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# TRADE UNIONS IN THE WAR EMERGENCY

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## *The Basis Role of the Trade Unions in American National Unity*

**N**AZI Germany can be defeated only by a united American people, fighting jointly with Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., China and other anti-Hitler peoples. All the classes in the United States—capitalists, farmers, city middle classes, workers—have a common and most urgent need to stand together in national unity to smash the Hitler threat to our national independence, civil liberties and economic welfare.

The labor movement must form the very backbone of this national unity, of the fight of our nation against Nazi Germany and its aides. The three great divisions of the trade unions—the C.I.O., the A. F. of L. and the Railroad Brotherhoods—with their 11,000,000 members and their families, and with their huge following among the unorganized workers, constitute a vital and enormous mass of the American people. They are also the most democratic section of our nation; they have the most to lose by a Hitler victory; they have the most to gain by a Hitler defeat.

The full and active participation of the trade unions in the national unity is indispensable for the suc-

cess of the struggle against Nazi Germany; their powerful democratic influence is needed to stiffen up the Government's anti-Hitler war policies; their position in industry makes them a vital factor in winning the crucial battle for production; their mass influence is necessary for the maintenance of democracy in America, while the war against Hitler is going on.

To perform their basic role in building and strengthening national unity the trade unions must themselves be united. Only in this way can the organized workers exert effectively their tremendous constructive power in America's war effort. It would be a grave mistake for the trade unions to try to go through this war split as they are now. The form that trade union unity is taking is united action among the three big divisions of organized labor—the C.I.O., A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhoods—upon all war issues. Although the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. have many points of sharp conflict in the industries, and long experience in the A. F. of L. shows how difficult it is to heal such jurisdictional problems, nevertheless this is no reason why the two trade union centers cannot cooperate on ques-

tions of national defense. In fact, they are already doing so in various localities.

United labor action upon questions of national defense is the central need of the American labor movement. To secure this trade union unity, as the basis for all-inclusive national unity, the trade unions must become vastly more active politically. The war situation is casting up a host of problems, all political in character. These problems relate to foreign policy, defense production, the financing of the war, the regulation of prices and profits, the protection of civil liberties, etc. Questions of wages, hours and working conditions are also becoming constantly more political in character and are increasingly the concern of the Government.

If organized labor is to play its proper part in the national unity it must meet all these questions in a united and political way. It must demand full representation on all the Government defense boards; it must insist upon its proper place in the President's Cabinet; it must take an active part in all elections. And, above all, organized labor must develop a united and rounded-out program to meet all phases of the present war emergency. During recent years American labor has grown up organizationally; now is must become adult politically.

To unify and develop labor's program there is urgent need for a national conference of the whole trade union movement. This conference would outline labor's attitude more clearly toward foreign

policy and national unity; it could unify its at present uncoordinated plans for intensifying munitions production; it could organize labor's fight against the pro-Hitler fifth column; it could make real its demand for full political representation in the Government; it could soften many of the present conflicts between A. F. of L. and C.I.O. unions, and it would do much towards achieving eventual complete trade union unity. A general conference of all trade unions is not only basically necessary for national unity and the struggle against Hitler, but it would also constitute an enormous stride forward for the American labor movement.

President Murray of the C.I.O. has demanded that there be called a Government-industry-labor conference to work out a program to meet the war emergency, and President Green of the A. F. of L. has proposed a plan somewhat similar to the War Labor Board of World War I. It is probable that action along these lines will be taken by the Government, especially if the question is raised energetically throughout the whole labor movement. The necessary unification of labor's program, by a general conference of all three major groups, might readily be held preparatory to or in connection with such a national get-together of Government, labor and capital.

*The Conventions of the A. F. of L.  
and the C.I.O.*

During the past few weeks the two great national federations of

labor, each claiming some 5,000,000 members, have held their conventions. The C.I.O., which increased its membership by 900,000 in the past year, has become the most fundamental section and the leader of the labor movement. With its great unions in coal, steel, auto, electrical, manufacturing, etc., it is a decisive factor in the defense program. It also has generally the more progressive program and leadership, and its whole structure and system of work are in harmony with modern industrial and political conditions. This does not mean, however, that we should underestimate the great importance of the A. F. of L. Although resting principally upon the lighter industries and hampered by reactionary practices, the A. F. of L. contains many basic workers, such as the 850,000 railroad workers, 500,000 truck drivers, 250,000 machinists, 75,000 longshoremen, etc. Moreover, it is showing rapid growth (260,000 in the past year) and it has a distinct vitality. Neglect of the A. F. of L. is a most serious shortcoming in our trade union work.

