

# ORGANIZED LABOR AND THE MARSHALL PLAN

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

IN SUPPORTING the Marshall Plan, the top leaders of the A. F. of L., the C.I.O., and the Railroad Brotherhoods are backing the program of Wall Street for world domination. Some of these labor leaders are taking this course because they are just as imperialist-minded as the big bankers themselves; others do it for opportunistic, "band-wagon" reasons; and still others, out of ignorance of the true situation in the world. But all these leaders of labor, whatever may be their individual motivations, are violating the most fundamental interests of the masses. They are betraying the working class and the American people as a whole into the hands of their worst enemies, the Wall Street imperialists, profiteers, and warmongers.

## THE MARSHALL PLAN

All the current blather to the contrary notwithstanding, the Marshall Plan is not a project of the generous-hearted American nation designed to help the war-ravaged peoples of Europe to get back on their feet. It is

a cold-blooded scheme of American monopolists to establish their ruthless domination over harassed world humanity. Cynically exploiting the American people's generous impulses and the country's great industrial strength, these parasitic capitalists are trying, through the Marshall Plan, to build up their own wealth and power at the expense of the rest of the world. It is a war plan.

The Marshall Plan's birthplace is Wall Street, its political father is Herbert Hoover, and its driving slogan is the Hitlerian cry for a "crusade against Communism." It is the discredited "get-tough-with-Russia" policy and the notorious Truman Doctrine, implemented with the great economic and military might of the United States. The Marshall Plan, controlled by the most powerful reactionary force in the world, American finance capital, is a menace to the democracy, prosperity, and peace of all mankind.

The three phases of the Marshall Plan—economic, political and military—are all equally reactionary. The economic phase consists in squandering tens of billions of American dollars in order to bring the economies and governments of Europe under Wall Street's control. The Schuman and de Gasperi Governments of France and Italy, acting directly against the interest and will of their peoples, have become, so far as their economic policies are concerned, little better than office boys for the U.S. State Department. Great

Britain finds itself unable to refuse vital economic concessions to Wall Street in return for badly needed American dollars. Thus, the four billion dollar loan to Britain was a definite infringement upon that country's national independence. A recent Gallup poll showed that 51 per cent of the people in Great Britain were in favor of rejecting such American aid as being injurious to British national independence.

The following incident, reported in the *New York Times*, December 17, 1947, typically illustrates how Great Britain is becoming economically subordinated to this country.

The United States agreed today to finance the entire cost of the British-American occupation of Western Germany, assuming an additional \$400,000,000 liability heretofore paid by the British, *in return for a controlling voice in the economic affairs of the area.*" (Emphasis mine, W.Z.F.)

Thus does the United States beat down Great Britain with its superior financial power.

Harold J. Laski, former chairman of the British Labor Party, after complaining about American economic dictation to Great Britain, exposes as follows the imperialist character of American economic policy:

Stripped of the rhetoric of diplomacy, the Greek and Turkish loans were a defense of American capitalism against the danger of what is called in Washington "Russian expansionism" but

may also be described as a fear that the masses in Greece and Turkey, like those in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, will abandon the capitalist way of life. . . .

And further, speaking of American capitalism's "anxiety to reconstruct Germany on the basis of private enterprise," he says:

For such a Germany means not only a great field of American investment; it means that American capitalists, as Germany becomes reorganized, can dominate France—and in partnership with Germany seek to keep Russia within limits they regard as safe.\*

The United States has poured out 15 billion dollars in grants and loans to capitalist nations since the war's end. Little "reconstruction" has taken place as a result of this gigantic sum. For the most part the money has gone down the drain, or rather into the pockets of the greedy exploiters in the various capitalist countries. The 17 billions demanded by the President to finance the Marshall Plan will go the same futile way if the American people are unwise enough to permit Congress to vote the funds. For all the gold and bayonets of Wall Street cannot make stricken West-European capitalism strong and healthy again. Actually, the far more badly war-devastated nations of Central and Eastern Europe, which have had little or no American "help," are recovering much more rapidly than the greatly

\* Harold J. Laski, "Is Europe Done For?" *The Nation*, November 22, 1947.

"aided" countries of Western Europe. This is because the former countries have adopted the economic and political reforms necessary for recovery, which the West-European countries, under reactionary American pressure, have been prevented from doing.

The political phase of the Marshall Plan is no less reactionary than its economic phase. The United States Government, under the dictation of Wall Street's political agents—Hoover, Dulles, Truman, Marshall, *et al.*—has become the center and organizer of world reaction. Representatives of the State Department, allied closely with the Vatican, Right-wing Social-Democrats, fascists, and big landlords and industrialists, are supporting reactionary political causes everywhere.

