
THE REACTIONARY OFFENSIVE AND THE WAR

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

IF THE American people are to prosecute the war to the "unconditional surrender" of Hitler and the Axis powers, as called for by the Casablanca conference, then it is imperative to smash the defeatist reactionary offensive which is increasingly taking shape in this country. Our national life-and-death struggle against the fascist barbarians is being hamstrung within our own borders by a powerful and insolent minority of reactionaries, enemies of all our nation is fighting for. In Congress, in the press, on the radio, in the various state legislatures, these destructive forces are ceaselessly at work. They have done vast damage to our national war effort, and their continued activities menace the whole perspective of victory in the war, as well as the continuance of American democracy. It is an intolerable contradiction that with the Government and the overwhelming masses of the people actively supporting the war, these defeatist groups are allowed to go on sabotaging it. Altogether the situation is full of danger and should provoke acute alarm among the American people and cause them to

take the necessary corrective measures.

While the defeatist reactionaries are active on all fronts of our social and political life, their agitation comes to a head in Congress. Consisting of the most reactionary elements of both the Republican and Democratic Parties, they loom as a conglomerate opposition to the Roosevelt Administration and the nation's war program. Among them are Southern poll-taxers, business-as-usual profiteers, union-busting open shoppers, politics-as-usual hacks, and outright friends of Hitlerism. These assorted copperheads and reactionaries in Congress are especially dangerous because: they are numerically strong in both houses of our Federal legislature; they have the active support of such powerful reactionary forces as the big Hearst - Howard - McCormick - Patterson chains of papers, the du Pont clique in the National Association of Manufacturers, and the strong group of defeatist elements led politically by Herbert Hoover; they are constantly coalescing more into a definite anti-Administration bloc under the leadership of the

most conscious and militant defeatist figures, such as Wheeler, Taft, Nye, Brooks, Hoffman, Dies, Cox and Fish; their program tends more and more to take on brazenly the character of sabotage of the war.

Although the reactionary line-up in Congress is not yet complete, they have already shown that upon many important issues they can control a majority of both houses. Thus, there is created a wide and dangerous rift between the Legislative and Executive branches of the Government, with the Executive attempting to conduct the war in the face of Congress' increasing opposition. The development of the reactionary offensive, both within and without Congress, has come from various factors, of which the following are the most decisive:

(a) *The changed situation in the war:* Now that the Red Army, with its epic offensives, has dealt smashing blows to Nazi Germany and the prospects of victory for the United Nations are generally looking up, the reactionaries and defeatists come forth more militantly with their program of disruptive activities. Knowing that the mass fear of a Hitler victory has greatly diminished, they dare to take more determined steps to advance their own special class interests at the expense of the national war effort. Especially the conscious defeatists seek more boldly to prevent the defeat of the Nazis, to block the consolidation of the United Nations coalition, and if possible to direct the war against the U.S.S.R. The greater Hitler's defeats, the more alarmed are the copperheads in this country and the

more they go to his assistance by whatever device they can.

(b) *Economic discontent among the masses:* Reaction has busily exploited the widespread economic dissatisfaction now existing among various categories of our population, including discontent among the workers at the rising cost of living, bad housing conditions, slowness of Government boards to adjust their grievances; discontent among small business men at their inability to secure war contracts, etc.; discontent among the farmers over price conditions, labor power supply, etc.; discontent among salaried employees because their incomes remain almost stationary while their expenses are skyrocketing. The basic cause of this widespread economic dissatisfaction is the failure of the Government, largely because of defeatist opposition, to adopt so far a full-fledged centralized war economy, one that would stabilize living costs, and systematically regulate production. The defeatists have understood how to exploit to their own advantage this prevalent discontent, much of which they themselves are instrumental in creating.

(c) *The slow tempo of American military operations:* A fact that has facilitated the growth of reaction in the United States (and in England, too) is the slow tempo of our armed forces in getting into full battle action in Europe. Had our Government, jointly with the British, launched a Second Front many months ago, as it could and should have done, undoubtedly the whole aspect of the American political

scene now would have been different. The reactionaries, however, after successfully blocking the Second Front up until now, have also been able to capitalize upon the consequent feeling in the country that our nation is not accomplishing what it should in the war.