The two conventions worked out policies making for an all-out struggle against Hitler. Both displayed strong progressive tendencies. They gave wholehearted support to the Government's anti-Hitler foreign policy. They pledged themselves to do everything possible to create a firm national unity. They also assumed a responsible attitude toward the battle for production and for the defense of the people's economic and political rights. In nearly all these matters the C.I.

O., true to its more progressive character, spoke out the most clearly and decisively.

The great weakness of both conventions was that they did not take a more positive stand on the vital issue of united labor action upon defense issues, although in both conventions there was a greater spirit of unity and a keener appreciation of the need for political action. This unity spirit was shown by the fact that this year the federations were much less violent in their attacks upon each other than before. The C.I.O. also gave a striking demonstration of its unity spirit by endorsing the demands of the railroad workers. But what was lacking was a ringing insistence upon united labor action. This was a very grave weakness, which should be overcome in the near future. Nothing would give a stronger impetus to national unity and nothing could be more beneficial to the whole labor movement than the coming together of all sections of organized labor on the basis of a unified program to smash Hitler. The passage of the Smith Bill by the House should be replied to by the establishment of trade union unity, locally, statewide and nationally.

Such a unification of labor's forces politically would be enthusiastically welcomed by the rank and file of labor, by the Roosevelt Administration and by the whole American people. It would open the doors of the Cabinet and of all Government boards to labor. It would put a halt to the present dangerous attempt in Congress to shackle labor with anti-strike legislation. It

would strengthen national unity in every direction.

### *Trade Union Tasks in Building National Unity*

National unity comprises all elements in American life, without regard to class or party, who are willing to fight Hitler, including capitalists, small businessmen, farmers, professionals and workers—Democrats, Republicans, Farmer-Laborites, Socialists and Communists. The United States Government is its cutting edge. It is the whole American people in action against Hitler, and the trade unions must be its very heart.

A host of organizations and activities, many of them governmental or semi-governmental, are involved in the building and functioning of national unity, in all of which the trade unions must play their part. These relate to the active mobilization of the people in support of every phase of the fight in Congress and elsewhere for the development of the Government's anti-Hitler policy; the carrying out of the program for winning the battle for production; the development of an active political defense of the people's economic and political rights; the creation of a whole network of committees and activities in connection with the United Service Organizations and civilian defense; active collaboration with all anti-Hitler elements in city and state elections; organized participation in the financing of the war through the sale of bonds, etc.; the building of a big movement for Russian War Relief; a great in-

tensification of the campaign to free Earl Browder, etc. Active trade union participation in all these organizations and activities unites the American people and strengthens the hand of the Government against Hitler. It gives organized labor invaluable political experience. It sets up vital contacts between labor and other anti-Hitler forces. And, by bringing the representatives of the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. together in daily cooperation on war issues, it paves the way for eventual organizational unity of the trade union movement.

Our districts are rich in experience of participation in local national unity movements, such as the New York City elections, the big Madison Square Garden meeting for medical aid to the U.S.S.R., the great New York C.I.O.-A. F. of L. anti-Hitler demonstration. Examples could be multiplied. Also we have neglected many splendid opportunities for such work. The comrades in their discussion should tell the National Committee meeting about their experiences, so that our whole Party may profit from them.

As yet, only a start has been made toward activating the trade union movement within the national unity. In every field of anti-Hitler activity more trade union participation is absolutely necessary. Especially is this so in the fight against the appeasers, both within and without the ranks of the labor movement. The trade unions should support such organizations as the Fight for Freedom Committee and the American Committee to Aid British Labor. They should fight the

appeasers on all fronts. William Green, at the A. F. of L. convention, exhibited a dangerous complacency when he said "There are no isolationists in the A. F. of L.," while at his elbow sat W. L. Hutcheson, First Vice-President of the A. F. of L., who is openly affiliated to the America First Committee, and while Coughlinites and others continue to exercise a dangerous influence in many A. F. of L. unions. The C.I.O., at its convention, did good work by attacking Charles Lindbergh and denouncing the F.B.I. as a Gestapo; but when it withheld condemnation of the America First Committee by name, this was a dangerous concession to John L. Lewis. The trade unions must be in the forefront of the fight against the America First Committee, which is Hitler's fifth column. Above all, it must clean its own leadership of this appeaser poison. The whole labor movement must ring with the struggle against such pro-Hitler organizations as the Dies Committee, the F.B.I. and the America First Committee.