In Great Britain, through manipulating the Labor Government, they are sabotaging the nationalization of industry and other vital reforms and at the same time scheming for the return of Churchill to power. In Germany they are working in close harmony with the big Hitlerite industrialists, fascists, and reactionary Right Social-Democrats. In France they had the Communists expelled from the Cabinet and are building up General de Gaulle as a future fascist dictator. In Italy, too, they forced the Communists out of the government, and they are cooperating with the remnants of Mussolini's fascists. In Greece they are backing, with armed force, the mon-

archist-fascist regime and the reactionary, clerical clique with which it is surrounded. In Spain they are lending support to the butcher Franco. In the Balkans and middle Europe they are trying to foment rebellions against the new democracies (Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, etc.). Outside of Europe, too, the aim of the American imperialists takes the same course—active support of the Dutch imperialists in Indonesia, the French imperialists in Indo-China, the rotten Chiang Kai-shek Government in China, and the worst reactionaries in Latin America—in opposition to the struggling democratic peoples in those lands. The political line of the Marshall Plan leads toward the reconstitution of fascism on a European and world scale.

The military phase of the Marshall Plan comprises the mobilization of the armed might of the United States behind the economic and political policies of Wall Street. This is the meaning of our atom-bomb diplomacy, the present gigantic American military establishment, the widespread warmongering here, the intensive preparations for war against the U.S.S.R., the armed intervention of the U.S. in Greece, China, and Indonesia, the State Department's systematic by-passing of the United Nations, the building of an anti-Soviet Western European bloc, and the construction of the Anglo-American military alliance.

In the New York *Herald Tribune*,

January 6, 1948, Sumner Welles exposes the military core of the Marshall Plan by virtually urging war. The paper characterizes his article in the following heading: "Congress Urged to Warn Kremlin U.S. May Use Force in Europe. Welles says Marshall Plan Alone is Not Enough. . . ."

The launching of the Marshall Plan in the face of vast popular opposition to it in many countries, has split the world into two major camps and thereby greatly sharpened the war danger. American imperialism, in a desperate effort to defeat world democracy and Socialism and to make its own reactionary will prevail, is consciously organizing another world war to push through its aggressive strategy of world conquest, of which the Marshall Plan is now the dominant expression.

#### LABOR LEADERS IN THE SERVICE OF WALL STREET

The A. F. of L., at its convention in San Francisco, in October, 1947, went all seas over for the Marshall Plan with the same enthusiasm with which it had been supporting the Truman Doctrine. The convention was an orgy of Red-baiting, Soviet-baiting, and warmongering. The principal complaint of such reactionaries as Matthew Woll and David Dubinsky was that Wall Street and the Truman Administration were not going fast and far enough in provoking their much-desired war

against the U.S.S.R. and the new democracies of Eastern Europe. With no Left elements at the convention to bid them nay, the A. F. of L. leaders gave an unrestrained demonstration of their crass labor-imperialism.

The C.I.O., at its convention in Boston, held at the same time as that of the A. F. of L., took a more roundabout course in backing the Marshall Plan. The convention resolution on foreign policy, a compromise, makes no reference whatsoever to the Marshall Plan, nor does it endorse the imperialist essence of that scheme. But it has been interpreted by President Murray as an endorsement of the Plan. Delegates like Walter Reuther, John Green, and their crowd voted for the resolution in that sense. The Left force at the convention were openly opposed to the Marshall Plan, but they made the mistake of not seeing to it that the resolution was clear and specific. They should have insisted that it propose that all American aid should be handled through the United Nations, and failing in this, should have voted against it.

Since their respective conventions, the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. leaders have demanded labor representation in the application of the Marshall Plan, "to insure its democratic administration." But, of course, the imperialist masters of the Government will not agree to any democratic "nonsense" in fastening their grip upon Europe. They do, how

ever, have important tasks for the labor-imperialists to carry out in putting the Marshall Plan into operation. Indeed, the latter are already busy at these tasks.

First, the Wall Street imperialists have impressed the pliable leaders of organized labor to help break up the opposition of the American people to the Marshall Plan. To this end, the reactionary labor leaders are carrying on the Big Business propaganda to the effect that the Soviet Union is engaged in a menacing expansionist offensive and that this country is in danger of attack; that the Truman Administration is defending world democracy against a threatened Communist revolution; that the United States wants European recovery, while the Communists want economic chaos. This imperialist propaganda is now being busily peddled to the American working class by many labor leaders, thereby ideologically confusing the workers and weakening their resistance to the attempts of monopoly capital to achieve its own purposes under the sign of the Marshall Plan.