(d) *The unorganized state of the win-the-war forces:* A basic reason for the headway of the reactionary offensive is that the win-the-war forces are suffering from much disorganization in their ranks, mingled with considerable confusion, complacency, and political hesitation. The reactionaries and defeatists, on the other hand, are far better organized, more vocal and determined, and they are proceeding in the spirit of an offensive. This explains why reaction won a number of seats in the recent national elections.

By utilizing all these factors, the defeatist reaction has been able to strengthen itself very materially. It is problematical whether or not this group has been able to win any considerable increase of mass following lately; but beyond all dispute it has succeeded substantially in organizing its forces, in unifying its program, and in consolidating its political position. So much so that it has now become a dangerous menace to our national war effort and to the whole outcome of the war.

Policies of the Defeatist Reaction

The reactionaries in Congress do not come forward in direct opposition to the war, knowing that this would bring down upon their heads the lightning of popular condemna-

tion and mass opposition. In the spirit of the Laval and Pétains who brought about the downfall of France under a cloak of patriotism, these people give more or less emphatic lip endorsement to the war, and then, behind this mask, they carry on a sniping warfare from every possible point against the national war effort and the unity of the United Nations.

A major center of their attack is their attempt to weaken the prestige and power of the President and the whole Executive branch of the Government, with the contention that a bureaucratic dictatorship is being thrust upon us and that Congress, therefore, must reassert its independent role. That there is considerable bureaucratic abuse in Washington is obvious; but the defeatists, blowing this up out of all proportion, use it as a pretext to try to take from the hands of the Executive branch those powers granted by the previous Congress and without which it is impossible successfully to conduct a modern war. To this end they are carrying on a national campaign to discredit the Administration in the eyes of the people as a useless, incompetent and dangerous near-fascist bureaucracy. They are also, by legislative action, reversing various directives issued by the President under his legitimate wartime powers, such as the cancellation of his \$25,000 salary limitation and the virtual liquidation of his price control regulations. In the same disruptive spirit they are interfering with the personnel of various Governmental departments and war boards, including

forced resignations of Leon Henderson of the O.P.A. and Prosecutor William P. Maloney of the Department of Justice, and they are hindering the functioning of these bodies by such actions as their refusal of necessary working funds to the War Manpower Commission, the Department of Labor and the National Resources Planning Board. They are also moving to whittle down the appointive power of the President, as indicated in the Mac-Keller bill, which would give this power to Congress. They are likewise instituting various interfering "investigations" of the many war boards, the most sweeping of which is the recently adopted Smith resolution in the House, calling for a review of the whole conduct of the war.

That the defeatists have in mind, if they can get away with it, nothing less than practically to take from President Roosevelt's hands the actual leadership of the war, is indicated further by their consideration of plans to set up a joint Senate-House committee for this purpose. This is hampering the Administration war work and injuring its prestige among our Allies. The Congressional defeatists, emboldened by their success, are becoming more daring in their efforts to weaken the Executive. Therewith they are weakening, too, the striking power of our nation in the war.

The defeatists in Congress are also interfering with the proper building up and use of our armed forces. Here they follow many lines of activity, all thickly camouflaged with patriotic assurances. Among the

more obvious of these moves is their present fight to reduce the size of the army far below that demanded by the Roosevelt Administration and the military leadership. Then there is their prolonged and persistent opposition to the Second Front in Europe, even after the Casablanca Conference has declared for it. Their idea is to let the U.S.S.R. do the fighting, after which the United States and Britain should step in and take over.

Also there is their constant attempt, with the help of powerful defeatist newspapers and reactionary radio commentators, to divert our armed forces away from Europe, where the decisive blow has to be dealt against the heart of the Axis, on the pretext that we must turn our major attention to Japan. Others of these gentry would exempt fathers from the draft (Wheeler Bill), or disperse our army for cotton picking and other agricultural work (Bankhead Bill). And, finally, to mention no more, there is the tendency, of which Mr. Herbert Hoover is the open spokesman, boldly to obstruct and to slow down the whole war effort, with "victory" postponed to the vague and distant future. The strength of the reactionary and defeatist forces in Congress makes all these paralyzing proposals exceedingly dangerous.

