
THE PEOPLE'S FRONT MOVES FORWARD! *

BY EARL BROWDER

I. THE INTERNATIONAL FASCIST OFFENSIVE AND AMERICA'S ROLE IN THE FIGHT FOR PEACE

THE experiences since our June Central Committee meeting have been extraordinarily rich, requiring a great deal of study and examination to assimilate all these experiences. Events within the country, as well as internationally, are sharpening up with such rapidity that a constant re-evaluation of developments is necessary. This extended meeting of the Political Bureau takes on a certain number of tasks that we had expected the Central Committee Plenum to perform, although this is only in the nature of a preliminary discussion, to lay the foundation for the coming Central Committee meeting, and to insure that the period between now and the Central Committee meeting will be one in which all of the leading comrades and the Party as a whole will see the line of development, especially arising from the last municipal elections, as well as other problems arising from the new developments at home and abroad.

We have invited to this meeting four comrades who have just returned from Spain—Comrade Steve Nelson, Comrade Bill Lawrence, Comrade Garland and Comrade Bradley. The presence of these leading comrades is

of special significance for us, because they represent in their own persons one of the greatest assets that our Party has in this last period. One of the greatest achievements that our Party has ever made is the building of the Lincoln and Washington Battalions of the International Brigade. I suppose every member of our Party understands something of the great work that has been done in Spain, and the role that the Americans have played. The American movement has gained enormously in its international role, in its international recognition, by the work of our comrades in Spain, and I want especially to mention the role of Comrade Steve Nelson, who, everybody agrees, has been an outstanding representative of everything that is best in the progressive people's movement in America. We can be exceptionally proud of having such representatives in our movement. And the fact that these comrades are back with us now gives us an opportunity to show how much the Party appreciates such sterling, fundamental contributions. Without having the opportunity to discuss it with anybody, I am going to take the liberty of immediately suggesting an unusual step, out of the ordinary procedure of the Party, but one which I think everybody will agree with without much discussion: *that this meeting propose to the coming Central Committee Plenum the cooption of Steve Nelson*

* Report delivered to enlarged meeting of Political Bureau held November 18-19, 1937.

to the Central Committee of our Party.

My report, comrades, is not going to be a systematic and thorough covering of all the problems before us, not a substitute for a Central Committee Plenum report, but in the nature of a preliminary discussion in which I will try to lay the foundation for a more thorough working out of the problems confronting the people of our country between now and the forthcoming Central Committee Plenum.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND OUR DOMESTIC PROBLEMS

In the first place, it is worth noting immediately the close hook-up between international politics and our domestic problems today, and to point especially to one of the international phenomena—the fascist propaganda offensive against the Roosevelt administration, especially since Roosevelt's Roanoke speech and the Chicago speech in October, which placed the President clearly in the position of the most outstanding anti-fascist spokesman within the capitalist democracies. The fascist international campaign has linked up Roosevelt and his followers directly with the "Communist menace." The so-called anti-Comintern pact of Germany, Japan and Italy, now a clear and definite alliance of the war-making powers, is openly including American democracy in its definition of Communism and in the list of enemies against which the anti-Comintern pact is directed. The intensification of the fascist invasion of Spain, and the development of the Japanese war against

the Chinese people, if not stopped by collective actions of world democracies, are clearly and unmistakably now generally recognized as the first stages of the new world war.

It is necessary to take special note and emphasize the equivocal role being played by the British Tory Chamberlain government. The visit of Lord Halifax to Berlin, taking place this moment, and the British negotiations with Hitler are very definitely sabotage of the democratic front, much more than a flirtation with fascism. In the United States the reactionary forces are attempting to turn the foreign policies of the United States government in the direction of close collaboration between the United States, the British Tories and the fascist aggressors.

It is very interesting to note, by the way, how supposedly progressive publicists in the United States have been either tricked into or have deliberately chosen to join in with the campaign of the open reactionaries to cover up this British bid for alliance with Hitler by a flood of outrageous slanders and speculations about the possibilities of a Soviet-German rapprochement against the rest of the world. In *The New York Post* yesterday, columnist Jay Franklin wrote a whole column in which he stated as a "fact," that the policy of the Soviet Union is directed toward an alliance with Hitler; and he publishes this precisely at the moment when Britain is negotiating with Hitler in Berlin.

Where there is clearly a danger of the disruption of the European front and particularly of France and Britain, these people come forward with the danger of a Soviet-Hitler

alliance. This is taken directly from the arsenal of the Trotskyite department of the fascist offensive. And it shows how the Trotskyites, as small as they are numerically, try to influence the weakest elements within the democratic front, to extend their wrecking and disruptive activities. This must be a sharp warning to us to stop thinking about the Trotskyite wreckers as merely Soviet enemies, or as extending only to Spain, or as being dangerous only in the presence of actual war: As we know, they already have organized insurrections in China to weaken the People's Front in their fight against Japan. These Trotskyites are doing their disruptive work every day in the United States; work that is exceedingly damaging and is equal or exceeds in its destructiveness the open reactionary forces and their newspapers.

In this respect we should also take note of the incident at the Madison Square Garden when the Catholic Church officially organized a demonstration against our Soviet anniversary celebration meeting and distributed leaflets with quotations from the well-known gangster of the pen, Max Eastman, from Eugene Lyons, and Emma Goldman, thereby giving official recognition by the Catholic hierarchy of the direct services to fascism by the Trotskyites and anarchists.

THE GROWING MENACE OF FASCISM IN THE AMERICAS

It is extremely symptomatic that the reactionary press of the United States, which in the past has been the most energetic champion of the Monroe Doctrine, has suddenly discovered

that the fascists' crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, their open invasion into Latin America through the setting up of the fascist state in Brazil by the coup of Vargas, directly under Hitler's influence, must be accepted very calmly by the United States as being a normal Latin-American political development without relation to European or world politics.

Walter Lippmann, one of the highest paid publicists of the reactionaries, receiving as much, I believe, as the President of the United States for his daily column, spent a whole column the other day to prove that America must not get excited by the presence of the fascist state of Brazil, but should accept it and adjust itself to it as a normal part of American life. In exactly the same sense the press is now preparing for new problems in Mexico.

