting the Wallace formation would weigh like a feather in the scale against the loss of a few score of new members who, instead of becoming Bolsheviks, are turned into confused Wallaceites. There is the danger of disorienting our ranks by maneuvering around with this movement.

It has been argued here that "we must go through the experiences with the workers." That is a very good formula, provided you do not make it universal. We go with the workers only through those experiences which have a class nature. We go with them through the experiences of strikes, even though we may think a given strike untimely. We may even go with the workers through the experience of putting a reformist labor party in office, provided it is a real labor party and subject to certain pressures of the workers, in order that they may learn from their experience that reformism is not the correct program for the working class.

But we do not go through the experience of class collaboration with the workers. There we draw the line. We did not go through the experience of the workers when they supported the imperialist war. We drew back when they went through the experience of people's fronts in Europe. We stood on the side and we told them they were wrong. We did not compromise ourselves. If another man takes poison, you do not have to join him in the experiment. Just tell him it is no good. But don't offer to prove it by your personal example.

Is the Wallace movement the future labor party? I believe this is the core of the Chicago contention. They consider it, if not the inevitable development, at least the most probable. If I have correctly understood them, that is a fair statement of their position. This assumption is arbitrary and unfounded. Of the numerous variants of development that can be conceived of, this is the most unlikely. Let us consider a number of other, and more likely, possibilities.

#### Possible Future Developments

Supposing we join this outfit, and give up the idea of putting up our own presidential candidate, what will we do if Wallace makes a deal with the Democratic Party and decides not to run after all? We have heard the answer: "We will go ahead in spite of Wallace." I would like to see a Wallace party without Wallace in the 1948 elections.



It would be a sick looking thing. It could not exist. It would fade and disappear. If Wallace were to say tomorrow, "I am through with this whole business," the "third party" would collapse like a pricked balloon and nobody could blow it up again.

What would we do in such an event -- look around for another Wallace? It will be a sad day for us if our party members get it into their heads they can run after any demagogue who talks radical and promises to cure all evils, and forget that our task is the class struggle that cannot be transcended by any maneuvers. Maneuvers at the best can only be subordinate and auxiliary to the hard slugging for a principled line.

Anybody who thinks Wallace is incapable of making a deal with the Democratic Party, should be reminded that he still has one foot in that camp. He has stated and reiterated that his demand is the reformation of the Democratic Party, and he repeated it the other day as he got off the plane in New York. He said again that he will not go back to the Democratic Party unless it becomes a "peace party" and unless Truman gives up the idea of peacetime conscription.

It is not likely that they will succeed in making an agreement in time for the elections in 1948. But it is possible. As for Wallace's big point -- military conscription -- opposition to that is not the monopoly of Wallace and the Stalinists. Taft is against conscription at the present time. Hanson Baldwin, military expert of the New York Times, has written extensively against the program of universal military training on practical grounds. MacArthur is reported to be against it too. When you see how really narrow is the tactical difference between Wallace and the Democrats and how modest are the demands he makes on the Democratic Party, you should not exclude the possibility of a deal and the bursting of the whole bubble which seems so attractive to you at the moment.

A second possible variant: The Wallace party can get a resounding defeat in the election. Truman can make some more radical concessions to the trade union bureaucracy for purposes of the election. Relationships with the Soviet Union may undergo a change in such a way as to scare off the fellow travelers who support the third party now. The vote can be reduced to a very small one and the party end in dissimulation, like the LaFollette movement in 1924.

A third variant: The party can get a big vote. The situation can change in the other direction. Truman can still further antagonize and alienate the trade unionists. More votes for Wallace. If prices of grain and wheat drop, the farmer is going to look for someone to vote for. So Wallace might get such a big vote as would attract to him more of the Democratic Party politicians who want to leave the sinking ship. It is reported that Senator Taylor, who

has been on the fence, has just about made up his mind to accept nomination for vice-president. Many others might flock over to Wallace and it might develop into a bigger party. Why must we assume that it will become a labor party in that case? It will become more and more a Wallace party. It may develop as a full-blown radical bourgeois party with enough support and votes to control a bloc in Congress and demand a place in the administration.

#### Prospects of a Truman-Stalin Deal

Another fourth possible variant. Suppose Stalin makes a deal with Truman between now and election day. The Stalinists now supporting Wallace would immediately decide that it would be wrong after all to "split the progressive forces of the Democratic Party," and call for a people's front for Truman. Is that excluded? I do not predict it, but it is certainly not excluded. These things have happened before.

There are powerful forces in the bourgeois world speaking in favor of such a temporary arrangement with Stalin. They are not less imperialistic or anti-Soviet. They have a difference over method and tempo. David Lawrence, an influential journalistic spokesman of big capital, who writes for the ultra-conservative New York Sun, advocates a deal with Stalin. For months Walter Lippman has been arguing in the New York Herald-Tribune for some kind of arrangement. Stalin badly needs it, and has already put out feelers, according to many reports. Churchill's threat to throw the atom bomb was coupled with the proposal: call Stalin to a secret meeting and offer him a deal, or else. Suppose such a deal is made before the election. What happens to the Wallace party?

The fifth variant: The labor bureaucrats fail to mobilize the unions for Truman. The policy of supporting the Democratic Party -- which can't win anyway -- is discredited. Follows a tremendous impulse from below, reflecting itself in a mass demand for an independent labor party of the workers. Will the bureaucrats fight to the last ditch against the sentiment for a labor party? Some may, but not all. If the sentiment of the masses becomes so strong, under the double pressure of the resounding defeat of Truman and the acceleration of the economic crisis, which always stimulates the political activity of the workers because they feel themselves stymied on the economic field, what is to prevent a big section of the official bureaucracy from plumping them for a labor party? The launching of such a party by the official labor movement, or a large section of it, would cut the ground from under Wallace's labor support.