Secondly, Wall Street is also using the reactionary American labor leaders to undermine the opposition of the democratic masses of Europe to the Marshall Plan. The mass resistance is especially concentrated in the European trade unions, where, above all, the Wall Street agents are determined to exert their pressure. And in this effort they have the active assistance of American labor

leaders, even to the extent of systematic union-wrecking and strike-breaking in various parts of Europe.

For the past several years the A. F. of L. has maintained in Western Europe, headquarters and a big staff of agents, whose shameless task it is to split the labor movements of the Continent and to wreck the World Federation of Trade Unions. This they are striving to accomplish under the Hitlerian pretext of fighting Communism. The A. F. of L. splitters are working cheek by jowl with Right Social-Democrats, reactionary clericals, fascists, and anyone else they can enlist to help them. They are now planning to hold a 16-nation conference of trade unionists in Western Europe, in the hope of forcing the Marshall Plan down the workers' throats and of splitting their organizations away from the World Federation of Trade Unions. The C.I.O. betrayed its progressive traditions by sending the notorious reactionary, James B. Carey, to Europe to "sell" the Marshall Plan to the unwilling labor unions and to engage in union-splitting.

The foremost trade-union leaders throughout Western Europe are Communists. On the basis of their loyal service to labor, especially in the hard conditions of the underground struggle against Hitler, they have been freely elected by the workers in elections more democratic than those of either the A. F. of L. or C.I.O. But the reactionary American labor leaders, at

the behest of Wall Street, have taken it upon themselves to oust these Communist leaders and to force the European workers to accept the Marshall Plan, even if they have to wreck their trade unions to do so.

During the recent great strikes against semi-starvation conditions in France and Italy, this union-wrecking on behalf of U.S. finance capital reached new heights (or rather, depths). Reactionary French and Italian labor leaders, supported by A. F. of L. and C.I.O. officials and supplied with American money, actually engaged in the most shameless strike-breaking. In the general strikes, they called upon the workers to disregard the official strike calls of their unions, and they also used every known employer tactic to start back-to-work movements among the strikers. In France, after betraying and weakening the big strikes, these false labor leaders deliberately split the labor movement in two. Every capitalist reactionary in the world applauded their disruptive work.

In the United States the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. leaders are supposedly fighting the Taft-Hartley Law, which is monopoly's main direct attack against American trade unionism. But these same dealers applauded the Schuman Government of France, a Wall Street puppet, when it adopted a far more drastic anti-strike law than the Taft-Hartley Act. Even more, they gave the strike-breaking French government

their tacit or open support. And in Greece, Clinton Golden, former C.I.O. top official, who was sent to that country as part of the American military mission, with the blessing of both the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. leaderships, endorsed by his silence the action of the monarchical fascist government in Greece in enacting legislation providing the death penalty for strikers. To such levels have American reactionary labor leaders fallen in their attempts to force the European peoples to accept Wall Street's Marshall Plan.

#### THE COST OF LABOR-IMPERIALISM

The leaders of the A. F. of L., the C.I.O., and the Railroad Brotherhoods have lashed their organizations to the chariot of American imperialism. They have merged the aims of organized labor into the campaign of Wall Street for world domination. For this betrayal of working-class interests the workers in this country and the whole American people will pay through the nose—they are already, in fact, beginning to do so. Loss of American labor's prestige abroad and of its integrity at home, together with worsened economic and political conditions for American workers, are the sure price that organized labor in this country will pay for allowing its reactionary leaders to attempt to ram the Marshall Plan down the throats of unwilling Eu-

ropean workers, for its leaders' cynical betrayal of the struggles of colonial and semi-colonial peoples in Asia against American, British, French, and Dutch imperialism, and for its crass abandonment of the workers and peoples of Latin America to the encroachment of Yankee imperialism.

Pro-Marshall Plan labor-imperialism not only injures workers in other countries, but also definitely harms the economic welfare of the American workers whose fight for better conditions it compromises. The squandering of tens of billions of American dollars all over the world, with organized labor's blessing, for reactionary imperialist economic, political, and military purposes, is like pouring a huge quantity of oil on the flames of inflation now raging in the United States. It sends prices soaring, makes living costs prohibitive, and is a major factor in creating the worst drunken spree of profiteering that the United States has ever known in peace time. The general atmosphere of political reaction and paralyzing class collaboration generated by organized labor's support of Wall Street's Marshall Plan and its imperialist policies generally, makes it next to impossible for the leaderless workers effectively to defend their living standards.