A couple of months ago when we began to speak very emphatically and openly about the fascist menace in Mexico, many people thought we were alarmists, that we were running ahead of events, that we were imagining things. Since that time it is being generally recognized that serious events are impending in Mexico. I have just learned that a foreign newspaper has sent one of its most noted correspondents to Mexico. In his conversation here in the United States he definitely told his friends that he was being sent to Mexico in anticipation of trouble and to be on the ground floor before trouble begins.

It is our considered judgment, as well as of the Communists and anti-fascists of Mexico, that there is in preparation a fascist armed insurrection in

Mexico that is of exceedingly great danger. Tremendous stores of arms are being smuggled into Mexico and collected in Central American countries around Mexico, specially in Guatamala.

A widespread organization of Mexican reactionaries is spreading throughout the Southwest in the United States, directly in contact with big American interests such as those of Hearst. These interests have given up hope of getting intervention through Roosevelt and Washington to protect their special privileges. They have lost their last hope of influencing the Cardenas government from within, since the expulsion of Cedillo and because the People's Front is being forged around the Cardenas government. Precisely because of all this the fascists in Mexico and abroad, being especially under the influence of the drive of the triple fascist alliance, are pushing rapidly to decisive action against the Mexican people.

We must also note the open fascist tendencies expressed in the raids conducted by the provincial government of Canada and Premier Duplessis of Quebec. Beginning with the Communist and Left-wing newspaper, *Clarte*, they are rapidly extending to the whole C.I.O. movement and are now preparing to cover all international unions including the American Federation of Labor.

All of these things should make us more conscious of the fact that the fascist offensive around the American continent is right at our very door and is tied up directly with the Tory offensive of the opening of Congress. It is no accident that capitalist news-

papers can describe the opening days of Congress as characterized by hooliganism on the part of the anti-Roosevelt bloc of Republicans and Democrats. When we see these ultra-conservative parliamentary representatives comporting themselves in Congress as hooligans, let us understand the meaning of it. It is an invitation and instruction to all their forces throughout the country to begin hooligan tactics, and public disturbances, to create trouble and an atmosphere of civil strife, to prepare for civil war against the people. This kind of tactics is an effort to overthrow the Roosevelt Administration in the second year of its second term.

THE FORCES OF DEMOCRACY AND PEACE ARE STRENGTHENING

It would, of course, be a mistake to emphasize the offensive of fascism without at the same time pointing out the extraordinarily important developments of the campaign for democracy and peace. Not the least of these is Roosevelt's Chicago speech in which he came out for the abandonment of the isolation and neutrality policy and called for concerted action of the democracies, and the 90 per cent of the people who want peace to restrain the fascist warmakers.

In connection with Roosevelt's Chicago speech, I want to read to you the formulations which I made in a speech immediately after Roosevelt's, which happened to be at the time I was at the Eighth Dominion Convention of the Canadian Party. This was printed in the *Daily Worker* and *The Communist*, and I suppose you have all read it, but due to the extraordinary importance of the issues

involved, I think I should read the key paragraphs of that here, because as it stands, it is already a declaration of policy which was endorsed by our Political Bureau and of which there has not yet been a broader discussion. All of the comrades gathered here should definitely be clear with regard to this important declaration. In that speech on October 8, three days after Roosevelt's speech, I said: •

"In the past few years, we Communists have been the sharpest critics of President Roosevelt, even while we were his staunch supporters when he fought against the reactionaries for progressive policies. Our criticism of the President has been especially sharp against what we considered his cowardly surrender to the reactionary neutrality policy.

"All the more clearly, then, because of our past criticism of President Roosevelt's foreign policy, must we of the Communist Party declare our full and complete support to the line laid down in his Chicago speech. It is the only course which can save the world from a terrible catastrophe.

"We have no illusions that the new course charted by President Roosevelt will be easy to execute. Above all, we are conscious of the strong and bitter enemies who will oppose a positive peace policy with all their power. These reactionary forces own or control most of the daily press of the United States. They control many leading positions in the President's own party. They are working hand in glove with Hitler and Mussolini in world affairs. They will move heaven and earth to defeat the President in his policy.

"Only the active support of the masses of the people in the United States, as well as in Canada and the other democratic countries of the West, can overcome the resistance of the accomplices of fascism and carry this positive peace policy into effect."*

The problems involved in our attitude towards Roosevelt's Chicago

speech have been analyzed in more detail by Comrade Bittelman in his "Notes of the Month," published in the November issue of *The Communist*. This discussion of policy is upon the basis of an extended and detailed elaboration in the Political Bureau. Let me emphasize the absolute necessity of your reading and studying these "Notes," and preparing yourselves to make the whole Party, and the whole progressive movement, understand the policy that is developed there, as the only possible course for a consistent struggle for democracy and peace in the present world situation.

TROTSKYITE AGENTS OF THE FASCIST OFFENSIVE

It is very essential to arm our comrades on this question today, because the Trotskyite agents of the fascist offensive are, precisely on this question, doing their most damaging work.

The Trotskyite agents, though very small in number, are linking up the most backward prejudices among the American masses with outwardly seeming ultra-revolutionary slogans and attitudes. They are especially dangerous because they try to link themselves with reactionary leaders of the peace societies, which are pressing to preserve neutrality at all costs, and with confused, vacillating spokesmen that embody within them the most backward prejudices. That, plus the combination of the open reactionaries, constitutes the force, which, if not fought against vigorously, is a menace to the correct policy of Roosevelt in the Congress of the United States, and among large sections of the population. It is of more than ordinary importance to know

* See *The Communist* for November, 1937, page 1043.—*The Editors*.

that among the progressive legislators in Congress, only a minority are outstandingly convinced of the President's Chicago speech. The majority of them are still uncertain on the question of foreign policy. The President cannot definitely rely upon those who are the most sincere adherents of his domestic policy to support his foreign policy.