#### *For a Strong Anti-Hitler Foreign Policy*

If the Government is to carry on a militant policy of struggle against Hitler and his allies it must have the active support of the whole trade union movement. One of the great weaknesses in the fight against Hitler to date has been the failure of the leaderships of the two federations to back up strongly the Government in its anti-Hitler foreign policy and to press for still more aggressive action. There has been too much hesitation, too much

of a tendency to leave the whole matter to Roosevelt. Passive endorsement of the Government's anti-Hitler line is not enough; there must be a powerful reinforcement of it by the militant mobilization of labor's forces, in the localities and nationally, in every fight that takes place with the appeasers and fifth columnists in the step-by-step working out of the anti-Hitler policy. In the recent struggle to repeal the Neutrality Act, for example, when the isolationists and appeasers showed great activity, instead of thousands of resolutions pouring into Congress from the labor movement supporting repeal, hardly a peep was heard from the labor movement.

However, the two conventions of labor, especially the C.I.O., registered real progress in the question of foreign policy, thereby greatly strengthening the hands of the Government and the fight of the American people. The conventions showed that the whole trade union movement, which is coming to realize more and more that America is deeply endangered by Hitler's aggression, and that "we have a war to win," is rapidly freeing itself from the "No A.E.F." illusion, from the idea that the United States should serve only as "the arsenal of democracy," and from the foolish notion that Hitler can be licked by "measures short of war." Although neither federation advanced to the point of calling for a declaration of war, the A. F. of L. demanded that the government "extend full and complete aid to Great Britain and her allies—until Hitler and his allies are de-

cisively defeated," while the C.I.O., speaking out even more militantly, insisted that "we immediately furnish all possible aid to and completely cooperate with Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China . . . and thereby bring about the military annihilation of Hitler's regime."

In the C.I.O. convention labor and the American people scored a real victory by the overwhelming defeat of John L. Lewis' isolationist foreign policy. By its resounding defeat of Lewis, the convention showed that the C.I.O., like American workers in general, wants nothing to do with such isolationist policies.

The more definite stand of the C.I.O. in support of the Government's anti-Hitler policy laid the basis for united action of the whole labor movement on the question of foreign policy, a condition that did not previously exist. The A. F. of L., however, although it expressly favored extending aid to the U.S.S.R., did not help matters when it slapped the anti-Hitler movement in the face by bitterly denouncing that country and asserting that a military alliance with it was "unthinkable." In spite of this stupid red-baiting, which helps no one but the appeasers, there exists the basis for joint action of the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. in support of Roosevelt's policy of struggle against Hitler. It now remains to carry the anti-Hitler resolutions of the two conventions to the great rank and file of the labor movement and to make these resolutions the base for a gigantic united mobilization of all

labor's forces, day in and day out, for building national unity and the world coalition against Nazi Germany and its allies.

### *The Battle for Production*

For the world coalition of anti-fascist peoples to succeed in smashing Nazi Germany it is necessary that American arms production be raised to the very maximum. Accordingly, under Government pressure, general production increased 29 per cent from August, 1940, to August, 1941. Experts estimate that by next June from 50 to 65 per cent of all American output will be devoted to defense production. Both the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. conventions, acutely aware of the decisive importance of production in the war against Hitler, pledged every effort to secure the utmost output possible. The C.I.O. resolution on the question struck the keynote—"The essence of our national defense program is one of production—the need of producing the necessary quantity of materials—airplanes, ships and guns—within the shortest period of time."

To fulfill labor's part in the battle for production it is not enough that the trade unions adopt a no-strike policy, nor that they simply look after the economic interests of the workers. They must plunge deeply into the whole economic structure of defense production and help administer it. They must especially be on guard against business-as-usual profiteering employers who subordinate the needs of defense production to their own greed; they must combat the great monopolists

who, seeking to dominate all industry, are the enemies of plant expansion and the distribution of war contracts to small concerns; they must be very vigilant to expose and combat those powerfully situated appeasers and pro-Hitler elements in industry who are deliberately striving to sabotage defense production and to undermine the whole anti-Hitler policy of the government and the American people.