One of the most menacing facets of the offensive of the reactionaries is their violent attack upon the trade unions. The open shoppers are in full cry against organized labor, putting the war into second place or leaving it out of consideration altogether. The press and radio are

full of vile accusations against the workers and the unions, charging them with profiteering, cultivating absenteeism, etc., by the Peglers, Kaltenborns, Rickenbackers, and other spokesmen of the National Association of Manufacturers and the so-called Farm Bloc.

Congress and many state legislatures, as never before, are jammed with rapidly anti-labor legislation. To name only a few of the more notorious proposals in Congress: There is the Hobbs "anti-racketeering" bill, which would put labor unions pretty much in the category of organized gangsters; the proposals for a vicious labor draft bill, aimed to regiment the workers and freeze them to their jobs; the Johnson "involuntary servitude" bill, to combat absenteeism by work-or-fight orders; the Byrd bill to draft strikers; the Connally bill to seize struck plants.

Besides these, there are a whole series of other anti-labor measures in various stages of preparation or consideration by the Coxes, Vinsons, Rankins, Hoffmans, O'Daniels, and other notorious labor-baiters. Among these schemes are plans to incorporate the trade unions, to deny the workers the legal right to strike, to force the registration of all trade union members, to prevent the use of union funds for election purposes, to abolish picketing, to halt the collection of union dues payments during the war, to exempt returned soldiers from union shop regulations, to outlaw the closed shop, to castrate the Wagner Labor Relations Act, and every other union-smashing device the open-

shoppers can think up. In short, the aim of many members of Congress and of the state legislatures is to introduce what President Green of the A. F. of L. has characterized as a "Hitlerian control of labor." And in view of the great number of defeatist and anti-labor elements in both Houses of Congress, the possibility of much of this dangerous legislation being enacted is very real.

This attack upon organized labor, by creating confusion and sharpening class antagonisms, is, of course, highly detrimental to national unity. Naturally, however, this is no worry to the reactionary forces in Congress.

Another attack of theirs upon the national unity so indispensable to national victory is directed against the Negro people. In many parts of the South the Ku Klux Klan-minded poll taxers have developed a virtual lynch atmosphere in order to subjugate the Negro people more completely. One of the most flagrant manifestations of this particular stream of reaction was the filibuster conducted by Senator Bilbo and his cronies against the adoption of the anti-poll tax bill during the closing weeks of the 77th Congress. This shameful action, which tied up the Senate for several days in wartime, succeeded in defeating the anti-poll tax measure although majorities in both houses were in favor of it.

Another fruitful field of Congressional obstruction of the national war effort has to do with the country's general economy. What is required in the United States in order to bring production up to its maximum and to avoid the danger of

inflation is the adoption of a centralized war economy, much along the lines of Great Britain. The Pepper-Kilgore bill, if adopted, would provide this needed national coordination of our economic system. But, of course, the reactionaries and defeatists in Congress want nothing of such necessary legislation, which they now have deeply pigeon-holed in the Senate Military Affairs Committee.

Instead of a balanced economic system, what the opposition of the Congressional reactionaries is actually creating is a situation in which the workers are to be chained to their jobs with their wages frozen, while the employers, especially the big ones, free of all real profit and production controls, revel in an orgy of profiteering at the expense of the national war effort.* In this spirit the reactionaries have succeeded in rendering inoperative most of President Roosevelt's seven-point program of economic stabilization, except those points relating to the control of the workers and their living standards. They have shattered the Administration's proposed farm controls and sent food prices skyrocketing.

In consequence of this general course by the reactionary opposition in Congress our national economy is now in a state of partial chaos. The workers are suffering from soaring costs of living and lagging wages; the industrial and agricultural labor

supply is disorganized; the capitalists are reaping unprecedented profits; the workers and poor farmers are bearing a disproportionate share of the financial load; a dangerous inflation is creeping over the country, and production (now reportedly only 50 per cent per man of what it is in Great Britain) is lagging far behind our vast potential. All of which is very helpful to Hitler, who has the defeatist opposition in Congress to thank for it.