Clearly, in this situation, every voice that can be used to give a "Left" coloration to this extremely reactionary attitude is of the greatest damage to the organization of the masses in their support of President Roosevelt's policy. Today we have all these elements turning their guns upon President Roosevelt, especially on this issue. With Norman Thomas in the forefront, they denounce the policy of concerted action of the democracies as the betrayal of peace, and represent the Roosevelt policy as the main enemy of the American people.

It is clear that on this question we have a major problem in which the results of our struggle in the United States will affect the fate of the entire world. The fact that Roosevelt in his Chicago speech came out so clearly and definitely, in such a developed form, with the correct program for America, is, however, a tremendous asset which we must more consciously and energetically keep in the foreground.

Comrades from Pittsburgh have reported to us how Roosevelt's speech changed the whole atmosphere of the situation in the unions with regard to sending delegates to the American League Congress for Peace and Democracy. And it was interesting to note from their reports how the work-

ers went out and tried to explain the program of the League, asking the unions to send delegates, and usually the reply was by a motion from the floor to investigate what the Congress really was. But when workers came to the unions with the message to carry out Roosevelt's program for peace, the motion from the floor usually was to send representatives. When the advocates of peace get such allies as this, we should not be bashful or hesitant because it is a great help to all American people in choosing the correct path for peace.

THE SOVIET UNION—BULWARK OF WORLD PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

In taking note of the big developments which counter the offensive of fascism, it is of course necessary to speak of the developments in the Soviet Union. First there is the tremendous strengthening of the Soviet power in the period of its twentieth anniversary and the period of the completion of the Second Five-Year Plan. During these last months the big job of cleaning out the wreckers and traitors of the Trotskyite-Bukharinite gang has been carried through, accompanied by a great upsurge of forces produced by the Soviet democracy. And this is being crowned in a few weeks by the first elections under the Stalin Constitution.

It is becoming generally recognized even among those who still pretend to maintain the position of defense of democracy and peace, yet are opposed to the Soviet Union, that the Soviet Union is the only solid bulwark of world peace and democracy today, the only power that can be firmly depended upon.

A couple of weeks ago we had the extraordinary example of a semi-official spokesman of the British foreign office rebuking the Soviet Union for not energetically enough coming to the defense of Spanish democracy, for not energetically enough assisting the Chinese Republic, and declaring that the prestige of the Soviet Union had dropped because it had not yet wiped out Franco and because it had not bombed Tokio. Of course, we understand the provocative nature of this well-known British newspaperman, Augur. This was a deliberate provocation. That skilled journalist tries to cover up the treacherous role of the Tory government in England in relation to Spain and China. He tries to minimize what everybody knows the Soviet Union has done and will continue to do, under superhuman difficulties, to aid the peoples of Spain and China. But the fact that such provocation could be made, in the belief that it would have some influence, proves that even the reactionaries understand that the main mass of the population looks upon the Soviet Union as the power which is, first of all, charged with the defense of democracy and peace. And the thing they would not expect Great Britain to do, the thing they would not expect France to do, although it is right next to Spain, they do expect the Soviet Union to do, in spite of the distance that separates the two countries. What they consider insane for the United States to do in the Far East, they think natural for the Soviet Union to do. This is a great tribute to the power and prestige of the land of socialism and is a sign of the strength of the peace front and

the growing possibilities of consolidating this peace front on a broader basis.

Our task in its broadest outlines in the United States, in relation to the world situation, is to mobilize all possible forces for the inclusion of America, through the Roosevelt administration, in the collective efforts for defense of peace and democracy, to establish collaboration of the American and Soviet peoples for this policy, together with all the threatened nations and the democracies sincerely interested in peace.

II. THE PRESENT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE ADVANCE OF THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

Now a few words about the domestic situation within our country; first of all, about the economic recession and the new offensive of reaction. At our Central Committee meeting last June we noted that economic recovery, already approaching pre-crisis levels, although showing increasing signs of accumulating factors making for another crash, was on the whole continuing upward. Since then a decided downward trend has set in. A trend, already serious in the light industries throughout the summer, in the last weeks invaded heavy industry, particularly steel, and carried the whole economic index on a sharp decline. Thousands of factories have closed down; hundreds of thousands of workers have been thrown into the streets during the last weeks. The major question for us is whether this decline is the necessary result of those accumulating factors making for another crash, which we noted already

in June. Our judgment is that this recession is not a necessary development at this time. There still remains sufficient economic basis for an upward trend of economy, or at least no more than a leveling off of that trend. If we have a sharp recession, the reason must be found not only in economic facts but in the political situation.

THE SIT-DOWN STRIKE OF MONOPOLY CAPITAL

Monopoly capital has decided to make use of the accumulating crisis factors, not to combat and overcome them, but to stimulate them and to bring them to sharper expression as a means of combatting the rising trade union movement, to block action on the progressive legislative program in Congress, to crystallize the camp of reaction, reaching into the Roosevelt ranks also.

It has decided to go to the country with a demagogic cry that Roosevelt's course is destroying prosperity and that prosperity can only be restored by relieving the rich from taxation and placing government policies in the hands of the safe and sane people of the Liberty League type, such as Glass, Landon, Hoover, etc. It is interesting to note that even the organ of reaction, such as the *Herald-Tribune*, spokesmen for the reactionary democratic groups such as General Johnson, are speaking almost openly of the present recession as a strike of capital.

Monopoly capital has gone on a sit-down strike. It is trying, by direct action, to cancel the mandate of the people of November, 1936. That is the chief significance of the economic

recession occurring at this moment. This does not mean that monopoly capital can make prosperity or crisis at its own pleasure. Certainly, the cyclical crisis is inevitable over a certain number of years; it cannot be avoided so long as capitalism lasts. But monopoly capital does have an enormous destructive power. It is this destructive power which is creating a dangerous situation for labor and the masses. Only a decisive mass struggle can overcome this menace, and only an understanding of the fact that capital is on a sit-down strike will enable us to mobilize the masses to the fullest possible extent.

