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DRAFT POLITICAL RESOLUTION

(Submitted by the Political Committee)

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1. In the Theses on the American Revolution adopted at the 1946 convention soon after World War II the party anticipated the cold war with the warning: "In their mad drive to conquer and enslave the entire world the American monopolists are today preparing war against the Soviet Union." But the bid for world supremacy comes too late, the Theses added. "U.S. capitalism can no more escape from the revolutionary consequences of world capitalist decay than the older European capitalist powers." Whatever the exact course of history may be, the imperialist drive toward war "will not cancel out the socialist alternative to capitalism but only pose it more sharply." Subsequent events confirm this analysis.

2. By means of the cold war American imperialism sought to clamp an economic boycott on the Soviet Union and to surround it with an iron ring of military bases while preparing a full-scale attack. In time the imperialist encirclement was breached by the social upheavals in the world: the Yugoslav revolution, the Chinese revolution, the colonial revolution and the expansion of Soviet property forms into Eastern Europe. In addition the Soviet Union was strengthened by advances in scientific, technological and industrial potential to a point where it now challenges the military superiority of imperialism.

3. At the present stage, with neither the imperialist powers nor the Soviet bloc countries holding decisive advantage, the world power struggle remains stalemated. The Kremlin bureaucracy has responded to this situation by launching a new campaign for a status quo deal with imperialism in order to free itself for action against rebellious moves by the discontented masses. American imperialism, faced with increasing pressures to slow down its war timetable, cannot easily reject the Kremlin's peace overtures outright. Some form of temporary, uneasy truce must therefore exist, be it with or without formal diplomatic confirmation.

4. Whatever diplomatic accommodations may be made in the stalemate, a new era of capitalist rule in the imperialist sector and Stalinist overlordship in the Soviet bloc is excluded. It is precisely against the status quo that the masses of the world are rebelling, against capitalist exploitation and oppression, as well as against the authoritarian bureaucracy in the Soviet orbit. Among the world masses, groping intuitively toward socialism, there will be repeated outbreaks of struggle against the status quo. These mass interventions will frustrate diplomatic equilibrium. Furthermore, American imperialism is driven toward war by economic contradictions, even though every successful revolutionary struggle makes the launching of war more difficult.

5. Until capitalism is abolished everywhere, above all in the United States, mankind will face the danger of nuclear war. American imperialism will continue the cold-war arms buildup, the maintenance of extensive military alliances and far-flung military bases. The American people will face heavy taxes, a mounting public debt and the consequent inflationary pressures. People's needs will remain subordinated generally to diversion of public funds for war purposes.

6. The capitalist government can be expected to keep the witch-hunt laws and decrees on the books. But the recent setbacks to imperialist foreign policy indicate possible easing of the pressures of national political reaction. Critics of the war policy and of the governmental neglect of social needs may anticipate a more ready response within the mass movement. Class tensions may be expected to increase, reducing the effectiveness of the witch hunt against radicals, particularly as the world contradictions of capitalism further sap the economic foundations of American imperialism.

7. Since the depression of the Thirties the American economy has depended increasingly on the basic prop of government spending for war and preparations for war. Within this framework relative economic stability has been maintained through a series of boom-recession cycles:

a. The first postwar boom received stimulus from the pent up consumer demands and reconstruction tasks arising from World War II. Saturation of this general market and a temporary decline in military spending led to the 1949 recession. Soon the economy got a fresh boost from the Korean war, only to fall back into the 1953-54 slump after the Korean truce. Since then boom tendencies have depended largely upon a qualitative increase in arms production and upon new capital investment for plant and equipment. The capital involved in plant expansion has derived generally from record corporation profits rebates in corporate taxes and government-financed enlargement of private facilities.

b. By 1957 a trend toward leveling off in new capital investment had developed. This trend, accompanied by an inventory rise indicating near-saturation of the consumer market, brought on the 1957-58 recession. Continued sluggishness in durable goods production has since impeded the new economic upturn. Durable goods output reached a peak in December 1956 and began its decline some nine months before soft goods production reached a pre-recession high. After a long slump beginning in mid-1957 soft goods output climbed back to its previous high by the end of 1958. But durable goods production entered 1959 still considerably below the December 1956 peak.