It is not surprising that a Congress so loaded as this one with various groups of labor-baiters, poll tax reactionaries and defeatist Hitlerites should coddle the fifth column, of which this country has a very strong and dangerous variety. Eventual readers of the history of this war will be amazed at the extent and with what insolence this protection of the enemies within our gates has been carried on by members of Congress. The worst thing done in this respect by Congress (so far at least) has been the re-commissioning of the Dies Committee and voting it \$75,000 with which to continue its subversive work. This action by the House brought glee to every defeatist in America. This dangerous committee has been authorized, with the people's funds, to continue its Hitlerian tactics of Red-baiting and sniping at the Roosevelt Administration, attempting to undermine our national unity, and sowing dissension among the United States and its Allies.

Cut from the same cloth as this menacing action by the House is the active support now being given by Senator Wheeler and other power-

* *Economic Notes* (Labor Research Association, March, 1943) says: "After all taxes, including excess profits taxes, the corporations of the United States showed net profits of \$4.2 billions in 1939 . . . \$6.8 billions in 1942. The rise in net profits was thus 62 per cent between 1939 and 1942."

ful figures in Congress to William Dudley Pelley, Elizabeth Dilling and the thirty-one other notorious fascist leaders brought to indictment by the F.B.I. Already the pressure of these high-placed, reactionary politicians has forced the resignation of the prosecutor in charge and it is now threatening to bring the whole case to a standstill. One Senator even rose to propose that the Nazi agent Viereck, recently released by an infantile decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, should be compensated for the time he has spent in jail. Such actions give a free hand to the American fifth column. It was this kind of subversive activities that brought about the downfall of France, and they can have only damaging effects upon our national war effort.

Another major field of the defeatists' attack upon the struggle of our country against the Axis is their attempt to discredit our war aims. The Fishes, Wheelers, Dieses, Tafts, and large numbers of their followers in the Senate and House obviously have nothing in common with the avowed aim of our country to smash Nazi Germany and the other Axis powers and to force them into "unconditional surrender." Nor are they supporters of the Atlantic Charter or the Four Freedoms. On the contrary, all these war aims are anathema to them and they never tire of belittling and assailing them. Roosevelt, Wallace, Willkie, and other outstanding spokesmen for victory and the Four Freedoms are the favorite objects of their scorn. So far Congress has refrained from giving specific endorsement to

these war aims as stated by Roosevelt, although it is possible that under mass pressure it may be compelled to doff its cap to them.

Obviously the way the Congressional defeatists would like this war to end is by a negotiated peace, hopefully with Hitler, but if this should prove to be too much to be put across, then a settlement with a Goering or with the German Generals would be quite acceptable. They would without hesitation give up our professed war aims and save what is possible of fascism. They do not want Hitler decisively defeated, fearing that a big upsurge of democracy on a world scale might result therefrom. Their international line is to prevent a democratic Europe and to check or destroy the influence of the Soviet Union.

And as to their post-war outlook in the United States itself, its dangerously fascist trend is exemplified by their present vicious attempts to destroy the trade unions and to wipe out progressive social legislation, and their attacks upon the modest reforms proposed by the National Resources Planning Board, denouncing them as socialism. Vice President Wallace, in his recent speech, despite some debatable statements, was very timely in his warnings of a fascist danger in this country.

It also fits right in with the whole disruptive line of the defeatists that they also leave no opportunity to pass unused to place obstacles in the way of the consolidation of the United Nations as a fighting force now and as a force for post-war re-

construction. While not hesitating to cultivate bad blood among all the Allies of the United States, their favorite target is the Soviet Union. With a never-ceasing campaign of slander and suspicion against the U.S.S.R., they are trying insidiously to drive a wedge between the United States and our Soviet Ally, and therewith destroy the great world coalition of states upon whose maintenance the winning of the war, the maintenance of collective security and the welfare of all humanity depend. Mr. Wallace was also quite correct in warning against the danger of the United States "double-crossing" the U.S.S.R.