It is instructive to see in respect to this question how the renegade groups are rushing to the defense of capital. This week, Lovestone publishes an extended article in which he "proves" that this recession is not the fault of the capitalists at all; they could not help it, and the Communists, when we speak about the sit-down strike, are rejecting Marxian economics. The conclusion of the renegades is that Marxist economics is now on the side of Wall Street, and that the capitalists have merely fallen victims to the system. That is a perfect alibi for the capitalists and a weapon for the renegades to disarm the workers in their fight against their present main enemy.

A PROGRAM OF STRUGGLE AGAINST REACTION

Comrade Bittelman, in an article in the *Daily Worker* of October 28, published as a judgment of the Political Bureau, gave our detailed analysis of the program of struggle against the recession.

Let me emphasize some features of this program of struggle. First of all, the government, by its policies, can influence the development of the economic situation, but all the proposals coming from reaction, all the tendencies within the administration, such as that represented by Morgenthau's speech the other day—all such tendencies as these will serve to intensify the crisis and not bring any recovery whatever. The increase of the social program of the government, the increase of public works, the increase of unemployment relief and the more strict control of finance and industry by the government are the line of governmental struggle against the threatening crisis. For the labor movement, in its extra-legislative demands on these questions, the points we have to emphasize are the necessity of the trade unions, and especially the new C.I.O. unions, to take up the struggle against unemployment, the struggle against the closing down of factories, and to begin to implement the line given by John L. Lewis in the Atlantic City meeting of the C.I.O., in which he proclaimed the right to a job of every American worker.

We must do everything in our power to secure through the trade unions, and especially through the C.I.O. unions, that they take up as an organic part of trade union activity the struggle of their members who are thrown out of the factories today; and this must be given special organizational forms within the unions.

Next, we must combat most energetically within these unions the ideology, which is especially expressed by

Lovestone and other renegade elements, that now the economic recession is beginning, the advance of the trade union movement is impossible, that any idea of struggle of those still in the factories must be stopped, and that it is necessary to surrender to all demands of the employers. These treacherous ideas, which play directly into the hands of finance capital, must be systematically combatted by a more energetic struggle to protect those in the factories, combined with the systematic fight for those thrown out of work, as an organic part of trade union activities. This is the second great item necessary for the struggle against the recession.

By the way, it is of more than ordinary interest to note that President Roosevelt, in his message to the Special Session of Congress on Nov. 15, has adopted a substantially correct analysis when he declared that the underlying economic situation does not justify the present recession. We believe the President is sound on that point. The President was further quite sound, when he declared for energetic action by the government to secure reversal of this trend. It is true the President did not point out the sit-down strikes of monopoly capital and denounce them; it is true rather, that he adopted a conciliatory tone towards the sit-down strikes of finance capital, much more conciliatory than to the sit-down strikes of the workers. The President seems to hope to coax these sit-down strikers out of their holes. The more the President and members of his Cabinet wheedle and coax, the more do the economic royalists scurry and crawl and gather their forces for new attacks upon pro-

gressive measures of the Roosevelt administration.

O'Connor's speech in the Senate yesterday constitutes one of the most rabid attacks that has ever been made upon anything progressive in the administration. The opening of Congress had been accompanied by an unprecedented barrage of reactionary propaganda for the purpose of blocking Roosevelt's program and embarking upon a clearer reactionary course. All of this is setting the stage for still more brutal attacks against the toiling masses all the way down the line by monopoly capital and reaction.

In order fully to understand this situation at the opening of Congress, we must give some attention to reviewing the last session of Congress, the defeat of the progressive legislative program there and the people's answer to this in the municipal elections in November, 1937.

In the first session of the present Congress, from January to August, the progressive legislative program sponsored by Roosevelt and the labor movement was almost entirely emasculated or defeated by a hostile majority. This majority was made up in the main of the Right-wing members of Roosevelt's own party, in open coalition with the Republicans. The mandate of the 1936 elections was sabotaged and defeated in Congress by those men who had ridden to victory in the elections on Roosevelt's coat tails.

The central issue around which reaction rallied all its forces was opposition to Roosevelt's plan of Supreme Court reform. Keeping the Landon Republicans in the background, making the renegade New Dealers their

front-line fighters and presenting in the center the so-called progressive Wheeler, reaction waged a bitter fight with a clever strategy, which registered a maximum of reactionary force; they reached their main objective of temporarily defeating the court reform, and along with it the chief items of social legislation before the session.

A big effort has been made within the progressive circles to brand the court reform as a mistake, a mistake from the point of view of program, certain of defeat and of dividing the progressives. That trend carried to defeat other progressive legislation which could otherwise have been adopted. This view would have us see in the court reform plan the cause of the reactionary advance and the set-back for the cause of progress. An extreme example of this attitude is Oswald Garrison Villard, the old-time liberal, the old-time progressive, who openly joined the reactionary camp on this issue. Another example is LaGuardia. LaGuardia kept silent on the question, and although he was cited in the election campaign as having been a supporter of Roosevelt's Supreme Court proposal, he was not. He did not commit himself. He did not come out against it; but neither did he say a single word for it. The overwhelming majority vote received by the Mayor in the last elections is certainly a mandate by the people of New York that the Mayor shall come out with a more positive and energetic support of all progressive measures proposed by the President.

Norman Thomas is a special example, with his shameless parroting of the reactionary slogans against Roosevelt, his shameless newspaper

statements against the court reform plan, which were seized upon and used by the reactionary press to the utmost, and especially by his scandalous campaign on the Black issue.

It is necessary to combat and decisively defeat this point of view among the masses, among the progressive circles; to defeat this point of view in whatever form it presents itself. It is necessary to combat and defeat it even when it is expressed by taking a defensive attitude on the court reform plan in face of these reactionary attacks, instead of replying with an offensive, an energetic struggle and propaganda for the court reform.

It is a fact, which we must establish everywhere, that the Roosevelt fight for reform of the Supreme Court remains, even in face of defeat in Congress, one of his outstanding achievements, one of the most positive contributions of permanent value in the history of our country. The Roosevelt plan correctly centered the attention of the masses on the Supreme Court as the main citadel of reaction and the chief obstacle in the way of progressive legislation. It placed the Supreme Court on the defensive before American democracy. It drastically reduced the freedom of action of the court and caused it to reverse itself by upholding minimum wage laws hitherto declared unconstitutional. Above all, it brought an issue to the fore which crystallized the class forces in the country as never before and greatly hastened the regrouping and realignment in American political life, which will bring forward the People's Front.