Furthermore, labor-imperialism disarms the workers in the face of the dangerous growth of fascist tendencies in the United States. The

imperialist drive of Wall Street on a world scale is necessarily accompanied by an anti-democratic drive in this country. These twin drives are the two sides of the one coin. The outrageous lynch attacks against the Negro people, the shameless Red-baiting of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the disgraceful "loyalty oath" prescribed by President Truman for government employees, the passage of the Taft-Hartley law, the persecution of Eugene Dennis, Alexander Bittelman, Claudia Jones, Leon Josephson, and many other Communists and progressives, and the emergence of the F.B.I. as an incipient Gestapo, are only a few of the many signs of the monopoly-cultivated fascist trends in this country. And they are all directly linked with Wall Street's imperialistic foreign policies. Organized labor's fight against these sinister developments, which are destroying the American people's democratic gains, will be of no avail so long as it continues to support politically Truman, Marshall, and other representatives of Big Business in their domestic and foreign policies.

Labor-imperialism likewise flings the United States wide open to the dangers of militarism and war. The growth of a stupendous military establishment in this country and the unfolding of a policy of war threats by the State Department are the inevitable accompaniment of the Marshall Plan. It is because of its

subservience to American imperialism that organized labor make no fight against the establishment of U.S. military and air bases all over the world, the development of a ruthless atom-bomb diplomacy, the forcing of armed intervention in various countries, the taking over of our national government by the brass hats, and the widespread campaign of warmongering. The labor leaders' support of the Marshall Plan thus exposes our country to the danger of an atomic war, which would bring untold death and devastation upon our people. In view of this wholesale acceptance of the Marshall Plan and the aggressive militarization program that goes with it, the fight of the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. against the Universal Military Training project of "labor's champion," President Truman, is waning to the point of being negated.

The meaning of all this is that the A. F. of L., C.I.O., and Railroad Brotherhood top officials have abdicated the working-class leadership which, as heads of the basic economic organization of the workers, they should be exercising. In these crucial times when labor should be on the alert against its great enemy, monopoly capital, on the foreign as well as the domestic front, the decisive leaders of organized labor are tailing after Wall Street's imperialist leadership. Only the Left-Progressive trade unions, comprising about

one-fourth of the C.I.O., are remaining faithful to the true interests of the workers. One should not be surprised so far as the imperialist attitude of the clique of reactionary bureaucrats controlling the A. F. of L. is concerned. If within the past forty years the policies of these reactionaries ever coincided with the interests of the working class and the American people, it was purely accidental. The C.I.O. leadership, despite that organization's progressive traditions, is on the same path of tailing after the capitalists. The C.I.O. top leaders are trying to convince the workers that the big capitalists who run the American government are striving, out of the goodness of their hearts, to preserve and strengthen world prosperity and democracy through the Marshall Plan, and that they themselves as trade union leaders, can therefore profitably identify the workers' interests with those of the Wall Street imperialists.

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THIRD-PARTY MOVEMENT

The A. F. of L., C.I.O., and Railroad Brotherhood leaders have logically taken their labor-imperialism over into the national election campaign that is now developing. In the main, these leaders, with the exception of John L. Lewis who has not yet made his position clear, are proposing the re-election of President Truman, and they claim they will use millions of the unions' funds for this more than dubious purpose.

Some of them are supporting Truman as a liberal, while others are backing him as "the lesser evil." But it is absurd to consider as either a liberal or a lesser evil the man who broke the railroaders' and coal miners' nationwide strikes and who threatened to use the Navy to smash the proposed national strike of maritime workers. Truman is the man who formulated the loyalty oath, who allowed the Taft-Hartley Bill to pass by refusing to fight against it, and who is going along arm-in-arm with Wall Street in its whole warlike imperialistic foreign policy. There is no real difference between Truman and the Republicans, with whom he is working so closely in foreign and domestic policy.

The labor-imperialists are not having things all their own way in mobilizing the people to support the pseudo-liberal Truman. Millions of workers, Negroes, small farmers, and city middle-class elements have had more than enough of Truman's so-called liberalism and they are turning toward Henry A. Wallace for leadership. This is particularly indicated by their turnout at his many huge mass meetings. The people like Wallace's militant fight against inflation, his tireless struggle to preserve American civil liberties from fascist-like attacks, and his dogged battle against the warmongers and for a genuine peace policy. Large sections of the American people correctly see in Wallace the continuer of the progressive policies of Roosevelt.