The whole program of the defeatists against a militant prosecution of the war is crystallizing into a determined effort on their part to secure control of the Presidency in 1944. Resolved upon defeating Roosevelt and his supporters is the strong defeatist wing of the Democratic Party, no less than the appeaser-isolationist section of the Republican Party. Their general strategy is already clear. They are busy laying plans to capture the conventions of the two major parties to be held some fifteen months hence. They would confront the country with the useless choice between two reactionary candidates on the old party tickets.

In the Democratic Party the powerful reactionary Farley group in the North and the K.K.K.-poll taxers of the South are at work together to advance this conspiracy by defeating the Roosevelt Democrats in the state primaries and nominating conventions, and in the

Republican Party the strongly-intrenched Hoover-Taft-Vandenberg combination is equally active to prevent the Willkie pro-war forces from winning control. If this strategy fails and a real win-the-war candidate should secure either the Democratic or Republican Presidential nomination, assuming that the war is still going on, then undoubtedly, as the second phase of their defeatist plans, the reactionary wings of the Republicans and Democrats will develop some form of political cooperation with each other.

Should the reactionaries succeed in electing the President this would be a national and international disaster, for the war and for the post-war situation. It would also be a threat to the very life of democracy in the United States. In the meantime, the defeatists are already making use of the developing Presidential election struggle by cultivating an intense partisan struggle designed seriously to weaken national unity and to divert the people's attention from the central task of winning the war.

The Damage Done by the Defeatists

The anti-war trend of the actions and policies of the defeatists in Congress is pregnant with menace to the prosecution and victorious outcome of the war. The defeatists' activities are not only a potential threat; they have already caused much harm to our national war effort, and they are daily causing more.

First, they have seriously pre-

vented the full mobilization of the American people for the necessary all-out war effort. They have weakened the national Administration and hence the striking power of our Government in the war; they have confused sections of the people, knifed their morale, and affected national unity; they have blocked the establishment of a centralized war economy, thereby checking our war production and exposing the country to a disastrous inflation; they have sabotaged the fight against the fifth column, thus encouraging the attack against our country from within; they have checked the speedy mobilization of our armed forces. All this defeatist opposition totals up to a serious lessening of our country's organization for war in every sphere, political, social, economic and military.

Secondly, the defeatists have also seriously hindered the military operations of our armed forces. Their blocking of the complete war mobilization of the United States in itself has weakened our military power abroad; but to this, the defeatists have added active resistance to the indispensable aggressive military policies of the offensive. It was their opposition which has prevented the establishment of the western front in Europe up till now and has confined our military efforts against Nazi Germany to the present important but limited operations in North Africa.

They have thus delayed the victory of the United Nations; for, as we see by the great victories of the Red Army on the Eastern front, were Hitler caught between the iron

jaws of the Red Army in the East and a big Anglo-American force in the West, as is altogether possible with available military resources, he would now be in full retreat and the march to Berlin would be well under way. As it is, however, due to American and British defeatist opposition to the second front, Hitler may now be given a new chance to recuperate his forces and to maneuver to secure a stalemate, and an eventual negotiated peace. With the military situation in Europe now so heavily advantageous to the United Nations' forces, the defeatist opposition is definitely slowing down the plans of the Churchill and Roosevelt Governments to establish a European front at the earliest practicable moment.

Thirdly, the defeatist attitude taken by the opposition forces in Congress regarding American war aims and post-war plans has seriously hindered the full consolidation of the United Nations' coalition and the development of its offensive military struggles. The blatant cultivation of American imperialist aims by Hearst and others; their persistent anti-British campaign; their widespread hostility to the U.S.S.R.; their patronizing attitude toward China; their sniping at the Lend-Lease Act—are all calculated to sow divisions among the allied democratic nations. Their effect is distinctly disruptive and jeopardizes our war effort.

The defeatists' enthusiasm for the appeasement of Mannerheim, Franco and Peyrouton, as well as for maneuvering with the Vatican, also has a decidedly weakening effect

upon our Government's war policy. Their isolationist trends (which are only the mask for a rampant American imperialism) and their sneering attitude toward the United Nations' war aims throw confusion into the ranks of our Allies, both with regard to whether the United States intends to fight the war to a victorious conclusion and as to whether it intends to cooperate with its present Allies after the war for the maintenance of collective security and for the reconstruction of the battle-torn world.

