THE STRIKE WAVE CONSPIRACY*

BY EARL BROWDER

THE present moment is characterized by the turn in the war in which the ultimate defeat of the Axis has been written in large letters for the whole world to see. The brilliant completion of the North African campaign with the occupation of Bizerte and Tunis by the British, American and French soldiers, and the rapid mopping up afterwards which netted 175,000 Axis prisoners, are a sign of the times.

The North African campaign, so well completed, and the rising tide of British and American air raids on Nazi munitions and communication centers, have merged with the victories of the Red Army on the Eastern Front-victories on a scale unprecedented in military history create the preconditions for breaking the backbone of Hitlerism in 1943. The decisive phase of the war has arrived; the road to victory lies straight ahead and needs only the immediate and full development of coalition warfare, unmoved by military or political diversions, to crush Hitler in the iron ring of a two-front war.

Hitler and his associates are fully

The Alter-Ehrlich Conspiracy The first open break in the United Nations was registered in provocations of the Polish government-in-exile which joined Berlin's propaganda against the Soviet Union, compelling the Soviet Government to suspend diplomatic relations with the Sikorski government. A New York Herald Tribune correspondent in London cabled to his paper day ortwo diplomatic the break in

relations the opinion expressed in

conservative circles in London, that

aware of this and are frantically trying to avert disaster by mobilizing all their resources and calling up their reserves. Hitler has already mobilized all of his fighting forces in Germany and is now combing the war factories for able-bodied men, replacing them with slave labor from the occupied countries. At the same time he has called upon his fifth column in the United States to go into action. The military record over many months has gone steadily and inexorably against Hitler, but he has still been able to register surprising strength on the diplomatic and fifth-column front, especially in this country.

^{*} This article is based on a speech delivered at Manhattan Center, New York, May 14, 1943.

the Sikorski government would never have dared to join in Goebbels' provocation about the missing Polish officers had it not been for the fact that they had been encouraged to expect United States support in such a position by the success that had attended the campaign in the American labor movement against the Soviet Union on the basis of the Ehrlich-Alter case.

It is true that a very small proportion of the American labor movement responded to this provocation on the Ehrlich-Alter case. However, I believe we have all made a serious error in underestimating the importance of this issue. We saw it too much as an isolated incident which would soon be over and forgotten, leaving the mass of the workers untouched and unaffected. We failed to see that it was a part of the whole pattern of Nazi conquest through the division of its enemies.

It is time we put an end to that underestimation because, although a very small section of the American working class in any way responded to that campaign, the campaign was carried out by men who hold powerful and strategic positions in the American labor movement and who compromised in their provocation important and honest leaders who did not know what they were being inveigled into. In this way the conspirators transmitted to a large section of the American population and the working class an attitude of suspicion and uneasiness toward our Soviet ally, precisely at the moment when that would do the most harm to the united war effort to strike Hitler this year and finish him.

These conspirators had powerful press organs in their hands for this purpose. They not only had the collaboration of a large section of the capitalist daily press. Through the presence of members of this anti-Soviet conspiracy in strategic positions in the labor press, they were able to make powerful trade union organs the bearers of this poisonous propaganda.

Thus in the months of March and April, the United Auto Workers News, the organ of the great automotive union, which happens to be by former edited а associate Social-Democratic of the Nem Leader in New York, carried not one single line to expose the crimes of the Nazis, but every single issue has thundered against the supposed crimes of our ally, Soviet Russia. Another former associate of the New Leader is the editor of the C.I.O. News of the State of Michigan. And there we find the same thing repeated: and it is no accident that this concentration has been right at the heart of the war industry in Detroit. They have dinned it into the ears of the workers that the great David Dubinsky of New York vouches for Alter and Ehrlich and says that those two men in the Soviet Union could no more have been guilty of appealing to the Red Army to desert to the Nazis, than David Dubinsky himself. But they did not tell the workers that David Dubinsky, on a public platform in New York only last week declared his solidarity with the sentiments expressed by N. Chanin, in the magazine Friend in January, 1942, that "the final shot will come from Free America—and from this last shot the Stalin regime will be shot to pieces," or that earlier David Dubinsky had defended another advocate of desertion from the Red Army, a Ukrainian associate and protegé of Dubinsky's who published a pamphlet in the City of Detroit in the Ukrainian language, addressed to Ukrainians and Russians and presumably transmitted through the international channels organization the centering around the New Leader to Soviet territory.