A sixth variant -- splits in both bourgeois parties. Where is it written that the Republican Party is united forever? If the crisis is deep enough it can produce a

rift in the GOP, a general shake-up of the whole parliamentary system, and a new party merging the so-called progressive Republicans and the New Deal Democrats, etc., while the Tory wing of the Republican Party unites with the Southern Bourbons in another set-up.

I have mentioned six variants, which are all possible. I am not predicting any one of them. My purpose is to show how narrow and unfounded is the assumption of the Chicago comrades, who see only one line of development, and that in my opinion the least likely of all -- the evolution of the Wallace party into a labor party based on the unions.

### Local Tactical Experiments

Now I come to the question of tactics toward local segments of the Wallace movement, which occupied the attention of some comrades here. I was sorry to hear it, because it is rather pointless to talk about tactics when you are confronted with differences on the fundamental problem. If we settle the fundamental line, not only here but in the party ranks, the tactical application should present no difficulties. The more firmly we settle the principle question, the more scope we can allow ourselves for tactics. Tactics are nothing but finger work. If your arm is broken, your fingers are not worth much.

The party must be educated and re-educated on the meaning of class politics, which excludes any support of any bourgeois candidate, and requires even the most critical attitude toward a labor party when we are supporting it. The task is to advance the revolutionary program and build the revolutionary party under all conditions. When that is clearly understood and firmly settled, then we can take up local tactical questions and easily dispose of them.

Can the party fractions work in some local units of the Wallace movement? Why not? I think it's entirely permissible, on the condition that this is understood as guerrilla warfare which must serve and not hinder the main campaigns. We will have to consider the possibilities concretely in each case. All around the country these local formations differ somewhat from the national party, which is cut and dried as to candidate and program. We have to consider that, and I think the Political Committee will be sufficiently alert to take advantage of any opportunities to fish around in local movements, especially those which have not yet settled their general character, providing the basic line is laid down and understood by all. That is the necessary condition for fruitful tactical work.

We must allow nothing to blur the main line, or to divert the energy of our comrades from our own campaign.

We have to bear in mind that we are going out for the first time in a national election campaign with a very small membership and very little money. It will really require a heroic expenditure of effort and energy to carry it through. We must not put our irons in too many fires. We must not lose sight of the main thing. This is far more important than local tactical maneuvers. The campaign for our own presidential candidates is a thousand times more important than any tactical successes we might have on a local scale. If we can carry this presidential campaign through, it can mean the establishment of the Socialist Workers Party on the national political scene.

We have sanctioned an extensive tactical experiment in the Independent Progressive Party of California (IPPC). Although the Political Committee adopted a motion condemning the Wallace movement nationally, we told the California comrades that we did not consider their work in the IPPC inconsistent with our national policy, provided they conducted their work in such a way as to prepare a break on the issue of the Wallace candidacy.

Our comrades decided to go into this movement before it had adopted its program and determined its candidate, to counterpose to the Stalinist people's front line, the line of a completely independent labor party with independent labor candidates. In our opinion this tactical experiment on a local scale is permissible if they understand that it cannot be kept up after the program and the candidates are selected. We must recognize also that the direction of the IPP movement in California is not to the left, but to the right. That will be crowned by their endorsement of Wallace. By that single action the IPP of California, up to now nominally independent, will be formally absorbed into the national Wallace movement. We will have to take our stand accordingly. So the work in the IPPC out there has to have a time limit put to it.

It can't be repeated too often -- the Wallace movement has nothing amorphous about it so far as the candidate and the program is concerned. It is a fixed package. It is a Wallace party and a Wallace program.

#### The Main Line Must Be Clear

Some comrades have spoken in favor of running our own candidates and working in the local units of the Wallace party too. It is a mistake to think we can decide that at a Plenum. Let the Plenum lay down a clear, definite line, the main line, and then let us take up these subordinate questions concretely where the opportunity exists. Fraction work in the local units of the Wallace movement does not contravene the general line provided it does not interfere with it or become a substitute for it. It is a practical question as to whether we can afford it, whether

we have sufficient forces for the double task. There's the rub. It is also a question in each case whether the comrades involved are steeled and educated enough to carry out a tactic like that and not get lost.

Our main line in The Militant must be sharpened, the line on the Wallace movement and on the Stalinists. Every trace of ambiguity or conciliationism has to be eliminated. We have to attack the Wallace movement and expose it for what it is. We must denounce the Stalinists for once more betraying the independent class party of the workers and selling it out to bourgeois politicians, in the hope of exerting a little pressure in Washington in the interest of Kremlin diplomacy. That is the best approach to the Stalinist workers. Not the slightest trace of conciliationism toward perfidious Stalinism! Our heaviest weapon right there is an attack on this Stalinist policy as an American adaptation of people's frontism. When you meet the Stalinists in the unions -- or wherever you meet them -- attack the treacherous policy of the CP.

The problem of problems before us today is to find a means of arousing the party members for the fullest concentration on the Presidential campaign. After twenty years of struggle as a Trotskyist nucleus, we have reached that point where we resolutely decide to put our own presidential candidates in the field. That is the clear word the party must hear from the Plenum. The convention must be, above everything else, the mobilization of the party for our own election campaign.