Wallace's independent candidacy is of the greatest importance politically. Wallace is especially speaking in the name of the profoundest peace sentiments of the American people. This is why the leaders of the two old parties and the reactionary press are so greatly alarmed by this fact. They fully realize that the American people do not want war, and they are afraid Wallace can reach and organize this basic mass sentiment of the American people. First, Wallace's candidacy will bring the question of foreign policy into the open and cause a real national debate upon it; until now the American people have been simply smothered with pro-imperialist propaganda. Secondly, it will open the way for a real electoral struggle against the inflationists and profiteers in the cities, states, and nationally. Thirdly, it will serve to awaken the American people to the gravity of the attack upon their democratic liberties by the Red-baiters and other reactionaries. Fourthly, it will galvanize into action millions of otherwise passive voters disillusioned by Truman and will thus provide the basis for the election of a progressive Congress. Fifthly, it will provide a tremendous force to check the reactionary war course of the Government by bringing vast mass opposition to bear against it. Sixthly, and most vitally, it will lay the basis for the long overdue progressive people's party in the United States.

The numerical strength of the

Wallace supporters cannot be gauged accurately at this time, but it is very large. How large a body of his many millions of potential supporters can be actually brought to the polls in November will depend to a great extent upon the organizing capacity of the new Wallace movement. Wallace will be subjected to the wldest and most unscrupulous Red-baiting in the history of the United States, and no pains or money will be spared to isolate him from the masses and to prevent his great popular support from crystallizing into a solid, organized voting strength and a third party.

The position now being taken by Wallace and the Left and Progressive unions in the C.I.O. regarding foreign and domestic matters is essentially the policy that should be followed by organized labor as a whole. Wallace speaks in the name of the basic interests of the American working class and the American people. The A. F. of L. and C.I.O. leaders have forgotten these interests and, by their support of the Marshall Plan, are surrendering the unions under their leadership to Wall Street. They are taking a path that can lead only to serious disaster for the workers.

The Wallace movement has very much of a rank-and-file character. American imperialism has succeeded in mobilizing the press, the radio, the church, and now the reactionary labor leaders, to support its drive for world domination. But millions

of the common people are refusing to be led into this trap.

With most of the leaders of labor going the way of Wall Street, and with great masses of the workers heading in the opposite direction, this situation can eventually have profound effects in reviving and rejuvenating the labor movement. The workers are in the process of breaking loose from the tutelage of the capitalist class and of establishing a broad, independent, anti-monopoly people's party. The 1948 elections will undoubtedly mark a most important stage in the onward march of labor and the cause of democracy in the United States.

Big capitalists in the United States, along with their various types of labor and Social-Democratic stooges, are frightened over the Wallace candidacy. And well they may be; for it is a deep-going grass roots movement against the reactionary, imperialist policies of Wall Street. In his January message to Congress on "The State of the Union," President Truman tried to sidetrack the Wallace movement by making a speech designed to create the impression that he has returned to the Roosevelt tradition. But behind all his wordy pseudo-progressivism was the hard reactionary substance of the Wall Street-Truman Administration policy. Truman reiterated his basic program of fomenting civil war in Greece and other countries, of splitting the world into two camps over the reactionary Marshall Plan, of bypassing the United Nations on the

matter of world recovery, of establishing universal military training and other features of a huge military program in this country. For the rest, his talk was all demagoguery, a cynical attempt to deceive the masses of the people with a lot of promises of social reforms which he has not the slightest intention of redeeming.

The two major weapons now being used against the Wallace movement are demagoguery and Red-baiting. Politicians, labor leaders, "liberals," newspapers, clericals, radio commentators, employers—are engaging in an unparalleled campaign to deceive the workers into believing that all will be lovely if

they will but reject Wallace. At the same time, all these pro-Big-Business elements are carrying on an unprecedented drive of Red-baiting to try to intimidate the workers and others into turning against the Wallace third-party movement. But these twin weapons of deceit and threats will fail. The people of the United States are stirring against their exploiters and oppressors. The Wallace movement will not be stayed. It is the first stage of a far-reaching political realignment, the beginning of the formation of a great new national democratic coalition in the United States.

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### A NEW CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD . . .

“. . . With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work [the *Manifesto*] outlines a new conception of the world; it represents consistent materialism extended also to the realm of social life; it proclaims dialectics as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; it advances the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat as the creator of a new Communist society.”

V. I. Lenin, *The Teachings of Karl Marx*,  
International Publishers, p. 7.