After stating that he is hostile to the Soviet Government, this man wrote in the pamphlet:

"Consciousness of national duty justifies desertion from the army of a hostile government. All dissatisfied elements will take advantage of this, their right, in order not to risk their lives."

This is addressed to the Red Army, and is an appeal to them to desert, not to fight the Germans. The circulation of this began about the time Alter and Ehrlich were arrested and charged with doing the same thing in the Soviet Union.

Dubinsky defended this man in the United States. He later defended Alter and Ehrlich. How can anyone doubt that Ehrlich and Alter said the same thing in the Soviet Union that their friends and protectors were saying in the United States?

Why did these men have the "courage" to be so bold in the Soviet Union? The answer is found in their own predictions at the same time that the Red Army and Soviet

Government would crumble under Hitler's assaults.

These men were speculating on the victory of Hitler over the Soviet Union, and today we see them beginning to speculate on the defeat of the United States. They still believe in Hitler's victory. They are still speculating on it and they are ready to go to great lengths to prevent Hitler from being defeated.

Another Diversion

That is the significance of the whipping up and the careful cultivation of the strike movement among the American workers at this moment, which, if it materialized, would prevent the opening of the second front this year. The same people who launched the first campaign in Berlin's propaganda break the unity of the United Nations and prepared the grounds for the present move, are now engaged in an effort to involve American labor in a broad strike wave against the government of the United States. There can be no doubt that if this movement continues to grow. it will confront the whole labor movement, as well as the entire nation and its allies with a major cripolitical sis. a and economic diversion directed against the development of the joint Anglo-Soviet-American war to a decisive and victorious conclusion.

It is indicative of the character of this strike movement that its basic premise is the contention that labor is not itself interested in winning this war, and that only the government and the employers have a special interest in victory. But as I stated in a recent speech on the mine strike and its lessons:

". . . this is a false and vicious argument. The war is first of all labor's war. There is not the slightest hope for the existence of free labor, or organized labor, anywhere in the world today except at the price of destroying Hitler and his Axis. The working class furnishes the main body of men who must fight this war on the battlefields. Labor's sweat and sacrifice alone produce and can produce the weapons of victory. Labor first and most of all will pay the terrible price of defeat in slavery. Labor first and most of all is interested in victory, which alone can preserve free labor." (The Worker, May 16, 1943.)

The second premise which the promoters of the strike movement attempt to convince the workers to accept is that all efforts to redress their grievances have failed because of the no-strike policy and that a few threats of strike, little strikes, or a big general strike would get immediate results. These people do not want labor to cooperate with the Administration or with management for victory; they do not want increased income for the workers based on increased production for the war; they do not want to solve the wage problem at all. They want only to break the back of the Roosevelt Administration by means of a deliberately planned strike movement which would open the way to a negotiated peace with Hitler instead of his unconditional surrender, and bring the war to an end without victory for the United States and the United Nations.

If you cannot find a settlement for these grievances without striking, it means you cannot conduct the war, because you cannot strike and have a war at the same time. If you think these grievances are more important than the war, then your place is with John L. Lewis and Matthew Woll and such people as Walter Reuther, and all the advocates of a negotiated peace. If you think that victory is above everything else, then you will have to go along with a no-strike policy no matter what you think of these grievances. If you not only place victory above everything else but understand that we can settle many of these grievances, even though we won't get 100 per cent satisfaction, you will not only go on with the no-strike movement but you will also continue to work with the government for the settlement of these questions and will help stop all this nonsense of withdrawing labor's representatives from the government bodies.

Is it true that we have an Administration which is indifferent or hostile to labor and its grievances? Is it true that this Administration has to be bludgeoned into doing anything? While reserving the right to indulge in the sharpest kind of constructive criticism of the Administration necessary in the interest of victory, it must be said that, with all its weaknesses, the Roosevelt Administration has organized and conducted a great war with fewer burdens placed upon the working class and fewer rights taken away from the working class than has ever happened in any capitalist country in the world before.