It was largely upon the basis of the Supreme Court issue that we found it

possible in our June Central Committee meeting, when the outcome of the Congressional fight was still in doubt, to predict a fundamental realignment in American politics arising out of that fight, to welcome this realignment as progressive and to recast our tactics to fit the new situation. Surely our judgment then was not based on any guarantee that the court reform plan would win a Congressional majority, although it did emphatically assume that it would win a majority of the population in the country. We are certainly not faced with any necessity to revise our estimate. Everything that has happened has confirmed the correctness of our line. Roosevelt took up the challenge of reaction and went to the country with a series of programmatic speeches, with a trip to the Pacific Northwest to test the temper of the people.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AND THE PROGRESSIVE FORCES

Four features of Roosevelt's campaign require special note: First, the speech in Roanoke, Va., before Congress adjourned, in which he gave out the slogan, "Democracy—more democracy," and in which he answered the charge of socialism against the New Deal.

"I fear very much," the President stated, "that if certain modern Americans, who protest loudly their devotion to American ideals, were suddenly to be given a comprehensive view of the earliest American colonists and their methods of life and government, they would promptly label them Socialists. They would forget that in these pioneer settlements were all the germs of the later American Constitution."

Second is his Constitution Day Ad-

dress, a basic programmatic speech, far in advance of anything we had ever heard before. Third, the speeches in the Northwest on Public Works and the Farmers Problems, directed to special sections of the population. And, fourth, the Chicago speech, outlining a positive peace policy. *These pronouncements of Roosevelt, when taken together, with the more concrete proposals of the C.I.O. legislative program developed in Atlantic City, on October 11, provide a rounded-out People's Front program of an advanced type.* That does not mean to say *we already have a People's Front to realize that program.* No, we have it only in a small elementary, unstable form. But the program for such a front is here.

At the Massachusetts Party Convention, September 19, four days after Roosevelt's Constitution Day Address, I dealt with the main questions of Roosevelt's speech in the following way:

"Last Friday I listened, in company with most Americans, with deepest interest and attention to the extraordinary speech of our President. There is not the slightest doubt that it expressed the deepest desires and thoughts that unite the majority of the American people against the threat from Wall Street and the Liberty League. I have no hesitation in declaring for the Communist Party and its followers that with the central thoughts and the direction of President Roosevelt's speech, we are in practical agreement, and that on such questions with which we disagree these are not questions for immediate practical solution.

"Let me make this precise by quot-

ing from the President those thoughts with which we agree:

"In our generation, a new idea has come to dominate thought about government—the idea that the resources of the nation can be made to produce a far higher standard of living for the masses if only government is intelligent and energetic in giving the right direction to economic life.

"That idea—or more popularly that ideal—is wholly justified by the facts. It cannot be thrust aside by those who want to go back to the conditions of ten years ago or even preserve the conditions of today. It puts all forms of government to proof."

"With this central thought of President Roosevelt's speech, we declare our heartiest agreement. With every group or person which makes this thought the guide in formulating policy, we of the Communist Party can find an ever-growing basis for common action.

"What prevents this policy from being expressed in government action, and what threatens our democratic control of government? President Roosevelt answered this question correctly as follows:

"We have those who really fear the majority rule of democracy, who want old forms of economic and social control to remain in a few hands. They say in their hearts: "If constitutional democracy continues to threaten our control, why should we be against the plutocratic dictatorship which would perpetuate our control?"

"We Communists declare our full agreement with this identification of the main enemy and the form of its threat against the people.

"The President then goes on to express a fear which we believe to be without ground, with which we disagree, and which we think is already disappearing from the minds of progressive Americans. He said:

“And we have those who are in too much of a hurry, who are impatient at the processes of constitutional democracies, who want utopia overnight and are not sure that some vague form of proletarian dictatorship is not the quickest road to it. Both types are equally dangerous. One represents cold-blooded resolve to hold power. We have engaged in a definite, and so far successful, contest against that. The other represents a reckless resolve to seize power. Equally we are against that.’

“In these words the President himself gives the grounds for answering his own fears. The reactionary forces are dangerous because they already ‘hold power,’ and have a ‘cold-blooded resolve’ to maintain it against the majority even if it means the destruction of democracy and the establishment of a ‘plutocratic dictatorship.’ This is a terrific threat, for these economic royalists control the economy of the country, control a large part of the President’s own party in Congress, control numerous local and state governments, and are building up private armies, vigilante movements and arsenals.

“But the impatient ones among the masses, those who want to jump to utopia overnight, can have no power except the power of large numbers, and numbers they can get only if the majority of the people should come to feel that they have been betrayed by their progressive and democratic leaders, or if these leaders should prove themselves incapable to ‘produce a far higher standard of living for the masses.’ Only produce constantly that higher standard of living, even show only a consistent and effective fight for it, and all fear of the impatient masses can be laid aside as unreal.

“The American masses are very pa-

tient—far too patient in fact—and the President has no real problem of holding them back. In fact, he could have advanced his program more effectively against his enemies, if he had called the masses to his assistance more consistently. Roosevelt’s strength lies solely in his support among the masses, and if he sincerely wishes victory he must rely more upon it, as did Thomas Jefferson before him.

“Proletarian dictatorship can become a practical order of the day in America only if President Roosevelt’s promise of a higher standard of living under the present system is defeated or betrayed. We of the Communist Party are prepared to cooperate with everybody who will help to win that higher standard of living for the masses.

“The Communist Party repudiates now as in the past all theories or proposals looking toward a forcible imposition of socialism or any utopia upon the majority of the people. We repudiate the ‘reckless resolve to seize power’ by any minority. If there should arise in America anything similar to the situation in Spain, where the democratic republic while repulsing the fascist invasion was stabbed in the back by the ‘uncontrollable extremists’ (a minority of the anarchists and the Trotskyite P.O.U.M.) then we, like our brothers of the Spanish Communist Party would be in the forefront of the struggle to suppress such ‘extremists,’ who are really agents of fascism, and render them harmless.