8. Capitalist production is nearing a point where excess capacity imposes serious limitations on further investment for expanded productivity, thereby losing in ability to stimulate boom conditions. Further loss in boom potential results from restriction of the world market. International tendencies toward capitalist economic crisis, inter-imperialist trade rivalries and Soviet penetration of the world market operate to contract U.S. trade abroad. This trend is reflected in a drop of about one-sixth in 1958 export trade as compared with 1957.

9. At a time when arms production assumes ever-greater importance as an economic prop, advances in military technology narrow the economic effects of government spending for war purposes. Relatively few guided missiles armed with nuclear warheads begin to supersede manned aircraft, tanks, artillery and other weapons

previously required in vast quantities. Arms production tends to center on a smaller segment of manufacture, thrusting some industries toward greater reliance on the normal consumer market. The armed forces are evolving toward basic components of skilled technicians. Consequent reductions in total military personnel add to the civilian labor force seeking jobs and accelerate the growth of chronic unemployment in industry.

10. Although the fundamental course of the economy remains screened by cyclical ups and downs, a severe crisis of overproduction accompanied by catastrophic unemployment is in the making. Each periodic recession tends to go deeper as the booms decline in momentum, leaving more pronounced residual effects from each downturn. The 1957-58 slump was the worst of the three postwar recessions and the current economic upturn is the most sluggish of the postwar booms.

11. The trend toward severe economic crisis affects ever-larger sections of the working class. As the last recession began unemployment stood over a million higher than at the start of the previous slump. Subsequent layoffs were greater than usual in volume and joblessness continues to run high despite a new rise in production. Conservative government figures indicate the country entered 1959 with over four million workers, at least 6 percent of the labor force, still unemployed. Meanwhile rapid extension of automation continues to whittle down employment and swell the jobless rolls. A steady rise in chronic unemployment has thus become a distinct feature of the American economy.

12. Layoffs loom as a continuing threat to all. When they occur family income is generally reduced to utterly inadequate jobless benefits with the danger these benefits will be exhausted before a job is again available. Economic security becomes further endangered from inflationary attrition on mass purchasing power and from heavy taxes. With federal spending, primarily of an inflationary military character, accounting for some 20 percent of the gross national product, the consumer price index climbs high and higher. Further price rises are implicit in new government spending of some \$11 billion to help overcome the last slump. New state and city taxes are being added to the growing tax burden.

13. For many workers the tenuous economic security of the postwar period has become gravely disrupted and the class in general has come to feel less and less secure. Sharpening class antagonisms leading to more intense class struggles are indicated in the changing objective situation. In time the workers can be expected to break through the present limitations in class policy imposed upon them by prosperous conditions.

14. During the radicalization of the Thirties mobilization of the workers as an independent class force stopped short at the union level. Independent political forms like PAC and the ALP were misused to support capitalist politicians. Organized labor remained under capitalist political domination within a multi-class coalition. Together with the long period of relative economic stability that followed, this political entrapment served to permeate the labor

movement with class collaborationism. The labor bureaucracy grew in strength. During the long witch hunt it consolidated its dictatorial rule over the rank and file. Radicals were purged from the unions, oppositions knocked down and union democracy suppressed generally. Strike authority was taken from the workers. Collective bargaining was weakened through bureaucratic concessions to the bosses far outweighing concessions won by labor. The bureaucracy joined with the capitalists to discipline rebel workers fighting to defend their class interests.

15. Class collaborationist norms are now beginning to give way to class struggle moods as the capitalist contradictions deepen and employer concessions become more difficult to obtain. Relations between the workers and bureaucrats are changing as pressures for union democracy mount in the ranks. An upward curve in labor militancy is reflected in recent strike struggles. Solidarity of employed and unemployed as concretely manifested in Detroit foreshadows a trend toward the 30-40 demand in industry and toward general social demands upon the capitalist government. A further rise in militancy can be expected as the developing capitalist crisis unfolds.

16. The capitalists are preparing an offensive intended to weaken organized labor and force a reduction in mass living standards. To preserve high-level profits under conditions of declining production the employers and their government are mounting an attack on the alleged "wage-price" inflationary spiral. Employers manifest growing unity in strikes and lockouts. Union demands are met by employer counter-demands calculated to impair labor conditions. Blows are dealt organized labor through decentralization of industry. Behind the smokescreen of a probe into bureaucratic corruption in the unions, the government is preparing a bipartisan campaign to enact harsher anti-labor laws. Although the union bureaucrats can't be trusted to stand resolutely against the attack, they won't find it easy to capitulate as cravenly as they did to the Taft-Hartley law. The union campaign against "Right-to-Work" laws in the recent elections indicates considerable political friction will arise in 1960 over attempts to further impair labor's rights.