How To Get Tough

We have had a long period in the United States in which the present labor movement grew up and the strike was the principal weapon in defense of labor's economic interests. When we talked about getting tough, we usually meant getting prepared for a strike movement. and out of that has grown a habit that if you don't talk about strike you are getting soft. I am not giving up the fight for the improvement of all the conditions necessary for waging this war. I am going to do some tough fighting for improving the policies, and adjusting the conditions of labor and wages in the course of this war. But would I be able to get tough if I joined the strike movement?

The worst section of the employers, those least anxious for the unconditional surrender of Hitler and the destruction of fascism, are the very ones who want the strike movement. Is it getting tough when you give these employers what they want? Or do we want to strike against employers that are ready to collaborate in the settlement of questions? Those who are not ready to settle problems are the ones who want us to strike the most. How can we call it getting tough when we play into their hands? That is not getting tough; that is getting soft and where it hurts the most, in the head.

To get tough means holding a disciplined labor movement together, studying and understanding its problems, formulating a way in which these problems can be solved.

and then pressing the solution upon the government and the employers, with the united power of labor—the political power of organized labor. That is the solution to this question.

As to the specific answers to these problems—they are all given by the C.I.O. and Philip Murray has repeated them time and again. We would be much tougher, and further along in the solution of these questions if we united around Philip Murray instead of helping the Lewises and Reuthers by sitting back and letting Murray fight out these questions without sufficient support from us.

A little story, told to me in Milwaukee, will illustrate the extent to which wage questions can be solved by cooperation with the government. This story concerns three small factories working in war production, similar in size, doing the same type of work, under the same general working conditions. wages hours. We'll call them Factory A, B and C. Each one had a separate business agent; each one worked out its own wage demands; the union in each case endorsed them and left it up to the business agent to file the claims with the War Labor Board. They negotiated with the bosses first, of course. In each case the bosses were quite willing to give them what they wanted. The negotiations were very short and sweet and agreement was reached, and it was left up to the business agents in each case to file their application with the War Labor Board, Each one made out his application in the terms he thought best according to his education and experiences; the

applications all went to the War Labor Board; everybody thought they were all going to win or lose together because the justice of the case was quite clear and the same in each factory.

The decisions came back: Factory A, application denied; Factory B, application denied; Factory C, application granted. Immediately the workers were up in arms. "What's this discrimination? Our case is the same, about the same things. The justice of our cause is the same. The War Labor Board turns down two of us and accepts the other one." And a whole strike sentiment developed on the basis of the discrimination. Then they began to examine the applications, and what did they find? Application in Factory A said the workers were entitled to this increase because of the higher cost of living and in general because they needed it and they wanted it. The same thing in Factory B. Factory C. however, had applied for approval of this agreement on the grounds that the factory had within the last period increased its production so much that this wage increase was not even as much as the increase in production, and that the cost per unit in production, therefore, would be even lower under this new rate than it was previously. That is, Factory C claimed its wage increase on the grounds of production increases that had already been achieved. That was the sound basis to argue under the rules of the government, and therefore it was endorsed. Factories A and B had increased their production just as much as Factory C, but under the influence of the Reuther line of thought, they refused to put that argument in their application, and therefore they didn't get their increases.

That is what's happening throughout the automobile industry today. Production is increasing. In most places, it is increasing steadily from week to week. In some departments of some plants, production increase has been as high as 80 per cent. Workers are still getting the same wages they were before. Walter Reuther, opposed to an incentive wage based on increased production, convinced them it was wrong to take such an increase, and the employers agreed that as long as the workers don't want it, they're not going to force them to take it. In the whole automobile industry, workers have increased their production 20 per cent in the last six months at a minimum estimate. If their wages were hitched to their production, they would have a 20 per cent increase, something that even Reuther doesn't tell them to go out and fight for. If they had the incentive wage, they would already have that wage increased.

If you get functioning labor-management committees and really get things moving, production will shoot up, and that will hasten the winning of the war and it will bring large increases in wages to the workers. This is the answer to the main question before the labor movement of how to combine the economic interests of the workers with the production interests for the war, the interests of victory, and only with this policy is it possible to fuse them and prevent the demagogues from

placing one in opposition to the other.