“The Communist Party represents a strong and growing force to support and help every progressive tendency

in American political life, and in no case to distract the progressive People's Front from its fight against the main enemy, the reactionaries and fascists.

"Therefore we declare that President Roosevelt's fears of impatient ones, who want utopia overnight, who want some vague form of proletarian dictatorship—this fear is not valid, and especially is he wrong to say it is 'equally dangerous' with the threat of the economic royalists to destroy democracy.

"The proof of what I say can be found in the reception given Roosevelt's speech itself by the reactionaries and by the Communists. The Liberty Leaguers foam at the mouth with rage against the President, but we Communists welcome his speech, agree with its central thoughts, and quietly and calmly tell the President that he has nothing to fear from us, but, on the contrary, will receive our help, so long as he really tries to carry out his declared program."

The masses have responded to President Roosevelt's more developed program at least as enthusiastically as they rallied to him a year ago when at Madison Square Garden he promised them such a program in more general terms. Even some hostile newspapers have been forced to admit that Roosevelt's trip to the Northwest was a triumphant procession, with the masses turning out to demonstrate their support of the President as against his enemies. The speeches of Roosevelt's opponents in Congress do not represent the temper of the country. This was also demonstrated in the local elections held in many places this month.

A REVIEW OF THE RECENT LOCAL ELECTIONS

Let us briefly review the most significant features of the question. New York City was the focal point of the local elections. Here the Democratic Party was defeated. This was a defeat of Tammany which is one of the centers of the more vicious opposition to Roosevelt and his policies, of which Al Smith is one of the chief ruling members. It was the American Labor Party which emerged as a real factor, the same Party which supported Roosevelt in 1936 and reiterated its support during and in the present elections. The Republican Party was in the winning coalition in New York; but only at the price of accepting the candidate's platform and allies a thousand times more akin to Roosevelt than to Landon, Hamilton, Hoover and Hearst.

The victory of the American Labor Party ticket was a sign that the tide of 1936 is running stronger than ever. The American Labor Party carried through an election policy closely approximating that which the Communist Party has been urging for two years—the People's Front Policy. This victory was proof of the soundness of this policy. While New York, traditionally Democratic, was lost by the Democratic Party, the city of Buffalo, N. Y., traditionally Republican was won by the Democrats. In both cases the decisive influence was the same—the American Labor Party and Roosevelt following. The loss in the Detroit elections of the labor ticket by a vote of approximately five to three is in direct contrast to the New York victory.

Yet in Detroit labor cast a higher proportion of the total vote than in New York; 37 per cent as against 22 per cent. But in Detroit the labor ticket did not follow the People's Front consistently, was not conceived in the beginning in the spirit of the People's Front policy. It had made a too narrow labor appeal and had allowed the slogans in the interests of the whole of the people of Detroit to be used by the reactionaries. It had even failed to unite the labor vote itself, due to the A. F. of L. spite vote for the reactionary candidates.

The Detroit vote demonstrated the very high potentiality of labor in politics but at the same time it demonstrated that a narrow trade union approach to politics is woefully inadequate for victory, that only the People's Front policy can successfully meet the needs of the day. It demonstrated also that independent political organization is an indispensable prerequisite to serious victory and that the trade unions cannot directly perform successfully the functions of a political party.

In Pittsburgh the New Deal Democratic ticket won hands down, with the support of labor in an alignment similar to that of New York, but without the independent organization of labor's forces. At the same time in the cities of Akron and Canton, Ohio, the progressive Democrats backed by Labor's Non-Partisan League were defeated. Undoubtedly one serious contributing factor in each defeat was that the candidates retreated before the Red scare and tried to do a little Red baiting on their own account. They also, in a different way from Detroit, made the fatal mistake of re-

jecting the People's Front policy.

It is significant to mention the campaign in Cleveland with Comrade Onda running for City Council. Comrade Onda came within 382 votes of being elected, and made a really outstanding campaign, an example to the whole Party of serious mass work, an example which should be more thoroughly studied and made available to the whole Party. One of the most serious achievements of the Ohio district has been that campaign for the City Council of Comrade Onda. It should be studied both for its strong points and for its weaknesses. If some of these weaknesses had been a little earlier foreseen and steps taken to remedy them, Comrade Onda would certainly be in the Council today.

The New Jersey state elections give the negative lessons of the impossibility of progress without an independent political organization of labor. There was little to choose between the Democratic and Republican candidates who represented machines which cooperated to keep a stranglehold on New Jersey politics. New Jersey gave a picture of what New York was like before the emergence of the American Labor Party.

Red-baiters were systematically defeated wherever they were opposed by clear-cut progressives; wherever they were opposed by those who did not themselves surrender to the Red scare. The debacle of Copeland, and after him Mahoney, in New York, was matched in Massachusetts by the defeat of Senator Sherman who, I understand, campaigned on the platform of Red-baiting stunts in the State Committee to Investigate Subversive Activities.

POLITICAL CURRENTS IN AMERICA
MOVING TOWARDS A PEOPLE'S
FRONT

More clearly than ever, the political currents in America are moving in the direction of a People's Front against reaction, fascism and war; and in these election results, we have additional proof of the correctness of our strategy and tactics. Clearly, in most cities and localities the most important instrument for the next period, especially in preparing for the Congressional elections of 1938, is Labor's Non-Partisan League. Where the League is well-organized and active and has broadened its policies and functioning, there decisive progress is being made. Where it is neglected, where it is hesitant and silent, or where it operates with narrow policies and forces, in such places the reactionaries are still able to have their own way. In those states and cities where other forms than Labor's Non-Partisan League are already at work, there the best cooperative relations with the League need to be established on a national scale.

The development of Labor's Non-Partisan League is of the utmost importance in preparing for the 1938 Congressional elections. When we say 1938 elections, most people have a tendency to think that means a year from now. But unless the major work is done between now and March, the Congressional elections are going to be a failure and a victory for the reactionaries. If we are going to have a progressive victory in the Congressional elections next November, the foundation for that victory has to be laid between now and the spring—

precisely during the winter months. In some states nominations have to be made in March, and in every case the work that is done during the winter is going to decide whether there will be a progressive victory or a reactionary victory.