The Disunity of the Win-the-War Forces

The overwhelming majority of the American people are anxious and determined to win the war. They sense the tremendous danger of a Hitler victory and are willing to make all necessary sacrifices for victory, even if with characteristic grumbling. And as for the standing of President Roosevelt as the nation's war leader, a recent Gallup poll shows that his mass popularity continues and far overtops that of any other political figure in this country. It is clear, therefore, that if the ways and means had been found fully and effectively to mobilize this overwhelming mass war sentiment the defeatists would have been swamped, regardless of their demagogic maneuvers.

The lack of unity of the win-the-war forces has been, and still is, both political and organizational. As for the Administration itself, it has displayed a whole series of weaknesses, for which it is now pay-

ing dearly in the shape of a strong and insolent opposition within Congress and without. Some of the more important of these shortcomings of the Administration may be listed as follows:

(a) Interminable delay in getting an Anglo-American second front under way in Europe. Such a front, by rousing American martial spirit and morale and by opening up a perspective of early victory, would change the whole American political situation.

(b) Appeasement of the fascist governments of Spain, Finland and North Africa, which has tended greatly to confuse American opinion, to lower national morale, to alarm our Allies, and to strengthen reaction in this country.

(c) Lack of a definite cooperative policy toward the U.S.S.R. Failure to fight this question out with the reactionaries and to set up the necessary close relations between the two countries, as Great Britain has done.

(d) Toleration of unreliable elements in important Government posts, who confuse or falsify the Administration's win-the-war policies, including Bullitt (Special Representative), Murphy (Representative to North Africa), Leahy (Chief Military Adviser), Standley (Ambassador to U.S.S.R.), Hayes (Ambassador to Spain), Berle (State Department), etc.

(e) Inadequacy in integrating the trade union movement with the war administration by giving it places in the Cabinet and responsible representation in the various war boards.

This step, which Roosevelt did not take because of reactionary opposition, would have enormously strengthened the position of the Administration by rallying to it actively the vast masses of trade unionists.

(f) Failure to proceed energetically and directly to set up a full-fledged centralized war economy.

(g) A one-sided application of the President's seven-point economic program; that is, the Government's endorsement of the points applying to the workers, and its failure to bring capitalist interests under proper centralized controls.

(h) Failure of the Administration to develop close working relations with the Willkie win-the-war Republicans, a failure for which Willkie himself is largely to blame. This has cost the Administration great potential mass backing.

(i) Refusal to take up the cudgels energetically against the fifth column, typified by the failure of the Administration to fight the subversive Dies Committee. In this matter, as in many other aspects of the war situation, the Administration has been far too complacent.

(j) Failure to carry the war issues sufficiently to the people, as against the demagogic maneuvers of the reactionaries. Had the Administration, for example, more definitely raised the war question in the recent elections, the whole outcome would have been more favorable for the win-the-war forces.

A healthful exception to such weakness was Roosevelt's action in September, 1942, when he gave Congress virtually a 30-day ultimatum

to vote him the authority to take the necessary steps to curb inflation.

Congress, after dallying previously for months on the question, promptly acceded to his demand rather than to face the people on the issue.

There are many other shortcomings in Administration policy, which the reactionaries and defeatists have been quick to exploit to their own advantage.

Organized labor, as well as the Roosevelt Administration, has also displayed many weaknesses which, in the present reactionary offensive, are now boomeranging against it. When the United States became directly involved in this war this should have been accepted as an imperative signal for the trade union movement to unite its ranks, to adopt a joint win-the-war program, and to mobilize its forces militantly behind the Government for an allout victory program. This has not been done, however.