. Many workers have been told the incentive wage policy is nothing more than a speed-up plan. That is one of Walter Reuther's pet propaganda devices. Of course there is a certain element of speed-up in increased production-a minor eleelement ment. The main in increased production is better organization of the work, better coordination of the workers and the departments, better planning, and better execution. There is a certain element of speed-up in war production, and the labor movement has accepted as policy that the workers are going to work harder for the war effort than they ever worked for a private employer. If you are against that, you are against the war, that's all. Let us face it. Do we think we're going to win this war without any kind of burdens, without any sacrifices? We certainly are not. And the problems are going to get worse. Do you think we're going to solve these problems with a slogan of "equality of sacrifice"? We know very well that the bourgeoisie never has agreed to any equality of sacrifice and never will. The point is this is our war. If we don't determine to win it, it isn't going to be won. That is the only question and that is the only answer.

The Forces Behind the Strike Threat

The deliberate nature of the strike movement can be seen from the forces behind it. Just this afternoon I received a copy of the Social-Democratic New Leader dated Saturday, May 15. A double line, full-page headline reads: "Carey, Reuther Lead Union Drive for New Roosevelt Labor Policy." Here we have it right out of the horse's mouth, except that there is one lie in that headline. It should have said, "Drive for New Anti-Roosevelt Labor Policy." Carey and Reuther are supposed to be the new leaders of the American labor movement, according to the sponsors of Ehrlich and Alter.

And what is the characteristic of Carey and Reuther today? They are working in such a way as to give aid and comfort to John L. Lewis to spread the strike movement throughout the labor world. discredit and to overthrow the responsible leadership of organized labor. Carey, it should be remembered, made his first appearance in the strike movement at the Alter-Ehrlich meeting with Dubinsky in New York; his second role was to begin to make speeches everywhere possible in which he lists all of the shortcomings of the Roosevelt Administration, contributing nothing whatsoever to bringing about a solution of them; his third role is now to appear with Reuther in support of Lewis' effort to upset the Roosevelt Administration.

Who else agrees with the New Leader? Norman Thomas and the Call, the Trotskyites and The Militant. This Trotskyite sheet declares: "Mine Leaders Predict Walk-Out"; "Union Members Are Prepared to Fight as Truce Nears End"; and in a modest place, "Earl Browder,

Strikebreaker." Hard words don't break any bones, and as regards the fomenting of the strike movement that threatens America at this present time, I consider it the greatest honor to be a breaker of this movement.

After I made my speech on the mine strike and its lessons in St. Louis on May 7, there gathered in the same city the Regional Conference of the United Auto Workers Union: and to that conference came Walter Reuther. He came to St. Louis fresh from the conference of the Auto Workers in Detroit, the heart of the union, where he had organized a move against the chief leaders of his union, had voted down all their proposals, preventing the denunciation of Lewis and his strike movement and instead engineering a message of cheer to Lewis, and where he endorsed the withdrawal of the union's representatives from the War Labor Board, and had endorsed the withdrawal of the no-strike policy. With these victories behind him, Reuther came to St. Louis on May 9, and the newspapermen asked him to read my speech and comment upon it. As a result, he went into the conference in St. Louis, made a speech against John L. Lewis, said John L. Lewis was manipulating the grievances of the miners for his own personal ends, and then joined the conference in a unanimous reaffirmation of the nostrike policy.

Some people think that Walter Reuther has already seen the error of his ways. I want to warn the Auto Workers and the whole labor movement that the difference between Walter Reuther and John L. Lewis is not so great as it appears. Lewis comes out in the open and Walter Reuther has a hypocritical mask on his face. He squirms around and tries to prevent anything from being on his record that could hold him to responsibility. But every active worker in the Automobile Workers Union knows that Walter Reuther is aiming to take control of the Auto Union and evidently is counting on the help of John L. Lewis as well as his Social-Democratic colleagues. He has encouraged his followers throughout the country to defend John L. Lewis and uses the example of Lewis to bring the airplane and tank workers of this country out on strike as quickly as possible.

It should be noted that even in maneuvers Walter Reuther does not abandon even slightly the central point of his fight as a "new leader." That which he carefully maintains is his fight against the incentive wage. Why is this so important to Reuther that he does not even maneuver with this issue but stands pat 100 per cent against the incentive wage? The reason is that it is by their fight against the incentive wage that they have prevented the airplane and automotive workers from getting wage increases that would have made them immune to the strike moods. They fight against the incentive wage because that fight closes the door to the solution of the grievances of the mass of the workers, and with a closed door against any solution of the biggest wage problem of this

great body of workers you can keep them stirred up, you can get them excited over all the current issues of the day, you can get them desperate in feeling the only way out is strike. That is why Walter Reuther is fighting against the incentive wage in the airplane and automotive industry.