This is a pressing, immediate question. In many places Labor's Non-Partisan League is not moving at all yet. It is the business of all labor and progressive forces to make sure that it does move. It is particularly decisive that we bend every effort to secure and guarantee this end. Everywhere we must help the movement overcome the mistake of neglecting the independent political organization of labor on the grounds that the trade unions themselves can do the political work. Experience has proved a thousand times over that this is impossible. Unity of labor, unity of all progressive forces in the People's Front, independent political organization, combined with the widest mobilization of the masses behind the legislative program of Roosevelt and the C.I.O.—these provide the means of the next great forward step.

In connection with the struggle for Roosevelt's peace policy, which I dealt with partially in the beginning, I must raise the special problem with regard to the Congress for Peace and Democracy in Pittsburgh next week. This Congress is of the most extraordinary significance, and we have the impression that in many districts it has been woefully neglected. Some districts have done excellent work, and we must say that the response to the movement generally, independent of our work, is greater than ever before. It is not too late for the com-

rades to do very important work to strengthen this Congress in Pittsburgh. This Congress in Pittsburgh can and must become the starting point of a big forward sweep of the peace movement which will transform the American League into a mass organization and a powerful force.

One of the obstacles up to the present has been the fact that the Socialist Party and the Farmer-Labor Party and other political groupings have not become organic parts of the movement. The result has been that the Communist Party, being the only affiliated political party, has sort of stood out in the situation and has been thereby the subject of all of the attacks of our enemies who try thereby to label the American League as a Communist organization. Of course, it is not, and neither is the presence of the Communist Party as the only political party in the League, our choice, and is not the realization of our program with regard to the League.

In facing this question we have come to the conclusion to propose to the executive of the American League that at the Congress in Pittsburgh, we eliminate this question from controversy by deciding in the organization of the Congress that for the time being political organizations will have only fraternal affiliation to the League and will not be organic affiliated bodies with voting rights but with organizational rights, and that the League be based only on mass organizations that take in members without distinction as to politics.

Formally it is a step backwards in the sense that after long years spent with the League we now voluntarily remove the official participation of

the Communist Party as an affiliated organization. This is only the formal side of it. The practical side will be that the Communists will be more energetic participants than ever before. Their right will be fully preserved. I think that we can depend upon our enemies to make clear to the entire country that the Communists have not been excluded from the American League.

A broad, all inclusive peace movement is a vital necessity at this time, and the action of the Party will facilitate the rapid emergence of such a movement. While this step will not create a big revolution in the League it is going to create the conditions whereby, with the proper work, the basis of the League can be rapidly and correctly extended, making it much stronger than it is at present.

TRADE UNION UNITY

A few words about the question of trade union unity and the negotiations now going on between the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. We have dealt with this thoroughly and concretely and in a sustained fashion in our press.

The action of the C.I.O. conference in Atlantic City in accelerating these negotiations was excellently timed and well carried out. It was done with a clarity and unanimity that was a revelation to the whole country. This is particularly true of the unity question. The fact that the A. F. of L. convention, after having been a build-up for war and very little else, was forced in the last moment completely to reverse itself and demobilize, was, in itself, a tremendous victory for unity and a tremen-

dous strengthening of the C.I.O. throughout the whole country.

The negotiations so far are on the whole good. That is, they place the issue clearly and squarely before the labor movement and before the country and they ensure a clearer line-up on the questions. That means they ensure a maximum pressure for unity and that pressure is developing. The longer the negotiations continue the more has the pressure for unity been developing in the A. F. of L. ranks, the more impossible it is for the Executive Council to break off these negotiations or to present impossible ultimatata. This will probably be true for some time yet and we, therefore, must not be impatient in our demands for immediate conclusions to come out of these negotiations. The demand that negotiations must bring forward progressive results is our demand, and whatever time is necessary to achieve those progressive results can well be afforded. On the whole, on this question our slogans, our policies have again been proved 100 per cent correct, and by being correct they have registered in the life of the movement far beyond our immediate circle of influence.

III. THE HISTORIC ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE PRESENT PARTY BUILDING CAMPAIGN

Now I must say a few words about the building of the Party and its press, some aspects of which will be the subject of a special report and discussion and which I will not go into. The results of the first period of our recruiting campaign with 10,000 new members so far recorded proves the general correctness of our estimate of

the possibilities, which we made in our June Plenum. But they are far from measuring up to our expectations and demands. The drive was slow in getting under way. It was only in the last four weeks that it can be said that we have involved our active members generally. This made it advisable to agree to the request of our leading districts to extend the special campaign to January. By that time the habit of recruiting as a permanent feature of Party activity should be well established and we will have some decisive results to examine. We should by January have 75,000 members and if every district will make an effort to have the dues payments improved, we should have a general average of 75 per cent dues payment.

We have uncovered a great wealth of Party builders among our members and these people have accomplished wonders. Their work must be popularized and their example used to stir the inactive ones to new life. There have been many new problems exposed in the course of the Party building campaign. I don't want to go into all of these problems at this time. But some few must be especially recognized and emphasized.

The first is that there is still not a general advance in the Party. Some of our most important districts still lag. Especially alarmingly do they lag in dues payments. This condition proves the lack of a healthy Party foundation in these districts, the lack of the preconditions for Party growth, correct relationships within the district, between the membership and leadership. There is an insufficient connection between the leading line of the Party and the organizational

life of the Party and we must begin to put our attention to these points and secure guarantees of overcoming this.

THE "DAILY WORKER," AN INSTRUMENT OF MASS EDUCATION

The circulation and financial drive of our press lags behind the recruiting, especially circulation. Nothing can take the place of the *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker*. This is our paper, our instrument of mass education. If circulation lags behind we are crippled. All other gains stand in danger of being lost. This meeting must arrive at some understanding of how we are going to approach this question. It must decide how we can handle this problem in a serious manner. We have a political paper now of which we can justly be proud, even though we strive by all means to continue its improvement. It can reach hundreds of thousands if we do our part. It must be done.