Many trade union leaders do not realize the responsibility of the labor movement as the very backbone of the national war effort. They have not sufficiently developed their unions' political initiative. Although the unions have heartily endorsed the war and the Roosevelt Administration, yielding up many of their hard-won gains, laying aside the strike weapon during the war, abandoning premium overtime pay for Saturdays and Sundays, accepting wage and job stabilization, and generally adopting war burdens to a far greater extent than any other section of our population, neverthe-

less they have tolerated great weaknesses in their practices and organizations which the reactionaries have been able to seize upon to whip up opposition to labor and the Government. Among these weaknesses may be cited the following:

(a) The split between the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. has been allowed to continue, despite the most crying need for labor's solidarity. The present slow-motion steps toward trade union unity are entirely inadequate to the acute urgency of the situation. Also, although the two labor federations have agreed that pending the achievement of organizational unity joint actions should be carried out in support of the Government's war program, this policy as yet has been developed in only the most fragmentary form nationally, and insufficiently on a local scale.

(b) Failure to develop an all-labor win-the-war program. The A. F. of L., C.I.O. and Railroad Brotherhoods are still going along on the basis of their individual programs. Although correct in the main, these separate programs greatly lack the vitality and organizing force that a united war program of the whole labor movement would have.

(c) Failure of the trade unions to insist that they be given full representation in the Cabinet and other war bodies, commensurate with their importance in the population and in the national war effort. This has kept organized labor in a situation pretty much of second-class citizenship in the prosecution of the war.

(d) Failure of the trade unions to

set up mass contacts sufficiently with other win-the-war forces, notably the farmers.

(e) Inadequate political activity and mass mobilization of the great trade union forces in support of individual war policies and issues. Examples: (1) delayed and scattered support of the President's seven-point economic stabilization program until the reactionaries had virtually cut it to pieces; (2) sluggishness in the recent elections when, had labor displayed even a modicum of political activity, dozens of reactionaries could have been easily defeated and the whole make-up of the 78th Congress radically altered for the better; (3) almost total neglect of the problem of the democratic education of the armed forces notwithstanding violent attempts by reactionary elements to propagandize the army against the trade union movement; (4) sluggish reaction to appeasement tendencies of the State Department toward Mannerheim, Franco and Peyrouton; (5) feeble support, if any, to the popular demand for a second front in Europe.

In general, the C.I.O. took a more advanced position on all these questions than the A. F. of L., and it gave a basically correct lead. In the A. F. of L. Executive Council the reactionary forces, especially the Hutcheson and Woll groups, have prevented trade union unity and active cooperation in support of the war. They have also produced incorrect policies, which have fed the offensive of the defeatist reaction. Such policies include endorsement of the Dies Committee, refusal to

join hands in an international committee with the C.I.O. and the Soviet trade unions, condemnation of the President's \$25,000 salary limit order, opposition to the Administration's 8,200,000-man sized army, etc. As for John L. Lewis, this defeatist has left no stone unturned to keep labor divided, to discredit the Roosevelt Administration, and to prevent any real mass support of the war. His activities have long been a strong contributing force to the reactionary camp.

It is because of such shortcomings of the Roosevelt Administration and the labor movement that the defeatists and reactionaries have been able to build up their brazen offensive in Congress and elsewhere and to create the present acute danger to our national war effort, to the trade union movement, and to American democracy.

Unite the Win-the-War Forces

Manifestly it is urgently necessary to mobilize and still further activize the great win-the-war masses of the people behind the President in order to achieve the nation's victory objectives. If the defeatists' present dangerous attacks upon the war effort in Congress and outside are to be frustrated and the Government implemented with the strong policies and support needed to win the war and to organize post-war security, the great patriotic masses of our people, workers, farmers, city middle class, and patriotic capitalists, everybody in favor of winning the war will have

to be organized and stirred into action.

This great popular movement, putting itself across the path of the defeatist reaction, should aim at opening up a great Anglo-American second front in Europe immediately, at strengthening national unity, achieving a centralized war economy, putting a clamp upon the resurgent fifth column, repelling the union-smashing open shoppers, consolidating the coalition between Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., China and the United States, and an irresistible application of all our national power for the "unconditional surrender" of the Axis powers. It should pay special attention to blocking the defeatists in Congress and to pushing through labor's and the Administration's program.