Walter Reuther knows just as well as anyone that the only way to raise the general level of earnings of the workers of his industry is either to break down the declared established policies of the Roosevelt Administration and force a complete general readjustment of the economic policies of the government on a level of higher wages and higher prices, or adopt the incentive wage which would keep prices as they are and wage rates as they are but wage earnings increasing even beyond the demands that are now made by any of the unions. It is one way or the othereither accept the incentive wage or shatter the Roosevelt Administration's policies in the hope that out of it some wage increases might come even at the cost of a general release of prices.

Roosevelt is committed to the present policies and the breakdown of those policies in the face of the hostile Congress would mean a breakdown of the war effort. Even should the movement for strikes in an effort to force a breakdown of the Roosevelt economic policies not succeed immediately, it would destroy the effective power of leadership of the Roosevelt Administration in the war effort and prevent the opening of the Second Front,

and could bring about a general national crisis.

Walter Reuther knows all of that just as well as anybody else; he is not a stupid man; he is a very clever and very able man. If there is any clear objective result to the policy that he is pursuing, it is time the workers understand that Walt Reuther intends that result to come.

A Revealing Banquet

For a direct formulation of these intentions, we can cite the words of Victor Reuther, Walter Reuther's brother and his collaborator, as well as the words of several of his associates delivered at a banquet on April 25. As far as we know, Walter Reuther has never broken with his brother Victor, or with his brother-in-crime, Norman Thomas, who uttered similar words and expressed similar sentiments as Victor at this banquet, which was held significantly enough in the city of Detroit. At this banquet Norman Thomas said, and Victor Reuther agreed, that "the winning of the war has been exalted too much. . . . The size of the Army is one of the greatest wastes of manpower with no reasonable justification for it. . . . Roosevelt is writing speeches while Churchill interprets them and the youth of America have to die."

At the same banquet in Detroit, Matthew Smith, head of the Mechanics Educational Society of America, a company union, was one of the featured speakers. Here is the tenor of his remarks: The war was offensive to me when it was

started....A matter of expediency should not allow any Socialist to support any war at all.... There is no excuse to be in the war any longer than such time as the other side is ready to quit, we haven't a lot to lose on either side of the war.

Drawing the practical conclusion of action from these general sentiments, Matt Smith said: "The M.E.S.A. has never accepted the nostrike clause. It is ready to drop it at the drop of a hat, and without even waiting for that." Walter Reuther is a little ashamed of his union; he's not so ready to drop the clause at the drop of a hat—he's got to get his union to drop the hat to drop the no-strike policy.

Matthew Smith said further: "We have the right to deliver ultimatums and take advantage of the shortage of labor now."

Victor Reuther, who is also an official of the U.A.W., of which his brother is one of the Vice Presidents, spoke next. If he said anything that was directly contrary to the wishes of his brother Walter, it would be something that has never happened before in their careers and what Victor Reuther said fits in exactly with what Walter Reuther is doing.

And Victor Reuther, Assistant Director of War Policy Division of the U.A.W., C.I.O., said at the Norman Thomas banquet: "I agree with many things that Matthew Smith has said; I used to make many of such speeches, years ago. I wish Matt Smith a great deal of success in his ideas." Victor Reuther elaborated on that. He attacked the whole idea of cooperation with the government on war policy for vic-

tory. He said that such policy is leading the labor movement into a blind alley. "Where does the union meet itself?" he declared. "I don't mind fighting McNutt, but some of our people are responsible for opening the door to such as the holdthe-line order. You cannot serve two masters." And then he made a conclusion of policy. He said: "I would rather see the C.I.O. washed up in a fight than to see it die slowly as a result of cooperation with the government. . . . The C.I.O. must fight the hold-the-line policy with whatever it takes to break that policy. . . . If the hold-the-line order is not withdrawn, the only thing to do is to announce to the government that we are withdrawing our no-strike pledge." With regard to labor participation in War Labor agencies, Victor Reuther said: "Maybe we ought to pull out and have the unions advance programs." That was the general recommendation for the labor movement of an action that the U.A.W. had already taken on the motion of Walter Reuther.