17. Confusion among the workers as to the real aims of the government's labor probe will begin to disappear as the anti-labor drive hits home in the unions. Recognition will grow that to win their democratic rights and safeguard their class interests the workers must defend themselves against both the union bureaucracy and the capitalist government. Bureaucratic corruption will be seen to stem from the greater leadership crime of class collaboration, for which the workers pay in speedup, economic insecurity and the danger of nuclear war.

18. Union bureaucrats of the Hoffa-Beck type who became the initial targets of the McClellan probe are notorious for their thievery, gangsterism and other corrupt practices in union office. But their removal is the internal business of the unions, not a matter to be left to capitalist politicians whose aim is to attack the unions themselves on the pretext of fighting bureaucratic corruption. When other bureaucrats, foolishly hoping to purchase

immunity, support the McClellan attack they commit a crime against labor. However in the act of capitulation they create a new factor inside the unions. A differentiation begins within the bureaucracy, serving to split its monolithic front against the rank and file. On the negative side the resultant expulsion of some unions from the AFL-CIO weakens labor's united power. On the positive side the rupture of the bureaucratic monolith strengthens the fight for union democracy.

19. Although the bureaucratic grip over the unions begins to loosen, internal rebellion has not mounted to the point where militants can push forward without serious danger of bureaucratic reprisal. Action can be contemplated only with assurance of adequate mass support locally and with due regard to the national situation. Premature action can still lead to victimization and the loss of later opportunities for successful intervention. Each concrete union situation will require careful study to determine where it is realistic to play a limited role and also to avoid going off half-cocked. In every case policy must be closely attuned to the actual relation of forces between rebel workers and union bureaucrats. Fraction decisions must be reached in close consultation with the party. The main union work continues to center on propaganda advancing the program of transitional demands and the labor party perspective. These propaganda efforts, under conditions of sharpening class antagonisms and growing demands for union democracy, will help prepare the way for a left wing in the unions oriented toward a class-struggle program.

20. Possibilities exist for activity in support of the struggle for Negro equality. Contradictions between the pressures of the Negro people and the dilatory policies of the capitalist politicians are sharpening. Parallel antagonisms arising from growing mass militancy within the general confines of conservative NAACP policy indicate the need for alertness to opportunities whereby Negro militants may be helped to break through the legalistic boundaries of present NAACP policy and advance toward mass action. Contact with wider circles made in regroupment work now serve to reinforce activity of this kind. In addition persistent efforts should be made to win labor support of the struggles. Our general propaganda should strongly emphasize the need for independent labor political action in alliance with the oppressed Negro people.

21. Mass aspirations for changes in governmental policy are reflected in the election of big Democratic majorities to Congress. These aspirations will be frustrated generally and close attention to the Democratic record will provide valuable material for labor party propaganda. Study of labor's campaigns against "Right-to-Work" laws in the recent elections will further help to enrich our propaganda, as will careful analysis of the political characteristics inherent in the developing unemployed movement. Although we do not at present visualize a labor party development in 1960, our propaganda will help us to appeal for support to a socialist ticket. Preparation of a socialist election campaign in 1960 will require both careful attention to developments in the mass movement and continued participation in the regroupment process.

22. The crisis of Stalinism provides an opening for the Socialist Workers Party to gain new strength on the field of political action. From the outset, however, our capacity to pose basic issues in concrete class-struggle terms has been severely limited. With mass action at ebb, regroupment activity has centered primarily on programmatic issues raised through united electoral campaigns based on radical elements. Dissatisfaction had been growing in the Communist Party milieu since the dissolution of the Progressive Party. When the regroupment process started the dissidents made their first break with CP policy for this country on the issue of socialist electoral activity. They took this path because in the United States independent political action remains central to the unresolved historic problems. Every form of radicalization within the labor movement becomes essentially a struggle for independent class political action.