The two labor conventions reorganized the vital need for labor to participate administratively in industry in order to assure successful defense production. They rightly complained that the Government defense agencies are now overloaded with employers and that the trade unions are almost entirely unrepresented, except in the limited Labor Advisory Council of the O.P.M. The conventions demanded full labor representation in all the defense production machinery.

In its Murray Industrial Councils Plan, the C.I.O. convention put forth the most advanced program of labor for playing its proper administrative role in defense production. In substance, the Murray Plan calls for the setting up of councils in each major defense industry, composed of equal representation from labor and the employers, with a Government appointee acting as chairman. The broad scope of these industrial councils is indicated by the following brief quotation from the original statement of the policy:

"The council would have responsibility for the various factors in each industry, now distributed through a vast number of agencies,

such as allocation of orders, determination and allocation of expansion needs, scheduling of production rates, determination of priorities, establishment of industrial relations, and labor supply."

Although the A. F. of L. made a somewhat more conservative approach to the production problem, its policy went in the same general direction as the Murray Plan. The A. F. of L. convention, for its part, demanded labor representation on all boards dealing in any way with defense production, and it stated its general policy as follows:

"Full participation of chosen representatives of labor and industry in the defense program and in planning for post-defense adjustments is the effective, democratic method of assuring an all-out effort for national defense."

A few days ago William Green gave this policy more concrete form by his demand that a War Labor Board be set up.

There is an urgent need that the C.I.O., A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhoods meet together and work out a unified policy regarding labor's role in administering defense production. Obviously, with anything like a spirit of unity prevailing between the C.I.O. and A. F. of L., a joint plan for the whole labor movement could be formulated. Such a united labor plan, backed by 11,000,000 trade unionists, would compel government and employer recognition, and it would redound enormously to the advantage of the nation's defense.

It is a major task to popularize

far and wide in the trade union movement and among the American people at large the Murray Plan and the demand for more labor representation generally in defense production. At the same time, the Murray Plan, or adaptations of it, should be introduced, so far as possible, in individual localities, industries and plants. The workers in every shop, factory and city should seize the initiative to develop plans for increasing production. The Ford workers give an excellent example of such initiative. Already the trade unions have acquired a great deal of experience in this direction and the delegates to this National Committee meeting should make a review of such local experience a central part of their reports.

*For an Equitable Distribution  
of the War's Burdens*

The supreme class interest of the workers, in keeping with the basic national interests of the American people, is the defeat of Hitler. This fundamental common interest—to preserve American national independence and to safeguard the welfare and liberty of our people—demands imperatively that the workers' organizations cooperate with capitalists, farmers, professionals, and other classes and groups in the anti-Hitler national unity. To facilitate the achievement of this national unity it is also necessary that the workers actively defend their immediate economic interests. Healthy, well-fed and well-cared-for workers are vital to national defense.

The workers realize fully that

Hitler cannot be licked without the American people making sacrifices; they know that when 50 per cent or more of all our production will eventually go for war purposes we as a people will have to undergo economic hardships. The workers are quite willing to make all necessary sacrifices to beat Hitler, and they are already demonstrating this by the restraint they are using in their trade union actions and demands. But, while willing to set an example of sacrifice, the workers at the same time have to insist that the war burdens should be fairly distributed upon all classes. They cannot bear the whole load themselves.

Obviously the workers must be on the alert to secure a fair distribution of the war burdens. Powerful and reactionary forces are actively at work to slash ruthlessly their living standards, to smash their labor unions, and to undermine all American democracy.

Capitalists practicing business-as-usual methods are utilizing the war emergency to carry on a profiteering orgy. Leon Henderson, Price Administrator, says that for 3,000 leading corporations profits will be up this year 60 per cent over 1940, when they were already 19 per cent above 1939. The cost of living is skyrocketing. In the past year it has advanced at least 15 per cent, and economists are warning that the trend today is pretty much the same as in World War I, when the cost of living doubled in the period from 1916 to 1920. Meanwhile, due to hard-boiled employer resistance, the wages of the workers



generally have lagged behind or remained stationary. U. S. Commissioner of Labor Statistics Isador Lubin says that net labor cost has risen but 1.2 per cent since 1936, while net price increases for wholesale products average 20 per cent for all commodities.