Thousands of new members coming into our ranks are still new members, not yet securely attached to the Party, a part of its life, a permanent addition. They must be held. If we fail at this time, the whole recruiting campaign has been a loss. We will fail unless we sincerely improve the inner life of the Party units; improve the work of Party committees, raise the level of Party education, improve the quality of our leading cadres. A consistent development of inner Party democracy is the foundation for improvement on all these points. *Party democracy, responsible leadership, raising of the political level of our work—these are the keys of building the Party as the key of all successful*

work among the masses. We must make more demands, more persistent demands around these lines in every district, every section of our Party.

PROBLEMS OF OUR LEADING CADRES

In this respect we must say some very serious words about the problems of our leading cadres. We must begin to draw more serious lessons from some of the experiences of our brother Party in the Soviet Union in the struggle against Trotskyite wreckers and fascist spies, and the ability of these poisonous elements to penetrate seriously in the ranks of the Party of successful proletarian dictatorship.

It gives us a much deeper understanding of the tasks that we have in the consolidation and building of leading cadres of the Party here where we are a small Party working under the tremendous pressure of the capitalist environment. We have to conduct a constant study and examination of all our leading cadres from a point of view of promoting new and strong people that can come forward in the mass work. We have to improve all leading cadres, systematically, from a point of view of correcting their mistakes, patiently helping them to overcome their weaknesses and, in the last resort, weeding out those who cannot make the grade.

There are serious problems involved in this which have to be taken up consciously and systematically by every district of our Party, as well as by the Central Committee. We must become more demanding upon everyone who pretends to occupy leading positions in such a great movement as ours. We must raise the standards,

and the raising of these standards involves political line, and equally, it involves personal character and conduct. Every Communist leader must learn that his political line is worth exactly nothing, unless he is able to win the confidence and respect of the masses, and that is won, not only by political line, but by personal character and personal conduct.

Our Party is operating today in the midst of a great mass movement. The spotlight is on us. The slightest weaknesses are exaggerated and made use of by our enemies. And let no one think that you can separate personal from political life. You cannot do it; not in leading work in the Communist movement. We must create a much keener realization of this fact in all our members. Any manifestation of looseness or penetration into our ranks of bourgeois habits, particularly with respect to personal life, must be rooted out, because it is precisely from such things as this that the enemies recruit in our ranks. It has been an almost invariable result of examination of political degeneration that it almost always is accompanied by personal degeneration. We must begin to examine the private lives of all of our leading cadres as a necessary and unavoidable part of the guarantee of the political integrity of our Party. And this applies to everybody, from top to bottom. And to the degree that we find problems that cannot be corrected, let us know in advance that there is always a final way of guaranteeing the Party against dangers—that is, removing people from responsible positions if they cannot give us a guarantee of their ability to protect the Party, to protect its line,

protect its prestige, protect its reputation among the masses. Every member of the leadership of the Party has got to contribute positively, making the Party's reputation spotless, unattackable among the masses.

In this connection we must raise once again the question of the proper political relations within the leadership—the Central Committee, the District Committees, the Section Committees—the development of real collective work, the proper attitude towards the promotion of new forces. We must raise the tradition and atmosphere of modesty in developing the leading role of our committees and their spokesmen.

These problems we have discussed many times. We know what the problems are. We know what has to be done, but we don't see always sufficient action, sufficient progress in bringing about the correct relations which guarantee the growth and health of our Party; which guarantee our Party against the alien enemy influences, which guarantee our becoming a strong mass Party.

We must again speak of these things, and we must begin to learn that where our work is not going ahead as it should, where we are not registering sufficient results, there we will usually find that the reason for it is not in objective difficulties, not in the difficulties made by our enemies from the outside, but in our own subjective weaknesses, in our own lack of systematic digging out these weaknesses, and finding a cure for them. It will be found in the liberal and tolerant approach to these weaknesses and a tendency to cover them up, and not face them. It will be found in

that tendency to take the easy way and to find mechanical solutions. There is no mechanical solution to these problems. There is no easy answer. And the central characteristic of a Bolshevik Party which distinguishes it from all others, is the ability to face, unflinchingly, all of the weaknesses, to attack them fundamentally, to secure the guarantees that these weaknesses will be overcome.

**WE MUST FACE THE PROBLEMS SHARPLY
AND CLEARLY**

Our Party is making great progress. We are securing a thousand proofs of the correctness of our political line, but we have not the slightest reason for self-satisfaction. We have an enormously favorable situation in which we are moving forward fairly slowly. This must make everyone of us very self-critical, must enforce upon us the lesson of modesty, must force us to constantly re-examine each one his own work and collectively our collective work. It must make us more demanding for a more decisive improvement, a more fearless facing of our weaknesses and shortcomings, and a real concerted drive of all of us together to solve our problems with the same spirit and the same method in which Comrade Stalin, in his famous speech last spring on mastering Bolshevism, stated the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is solving and facing one of its historic tasks, that of cleansing the Soviet power of all weaknesses, to prepare for the decisive world

battles immediately confronting us.

We are a small Party. The Party of the Soviet Union is a very big one. We are a Party only coming to maturity. Our great Brother Party has been administering state power for 20 years. But our role is clearly responsible—and in terms of history, of world development as it will be written, if we measure up to our responsibilities, if we create such a Party as will be able to organize and mobilize the American people in the coming battles on the side of progress, democracy and peace, then we will have earned our right to speak of ourselves as a Bolshevik Party, the great Party of Lenin and Stalin.

But we must approach the problem of our Party building in the light of the tremendous tasks we have assumed, in the light of the limited time we have to accomplish them, with the knowledge of the world of enemy forces with which we are surrounded and which we have to meet and defeat not only in the mass struggles but in the very formation of the character of our Party members and leaders. We have to transform society, and we have to begin that job by transforming ourselves. We have to make the working class powerful and strong. We have to begin by making ourselves powerful and strong and immune to all the influences of a decaying capitalist society. We cannot do it unless we face these problems sharply and clearly. If we face these problems sharply and clearly, we will solve them.