23. The relation of forces within the radical movement is shifting to the advantage of revolutionary socialism. The Communist Party has been reduced to a hollow shell of its former self, but it will remain a dangerous opponent so long as the bureaucratic fountainhead of Stalinism holds power in the Kremlin. Fusion trends within social democratic circles -- into which the Shachtmanites have become absorbed -- represent a coalition within a stagnant, pro-imperialist milieu. Former Shachtmanite youth retaining revolutionary vitality have come to the SWP.

24. Our revolutionary-socialist tendency has gained most from the regroupment shakeup. A section of the former CP periphery and a limited number of former CP members have moved toward political collaboration with us. Although comparatively modest, our recruitment has been important. Our positive and flexible intervention in the regroupment process has pretty much broken down the wall of hostility against Trotskyism. We have experienced a measure of initiative within the radical movement and of increased attractive power as the decisive organized force pressing for socialist action perspectives.

25. At the outset of the Stalinist crisis we offered regroupment with the dissidents. We sought fraternal political discussion with them and advocated united action on specific issues where we found common agreement. Cooperation increased on issues like civil liberties but the initial trend was mainly toward symposium discussions, symbolized by organization of the American Forum for Socialist Education. The most responsive people soon became dissatisfied with mere discussion and new possibilities arose for socialist activity. The shift culminated in the 1958 united socialist election campaigns in some states and greater support to SWP tickets in others.

26. In the united campaigns we could put forward only part of our program. But this did not diminish their value as a means to draw broader socialist forces into positive action on the key issue facing American labor -- independent class political action as against support to capitalist parties. Former Communist Party supporters were mobilized in direct opposition to CP policy in an electoral coalition with revolutionary socialists. That is an accomplishment of first-rate importance.

27. Those who have moved toward political collaboration with us manifest agreement on some class-struggle issues but they also retain differences on other questions. Some state they don't think the single fact of appearance on a capitalist ticket should disqualify a candidate from socialist support. Illusions remain about a capitalist third party of the Wallace variety. Lack of class-struggle pressure retards their reeducation in class politics. They cling to their former positions to a pronounced degree on such issues as support to the struggles of the Soviet workers against the bureaucratic caste and the form the conflict must ultimately assume, namely, the political revolution.

28. In our united actions with people coming from the CP milieu we have sought to emphasize points of agreement rather than dismiss collaboration because of remaining differences. We joined in actions with them on agreed political issues and hope to influence them further toward full revolutionary positions. We have seen in the Stalinist crisis a chance to strengthen revolutionary socialism and advance the fight for revolutionary leadership of the next wave of mass radicalization.

29. A new opportunity to strengthen and revitalize revolutionary socialism arises from changes taking place among the youth of the country. For years all radical tendencies have subsisted primarily on older cadres. Worker and student youth -- bribed by capitalist prosperity, corrupted by the union bureaucracy, misled by Stalinists and social democrats -- have long been deflected from the revolutionary movement. Winning the youth has become the real problem of the day for revolutionists.

30. With prosperity on the wane the ruling class and its labor lackeys enjoy less advantage in the struggle for the youth. Restiveness grows on the campus. Young workers begin to experience the ravages of capitalism in industry. Above all the youth, who as draft-bait are much concerned about war and militarization, want clear answers to the profound issues facing the world. Interest in radicalism is on the rise among students who are usually the first to reflect such trends. In time radical moods will increase among worker youth as well. With Stalinism standing exposed and the social democrats impotent, the regroupment policy helps to channel the youth toward revolutionary socialism.

31. Our accomplishments in regroupment work have set the stage for stepping up counterposition of our views to those of the Stalinists and social democrats, advanced in interrelation with the propaganda approach to the mass movement. Among the central issues involved are: The burning need for independent socialist and working-class political action. Revolutionary opposition to imperialist foreign policy. The socialist answer to capitalist economic crisis. Workers democracy, first within the revolutionary party, the highest and most conscious form of class organization through which the class leadership must be forged; then within the mass organizations, particularly the unions as a basic instrument of organized class power; finally within the workers states as the indispensable prerequisite for the advance to a socialist society. Our aim is to set forth, publicize and propagandize the tasks facing the American socialist movement.

32. We cannot bank on any immediate basic change within the mass movement, nor can 1959 be expected to provide scope for united radical action to the extent possible in the 1958 elections. Limited means for concrete actions are available through civil liberties cases and through work in support of the Negro struggle. Only a few off-year elections will offer minor openings for 1959 election campaigns. Some degree of activity may be possible through the developing unemployed movement and we should neglect no realistic openings for work in this sphere. The least we can and should do in the unions is to lay propaganda foundations for future work as we closely follow developments. Among our most vital tasks will be expansion of the press circulation to help lay the political basis for future left-wing activities in the mass movement.