The trade unions have a vital role to play in this intensified activation of the American people in support of the war. With their 13,000,000 members they are the chief spokesmen of the great working class and it is upon them that these huge armies of toilers must look mainly for guidance. To fulfill the heavy responsibility which history has placed upon the labor movement in this critical period the trade unions must advance rapidly to a higher stage of political initiative and activity than they have ever achieved before.

The success of the American national war effort, as well as the protection of the labor movement itself, depends upon whether or not the trade unions rise successfully to the great political tasks now so brusquely thrust upon them by the offensive

of the defeatist reactionaries. This political mobilization of the unions, their friends and supporters, is not a matter that can be left to the leaders alone. Especially it must develop by the vigorous action of all branches of organized labor in every community throughout the nation. Only to the extent that the unions achieve this unanimity of purpose can they make their true weight felt for a vigorous prosecution of the war, especially by the opening up of a second front in Europe. Alarmed at the present drive of reaction against the war, against the labor movement, and against American democracy, the trade union masses are now very much in the mood for developing unified support of the Government and the war on an unprecedented scale.

Between the programs of the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and the Railroad Brotherhoods there is basic agreement and, given a willingness among the leaders to cooperate, there should be no real difficulty in formulating a win-the-war program for all of organized labor, one that would definitely support and strengthen the whole war program of the Roosevelt Administration. On February 5, Mr. Philip Murray, President of the C.I.O., said in a speech that arrangements were being perfected to call a general conference of all major branches of the labor movement, with farmers participating, for such a purpose. This would be a long step in the right direction. The workers all over the country should give the proposed national trade union win-the-war conference their hearty endorsement

and insist that it be convened at the earliest possible date.

What is needed on a national scale is a broad legislative committee of all labor. This should not be a mere lobby but basically an instrument for conducting the mobilization of the workers and all other pro-war elements throughout the country. In all communities, especially on a Congressional District scale, similar broad joint committees should be set up. In his speech on February 5, Mr. Philip Murray gave a clear line on how this can be done, saying:

"Every local in the C.I.O.... should organize and join with other C.I.O. locals in organizing on Congressional District lines for purposes of basic contact with our representatives in Congress. These local committees must operate jointly with A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhood locals, farm organizations, church and community organizations in their respective localities or Congressional Districts."

With ramifications all over the country, these committees could quickly exercise a decisive political effect for a more vigorous and reliable war policy. Labor must drop its present defensive attitude and go over to the offensive. This can be done only through intensified political action. Lewis and others who are backing an active strike policy as the way the workers should go are, in effect, trying to lure the labor movement to sabotage the war.

The trade unions have in fact already begun developing along the political lines here indicated. Joint

war activities are growing among them in various localities—especially during the past weeks, in the face of the violent offensive of the defeatist reactionaries. Joint labor legislative conferences have been held in many states, including New York, California, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Washington, etc., where committees have been set up and legislative and general political activities begun. This is a vital movement and it is full of promise of bigger developments to come.

But the progress made so far in no sense measures up to the grave threat against the war and the whole trade union movement. The entire development must be greatly speeded up and vastly amplified. Organized labor, on pain of serious danger to our national war effort and of peril to itself, needs to take up the whole question of political action in a new light. American labor must advance swiftly from its previous economic status to that of a major political force.

In developing its intensified political activity in support of the war the labor movement needs to think in terms of the coming Presidential election. It is only fifteen months now until the nominees will be selected by the various parties. Al-

ready the fascist-minded defeatists are busily laying their plans. Organized labor dare not be caught napping. It cannot possibly afford to go into this vital election in the chaotic powerlessness of previous election times. The needs of the war situation demand that labor thoroughly organize itself for the 1944 elections, and now is not a moment too soon to begin.

The Communist Party joins wholeheartedly with all other win-the-war forces, for the intensification of production, for the defeat of the Congressional reactionaries, for an active prosecution of the war in every field. In order to meet these great tasks properly, our party must be built up and free itself of the present discriminations practiced against our members in some unions, in war industries, in the armed forces, etc. On the borders of our party stand ten and hundreds of thousands of workers who are sympathetic with our militant line in support of the war. It is a patriotic duty to bring these workers into our party. In the present great struggle to checkmate the defeatists in Congress the Communist Party can and will be a vital force.