

# POLITICAL AFFAIRS

*A magazine devoted  
to the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism*

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# AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND THE WAR DANGER\*

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

THE CHIEF WORLD political characteristic at present is a growing tension within the various capitalist countries and among the great Powers on a world scale, that is, between the forces of reaction and the forces of democracy. Underlying this general situation and giving urgency to it everywhere, is the effort of the United States, controlled as it is by the big trusts and corporations, to secure world domination. Wall Street is attempting to force an American-dictated imperialist peace upon a world determined to bring to reality the democratic objectives for which the peoples fought and defeated the fascist Axis powers. The tension caused by this drive of American imperialism for world control has now become so intense as to generate fears among the masses, in this and other countries, of another world war, a war that will be fought with atomic, bacteriological, and other super-dreadful weapons. Let us see what there is to this war fear. To place the question

clearly of whether or not there is a war danger will be the central purpose of my report.

\* \* \*

After the Battle of Stalingrad, when a perspective of ultimate victory was opened up before the democratic countries, the big capitalists of the United States, banking upon the huge industrial and military strength of this country and the war-weakness of other lands, had already determined that in the postwar period they would establish a peace that would be formulated in the interests of Wall Street and not of the democratic peoples.

Today, American foreign policy is being dictated by the Republican Party, the main party of imperialist finance capital. Just what the policy of this party is, was indicated even during the war, when I stated the following in the *Daily Worker* of July 25, 1944, in commenting on the Presidential campaign:

Make no mistake about it, a Dewey Government would follow actively imperialist policies and would be an enemy of democracy and progress throughout the world. Its path, if unchecked by democratic resistance, would lead towards economic crisis, the regrowth of fascist reaction and a World War III.

To this end, even before the war was concluded, the great trusts of this country launched a big economic, political, and diplomatic offensive designed to cripple the U.S.S.R. and other democratic forces, and to make Washington (that is,

\*The text of a report delivered at the June 23-30 meeting of the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

Wall Street) the capital of the world. Ever since then, this American imperialist offensive has been prosecuted vigorously and relentlessly. It is being conducted under hypocritical slogans about defending world democracy and about the necessity for the United States to exercise moral world leadership. This hypocrisy is equalled only by that of the Vatican which, while speaking in the name of preserving world peace, constantly throws its support to the Truman Doctrine, to the worst reactionaries and warmongers.

Among the specific objectives set by American imperialism in this drive for world conquest may be listed the following:

1. To reduce the Soviet Union to the status of a second-class power.

2. To force Great Britain into the position of Wall Street's junior partner.

3. To develop a reactionary, American-dominated, anti-Soviet Europe.

4. To transform the defeated countries—Germany, Japan, and Italy—into satellites of the United States.

5. To establish American economic and political hegemony over the colonial countries that are loosening their bonds with the British, Dutch, and Belgian Empires.

6. To strengthen the grip of American monopoly all over Latin America.

Together with these grandiose projects of conquest, the moguls of Wall Street also planned to run the

United Nations as they saw fit; to secure a stranglehold on the markets of the world by means of this country's vast, high-powered industries; and to establish American air and naval bases all over the world. In the United States proper, as the base of all their imperialist plottings, they proposed to set up an ultra-reactionary, militarized regime, if not outright fascism.

Such is the kind of imperialist peace that the trust-controlled Truman Government and the Republican Party, with their so-called bipartisan policies, are trying to fasten upon the world, with the help of the Vatican, Right-wing Social-Democrats, and assorted fascists and capitalist reactionaries in various countries. The United States has indeed become the organizer and leader of reaction all over the world.

No other nation in history, not even Nazi Germany or militarist Japan, ever set for itself such all-inclusive imperialist goals. The whole program is fantastically impossible. Moreover, Wall Street's imperialist leaders made it all the more impossible in that they hoped to establish this American world domination, not after a long period of years, but immediately upon the close of the war. Their atom-bomb diplomacy and their general truculence in the United Nations and throughout the four corners of the earth were based on this blitz conception of taking charge of the world at once.

But this Wall Street imperialist drive against world democracy has

not succeeded. And for two major reasons: First, the forces of monopoly capital on a world scale have been greatly weakened in the war—the German, Japanese, and Italian empires have been shattered; the British, French, and Dutch empires have also been seriously undermined; while all over Europe, as well as in other parts of the world, the strength of the big monopolists, financiers, and landlords has been seriously reduced. Only in the United States and Canada has monopoly capitalism been able to strengthen itself, and here, too, it suffers from serious economic and political weaknesses.

Secondly, American imperialism has not achieved its goal because the world's democratic forces have been greatly strengthened as a result of the war. The U.S.S.R. has become a top-rank world power, the colonial peoples are almost everywhere in upsurge, Europe is alive with a new and militant democracy, and the trade unions and Communist Parties have a greatly enhanced power all over the world. These democratic forces are making real resistance to American imperialism on an international scale. The relations of the forces of democracy and reaction are radically different after this war than they were after World War I. The general result is that the United Nations has by no means been transformed into the convenient tool for the United States that Wall Street hoped it would be. In consequence, the imperialists have had to rely

more and more upon unilateral action by the United States, as in the case of Greece and Turkey. This course of action is greatly weakening the United Nations. By the same token, the American world slogans of free trade and free enterprise are meeting effective opposition in the various world conferences and world markets. In short, the postwar situation of a weakened world reaction and a strengthened world democracy is working out to stymie Wall Street's imperialist plans of global conquest.