The employers, especially the great monopolists, are strongly resisting efforts to curtail their profits, as witness their present fight against real price control and their violent reaction against Secretary Morgenthau's mild proposal to restrict wartime profits to 6 per cent; and the government has not adopted adequate measures to check the rising costs of living and to halt the threatening inflation. Nor have the government boards that are being called upon to consider the workers' demands lent a responsive ear to them. Only recently we have seen the spectacle of two boards—the National Labor Relations Board in the captive mine case, and the President's Emergency Board in the railroad wage demands—having their skimpy decisions justly rejected by the workers and then referred by the Government to new bodies for revision. And now, in the House, we have just seen the adoption of the infamous Smith Bill, which is a menacing threat to the whole labor movement.

The strike weapon is not the answer to the workers' problem of protecting their living standards and unions while fighting for an equitable distribution of the war burdens. For strikes would cut down war munitions production, thereby injuring the workers and

the whole nation in their most vital interest, the military defeat of Hitler. The workers are fully aware of the imperative necessity of keeping industry going at full blast. They don't want to strike, and they are doing so only under serious provocation. In fact, the workers are already voluntarily widely refraining from the use of the strike, most of the present-day strikes being of very short duration and mostly of a demonstrative character. The workers are quite ready to accept mediation or arbitration, if they have even half a chance to get a square break.

Strikes in defense industries, besides injuring production, tend to isolate the unions from other masses of the people. The anti-union reactionaries came close to defeating the repeal of the Neutrality Act, with the recent ill-advised coal strike as their excuse, and now labor is having a most serious fight in Congress to prevent the final passage of drastic anti-strike legislation, some of which apparently has the backing of the Roosevelt Administration. In this war emergency labor should contemplate using the strike only when the basic economic needs of the workers are involved or the very life of trade unionism is threatened, and then only after all other means of settlement have been exhausted. Only if the trade unions follow a strong policy or responsibility toward the national defense can they serve as the main safeguards of American democracy and defeat those elements who are aiming at establishing fascism in this country.

It is not enough, however, to tell the workers not to strike. They must have effective means to prevent undue war burdens being placed upon them. A considerable part of the answer to this problem is the development of a better brand of trade unionism. Shop grievances must be more systematically taken care of by local committees, and the national trade unions should pay closer attention to local movements of the workers. Active organizing campaigns must also be pushed to strengthen the trade unions generally. These elementary union measures will go far to eliminate hastily called local strikes. In numerous instances lately we have seen strikes which could have been prevented by strong organization and effective negotiations. It is a trade union axiom that powerful unions, well-handled, are far better able than weak ones to secure their demands without striking.

But the fundamental answer to the workers' problem of protecting their economic interests in this war emergency lies, as a necessary phase of the building of national unity, in united political action. The C.I.O., the A. F. of L. and the Railroad Brotherhoods simply must get together politically. They must present a solid front to profiteering employers and union-smashing reactionaries. They must convince the American people that the present attacks upon the workers' standards and trade unions are direct injuries to national unity and the defense program. Only in this manner can they secure full representation in the government and all its defense

boards, accomplish the establishment of adequate wages and proper working conditions, achieve legislation to check the soaring cost of living and repulse the attacks of labor-hating reactionaries who are seizing upon the war emergency to hamstring the trade unions and weaken civil liberties generally. Parallel action by the different groups, that is, independent steps more or less along similar lines by the C.I.O. and A. F. of L., is not enough. Only when labor moves in a body can it hope to wield its full and indispensable political influence in this critical situation.

It was one of the greatest weaknesses of the two labor federation conventions that they did not more clearly realize the need for labor unity and intensified political action. This was largely because they were overwhelmed by the antagonisms of their rival union claims in industry. But this grave shortcoming must be overcome. For labor to unite politically in support of its program is absolutely necessary. All get-together movements on the part of the C.I.O., A. F. of L. and railroad unions, on a local or industry-wide scale, should be cultivated as steps toward the much-needed immediate goal of a politically united national labor movement.