33. At present the 1960 presidential elections loom as the next major political action. A united socialist presidential ticket is not excluded but a complex of factors make it an uncertain prospect. In preparation for 1960 the SWP should make it clear that, except for an unexpected labor party development, we will work toward putting a broad socialist ticket (on acceptable lines) in the race. But if this does not prove possible we will be prepared to run our own candidates.

34. Looking back across our history the party can be proud of its ability to respond to the revolutionary tasks imposed by the rise of Stalinism and proud of its capacity to respond to the revolutionary opportunities presented by the crisis of Stalinism. In the 1928 split the main job was to expose Stalinist revisionism and treachery, primarily through literary activity. Important revolutionary-socialist cadres were forged but with the CP strong and on the ascendancy our growth was restricted. During the Thirties our flexible response to new opportunities enabled us to steer in a revolutionary direction left wingers who had been moving toward the social democrats and to sink a few roots in the mass movement. Meanwhile we were able gradually to refute Stalinist pretensions as revolutionary socialists. Then came World War II, a limited postwar upsurge and the long witch hunt. We were thrust into a holding operation, striving to maintain our forces and resources, conducting propaganda work, looking for an opportunity to turn outward as a party of action. Now we begin to see new chances to break out of isolation, through the regroupment shakeup in an immediate sense and through opportunities now in the making within the mass movement.

35. After 30 years objective events have come powerfully to our aid in exposing the theoretical bankruptcy of Stalinism and attacking its political treachery. Khrushchev's repudiation of Stalin shattered the ideological structure of the Communist Party, discredited it politically and morally. Trotskyism thereby won fresh vindication in its long, principled struggle against Stalinism and gained immeasurably in ideological, political and moral capital. We are no longer at the disadvantage before Stalinism that operated against us during the radicalization of the Thirties.

36. Stalinism has fallen into a fundamental crisis which must inevitably lead to abolition of bureaucratic rule and establishment of workers democracy in the Soviet bloc. Before the final victory of the workers there will most likely be partial victories and

partial defeats; ebbs in the struggle accompanied by temporary re-stabilization of bureaucratic rule; intensification of the molecular processes followed by new mass explosions leading to new partial victories. Out of the struggle of contending forces -- conditioned at each stage by the given world objective conjuncture -- will emerge a mass revolutionary party capable of smashing the bureaucratic regime.

37. Until the Kremlin bureaucracy is crushed by political revolution the CP will remain a rival against whom we must wage unremitting combat. The temporary restabilization of bureaucratic rule reflected in the character of the twenty-first congress of the CPSU gives Stalinism a further lease on life. But the same congress also revealed a deep factional rift within the hard-pressed bureaucracy. Promises of further concessions were felt necessary to appease the restive masses. These manifestations indicate that the life expectancy of the American CP as a Kremlin agency grows shorter. Our prompt and continuing intervention in the regroupment shakeup helps to forestall any CP resurgence and to speed its further decline.

38. No signs are visible of a prospective organizational merger in the revolutionary socialist regroupment, but our regroupment policy remains valid as an approach to dissidents moving away from the CP milieu. Even in a mass radicalization the regroupment policy would still hold good. Limited united action with people coming toward greater agreement with us would help unite them in struggle against the union bureaucracy and also help them develop full revolutionary-socialist positions. In addition to people first approaching radicalism, we may assume that some present CP members and ex-CP members are yet to be won in the coming labor upsurge. In fact socialist accomplishments on the mass arena tomorrow are profoundly tied to the regroupment efforts of today.

39. The actual trend toward revolutionary-socialist regroupment has taken place through united actions between ourselves and unaffiliated radicals but the ultimate organizational form of the expanded revolutionary-socialist movement remains to be seen. We are not organizational fetishists; we ask only that whatever eventually emerges meets the test of revolutionary principles. To those searching for a means to conduct organized socialist activity in the meantime, we extend an invitation to join the SWP. In our party they will find both an instrument for organized political action and the means to work along principled lines for the broadest possible regroupment of principled revolutionists.

March 3, 1959.