Tucker Smith, head of the Retail Clerks Union of Detroit, C.I.O., and old-time associate of Norman Thomas and former head of Brookwood College in New York State, also spoke. Pointing to a uniformed soldier in the audience, he said: "I don't like to see Socialists wearing the uniforms of a capitalist government. . . . It is unpleasant for me to support this war and I have to do it solely on the ground that it is a different kind of a war."

The same Tucker Smith referred to Victor Reuther's opinion that cooperation with the government's war program leads to disaster, and said:

"Those of us in the C.I.O. who believe this, should take some steps to see that the leadership makes a break with this good fellow policy."

The "good fellows" who have to be changed or kicked out of the leadership of the labor movement he specified were first of all, Phil Murray and R. J. Thomas. And his friends, the *New Leader* in New York announced today, "Carey, Reuther Lead Union Drive for New Roosevelt Labor Policy."

An Unmistakable Conspiracy

It is clear by now that we are not dealing with misguided short-sighted men who are just swept away by the pressure of a mass resentment of the labor movement because of an accumulation of grievances. We are dealing with a well-developed, organized conspiracy against the war, to prevent the solution of the grievances of labor manipulate those then to grievances in order to whip up strike sentiment and a strike movement among the workers of this country, all directed toward one specific purpose—to create a crisis in the United States that will prevent the opening of the second front in Europe which will crack Hitler in 1943.

If you look over the speeches and the newspapers which represent the leadership and the development of this strike movement in the United States, you will find one feature common to all of them: Every leader of this strike movement is hostile to the Soviet Union, wants to see the Soviet Union defeated, and most of them joined in the campaign against the Soviet Union on the Alter-Ehrlich case. It is not an accident that David Dubinsky himself, although he heads a union in an industry that has no significance for the war directly at all, went out of his way to help create strike atmosphere in the American labor movement by calling his dressmakers out on strike absolutely unnecessarily, not so many weeks ago in New York. settlement of that strike had already been worked out before the The only strike was ever called. purpose of that strike was to spread the idea throughout America that the way to get settlements was to strike.

There are a large number of anti-labor employers in industry after industry who, on little grievances, are encouraging the work-And when they ers to strike. strike, they will settle the little grievances: if they won't strike, they don't settle anything. These employers want to help create the atmosphere of strike movements in the United States. The reactionary directors of the coal operators collaborated with John L. Lewis for preparing and provoking the mine strike. And if you read the reactionary columnists in the big newspapers in this country, you will find that they all have been repeating for weeks now with the most curious unanimity, that John L. Lewis is the outstanding leader of organized labor, congratulating him on

his achievements, and then ending up their columns with the conclusion that this means, of course, that we're going to have the anti-labor Smith Bill adopted by Congress very soon and everything will be hunky-dory.

Every one of these people who talk strike agrees not to mention any of the problems of the war. They are all agreed, in the words of Norman Thomas, that too much has been made about this question of victory; victory is not the important thing any more. Every one of them is agreed that it is more important to satisfy the immediate, particular demand or desire that is raised for discussion than any consideration about the conduct of the war. Every one of them is agreed that Lewis' friends are of course correct when they laugh at Phil Murray and say, "Phil Murray, he's a good fellow, but he's no leader." Every one of them is agreed that, "Roosevelt, of course we don't speak directly against him, but his policies, they have to be broken down." Every one of them is agreed that it is not worthwhile to talk about the crimes of Hitler: "after all, that's just war propaganda and you know from the last

war how things are exaggerated. Don't get excited about the whole-sale enslavement of the working class of a dozen nations." Every one of them is agreed that we must get very excited, however, about Ehrlich and Alter, and every one of them sprang into action at the moment when the word went out from Berlin, "We're in a tight spot, boys. Go to it."

As long as this strike issue is before the country and the labor movement, I am going to avoid criticism of the Administration's labor policy. As for labor, it is clear that one of its first obligations is to clean its own house of defeatists and place itself solidly behind this war and take leadership in the conduct of the war. Because, after all, this is truly the nation's war and consequently labor's war. It is true that there are important parts of all other classes besides labor who want to win this war, just as much as labor does. But it is true that it is labor which is the most unanimous and the most trustworthy in the conduct of this war to victory.

This is labor's war. The nostrike policy is labor's policy, and labor is going to enforce that policy throughout the United States.