#### *Other Trade Union Questions Relating to National Unity*

The foregoing discussion about national unity, foreign policy, the battle for production and the defense of the workers' economic interests gives the main outlines of

our policy in the main fields of trade unionism. Now for some special aspects:

(a) *Organization of the unorganized*: The work of organizing the unorganized workers should be pushed vigorously. This is necessary in order to strengthen national unity. The stronger the trade unions, the stronger our nation's struggle against Hitler and against reaction in this country. The workers are eager to organize and can readily be brought into the unions in huge numbers. The right of organization must not be surrendered in this war, as it was by Gompers during World War I. Today the right to organize is recognized by Federal law and the workers should insist upon its enforcement.

Organizing campaigns can and should be carried on without strikes. Strikes over jurisdictional questions with rival unions should be prevented by mutual agreements along the lines of the understandings between the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. electrical workers in New York and the steel workers in Gary. Strikes for the collection of union dues should be strictly avoided by the unions and systematic collection work instituted. As for the closed shop, important as this is for union labor, it would nevertheless be a grave mistake to launch wide strike movements for its establishment. With active organization work any live union can establish virtually a closed shop and make its recognition as such by the employers and the Government a secondary question.

Vitally important in the question of organizing the workers and for

the unity and health of the trade union movement in general is the avoidance of raids by A. F. of L. and C.I.O. unions upon each other's more or less well-established territories. Such are the A. F. of L.'s raids upon the miners, steel workers, textile workers, aviation workers, etc., and the attempts by Lewis-controlled C.I.O. unions to take over organized building trades workers, teamsters and railroad workers. So far as possible, the aim should be to direct the organizing efforts of the two rival federations to the great masses of unorganized workers. The C.I.O. Council in Detroit gave a splendid example of trade union unity when it publicly condemned the Lewis invasion of the building trades and teamsters unions in that city.

(b) *Trade union democracy*: In this war emergency, as never before, is the time ripe and the necessity great for the maximum democracy in the trade unions. The C.I.O. convention just held was a splendid example in this respect. Before the convention opened the affiliated national unions and industrial councils met widely and expressed freely their ideas on foreign and domestic questions, and when the C.I.O. convention came together it truly reflected this democratic mass expression, to the consternation of the Lewis forces. In a number of C.I.O. unions, however, there are many undemocratic practices which should be eliminated. One of the worst examples is in the United Mine Workers, where John L. Lewis rules autocratically, many of the big district organizations being without

regularly elected officials and run arbitrarily by Lewis's appointees.

In the A. F. of L. convention and unions the need for more democracy is urgent. Contrast the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. conventions. In the C.I.O. convention the rank-and-file influence was decisive and was reflected in all its proceedings and decisions. In the A. F. of L. convention, however, the hard-boiled bureaucrats reigned supreme; the left and progressive forces were without organization and real influence, and the will of the rank and file was a thing remote. The need for the left and progressive forces in the A. F. of L. to become more active is an acute one and should be given vastly more attention. The A. F. of L. workers are progressive and militant and, were they truly represented in their union leaderships and A. F. of L. conventions, the whole American labor movement would be enormously strengthened.

Especially in the A. F. of L. is it necessary also to carry on a relentless struggle against racketeering and gangsterism. Their existence must not be left as an excuse for such reactionaries as Westbrook Pegler to make war against the labor movement. Peglerism has become a real menace to trade unionism and it must be fought resolutely.

At its convention the A. F. of L. again sidestepped the urgent question of racketeering, by its milk-and-water anti-gangster resolution and by its evasion of the Browne issue through reducing the number of Executive Council members. The

left and progressive forces should take the lead in this vital matter.

(c) *The Negro Workers:* During the past few years, especially in the C.I.O., the Negro workers have come forward as a powerful trade union force. They played a big part recently in the organization of the Ford plant. Yet in many trade unions of the A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhoods they are still flagrantly discriminated against. In the C.I.O. unions the situation is much better, but even here there still linger many subtle remnants of white chauvinism. The A. F. of L. convention once again evaded the question of justice for the Negro workers. All of which should be a signal for the left and progressive forces to wage an intensified and tireless struggle wholly to eradicate racial prejudice from the ranks of the American labor movement and American industry. This problem is now acute in connection with the defense industries and the achievement of national unity.

(d) *Inter-union factionalism:* In this period of acute national emergency, when it is necessary to create the broadest national unity possible against Hitler and his American agents, it is especially necessary to work for the cooperation within the trade unions of all who want to fight Hitler. The C.I.O. convention gave a magnificent example of how this united action can be secured. All the elements who favored a militant fight against Hitler, rising above their differences on other questions, created together a working unity that made the C.I.O. convention a landmark in the develop-

ment of the American people's struggle against Hitlerism. Were the same spirit to be shown between the top leaders of the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O., the question of the political unity of the American labor movement would be quickly solved.

In solidifying the unions internally in the struggle against Hitlerism, the need to abolish red-baiting has become urgent. In this respect the C.I.O. convention again scored a victory and showed its truly progressive spirit, because its proceedings were entirely free from this reactionary practice. In the A. F. of L. convention, however, as well as in many unions, red-baiting still continues. With the lefts and progressives following diligently the policy of working wholeheartedly with all elements in the trade unions who want to fight Hitler, real progress can quickly be achieved in ridding the labor movement of the disease of red-baiting, or at least in greatly reducing its virulence.

(e) *International Trade Union Unity*: In these days of war it is most important that labor develop strong ties internationally. This is necessary in order that the struggle against Hitler may be prosecuted vigorously. It is especially necessary, therefore, that the American labor movement link itself up officially with the newly organized Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee. That neither the A. F. of L. nor the C.I.O. conventions took steps in this direction was a real weakness.

Then there is the question of the solidarity of labor in the Western

Hemisphere. The broad path to secure this is for both the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. to establish official cooperation with the Latin American Confederation of Labor, which combines all the bona fide trade union movements in the countries south of the Rio Grande, and which a week ago concluded its fine convention in Mexico City. By attempting to revive the moribund Pan-American Federation of Labor and trying to force it upon the Latin American workers, the A. F. of L. leaders are doing a disservice both to the solidarity of the all-American labor movement and to the building of the Western Hemisphere anti-Hitler front.

In the report of Comrade Minor, as well as my own, it has stood out that organized labor is playing a larger and more militant part in the national unity against Hitler and his allies. It is also obvious that we Communists have been no small factor in this advance of labor. We have helped explain the true significance of the war and the need of America to play its full part in it; we have stressed the vital necessity of national unity; we have done what we could to stimulate munitions production; we have actively supported the C.I.O. big organizing campaigns; we have defended the people's civil liberties and fought for the equitable distribution of the war's burdens.

Our line is sound and in the main it has been well applied. Such shortcomings as have occurred have tended generally in the direction of sectarian narrowness, which is the main danger against which we have

to be on guard. Among our greatest shortcomings in the present period are: a serious underestimation of the importance of the A. F. of L., failure to take advantage of favorable opportunities to develop national unity movements, especially with non-working class elements; slowness in developing cooperation with other elements in the unions willing to fight Hitler; hesitancy in raising strongly the need for united action between the C.I.O., A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhoods on all defense questions; and inadequate support of the Free Browder campaign in the trade unions.

We should explain these and our other weaknesses and lay the basis for their correction at this National Committee meeting. And when we return to our various districts we should attack with redoubled vigor the many tasks in building the national anti-Hitler unity, as outlined in the reports of Comrade Minor and others. Briefly, these tasks may be thus summarized: to arouse the American people fully to the danger to our national independence presented by Nazi Germany's aggression and the fundamental necessity for our nation to join completely with Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and China for the military destruction of Hitler and his puppets; to utilize every means for the building of American national unity in support of the Government's anti-Hitler policy, in winning the battle for production, in smashing such treasonous fifth columnists as

the America First Committee; to struggle for an equitable distribution of the burdens of the war and while doing so to protect the living standards, trade unions, and civil liberties of the people from attacks by profiteers and fascist-minded union haters. Let us redouble our efforts for the release of our leader, Comrade Earl Browder. And as we do our share in all these basic tasks let us never forget that the master key to labor's playing its full part in every phase of the fight against Hitler is united action between the C.I.O., the A. F. of L. and the Railroad Brotherhoods. And let us keep constantly in mind the basic need to build the fundamental instrument of all our work, the Communist Party.

Let me say, finally, that the American trade union movement, both big sections of it, the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L., is on the march forward. It is strengthening its numbers, unifying its forces, clarifying its understanding, improving its leadership. More and more it is playing its fundamentally necessary role in the development of the national unity of our people and in its fight, jointly with the U.S.S.R., Britain and China, to annihilate Hitler and Hitlerism. Nor can all the reactionaries—with their Smith Bills, their Dies Committees, and their organized sabotage of national defense—halt the progress of the American labor movement and the development of the American people's struggle against Hitlerism.