American imperialism has unquestionably won numerous important victories since the end of the war, but it has also suffered many checks and defeats. Great Britain, although it has been forced into a position secondary to that of this country, is by no means a docile prisoner of American imperialism. British interests conflict basically with Wall Street interests in many parts of the world and this contradiction is full of dynamic dangers to the position of American big capital. In Europe, too, American imperialism has won some victories, such as the exclusion (which will turn out to be temporary) of the Communists from the governments in France and Italy. Democracy in Europe, however, is more than holding its own in its struggle against native and American reaction. Japan has been reduced virtually to a colony of Wall Street, but Germany and Italy have by no means been captured by American imperialism. In Latin America, de-

spite a new-formed "friendship" with Argentina, the United States is also confronting serious difficulties. In the colonial world especially, the future looms up as a dismal one for the imperialists, with India, Indonesia, Indo-China, Burma, Madagascar, and other large colonies moving irresistibly, in spite of temporary setbacks, toward a larger independence. China, particularly, registers a big loss for the Wall Street imperialists, what with the Chiang Kai-shek government, spoon-fed by the United States, now fighting with its back to the wall against the rising tide of the Chinese people's democratic strength. And most important of all, the U.S.S.R., the spearhead of the world's democratic forces, remains quite unintimidated by Wall Street's atom-bomb diplomacy; its influence is now greater than ever before and is rapidly increasing. Then there is the strong and growing resistance of the American people to Wall Street imperialism. Nonetheless, the most significant victory American imperialism has scored since the end of the war was right here in this country when, last November, the Republican Party, the main party of American imperialism, captured both houses of Congress. This, as we now see, is raising the danger of fascism in the United States.

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Despite these domestic successes, however, the world situation looms up as very unsatisfactory and alarm-

ing to Wall Street. It shows that American imperialism, with all its war threats, is not able to force its imperialist peace upon the world. International politics presents a picture of world democracy marching forward in spite of all that American imperialism and its reactionary allies can do to prevent it. Hence, American Big Business chiefs are becoming afflicted with nightmares of an advancing radical democracy and Socialism that they believe will write finis to capitalism and its "free enterprise." They are convinced that American imperialism must at all costs become dominant or the world capitalist system is lost. Never in the history of the United States was the American capitalist class so frightened, confused, and pessimistic as it is at the present time. In consequence, it is attempting to apply ever more drastic measures to achieve its own imperialist domination of the world. This added imperialist drive is sharply expressed through the so-called Truman Doctrine of military intervention in various countries to defeat the forces of democracy.

Previously, the armory of weapons of American imperialism consisted principally of atom-bomb threats and warmongering, of the political use of food reserves among famished peoples, and of the political coercion of war-ravaged countries by the granting or withholding of financial loans. These are very powerful weapons, but obviously they are not powerful enough. So to

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them has been added the policy of open military intervention by the United States on the side of reaction in various crucial situations in other countries. This Truman Doctrine is being carried out openly in Greece and Turkey for the express purpose of combatting the new European democracy and Socialism, conveniently dubbed Communism. President Truman's new doctrine is the 1947 edition of Hitler's anti-Comintern pact.

The Truman Doctrine, pushed to its logical conclusion, would go as far as initiating civil wars in given countries in order to keep reactionary minorities in governmental power or to give them such power. Actually, in several countries the United States is already practically waging war against democratic forces. This encouragement of civil war is not exactly a new policy, however, for American imperialists. Latin-American history has many examples of governments instituted by *coup d'état* organized by American adventurers. In China, too, the result of our policy is the present civil war. And in Poland the attempts of British and American imperialists, continued over several years, to force reactionary governments upon the unwilling Polish people, were climaxed in armed attempts to overthrow the present democratic government. Now what is proposed is the widespread use of this civil war technique in Europe. The consequence is that all the reactionary and fascist adventurers in

Europe, from de Gaulle in France to Petkov in Bulgaria and Nagy of Hungary, will proceed on the assumption that they can count on President Truman's backing, even to the point of civil war.

The Truman Doctrine, however, has had very serious negative consequences for American imperialism. The bald support of the reactionary Greek and Turkish regimes, and the threat to follow a similar line in other countries, greatly shocked and alienated democratic forces all over the world. Here in the United States large masses see that the Truman Doctrine conflicts directly with our national interests. For the policy stripped away the pretences of democracy in Wall Street's foreign program and exposed its reactionary heart. Even many American reactionaries doubted the wisdom of the Truman Doctrine, explaining, with truth, that it was antagonizing liberal and democratic forces in every country.

Now we have the so-called Marshall plan. The purpose of this plan is to attempt further to implement the Truman Doctrine and, if possible, to make it more palatable to the democratic masses by initiating a super-loan plan for all Europe. According to this plan, billions of dollars would be placed by the United States Government at the disposal of various European governments. This plan, it is clear, if Wall Street has its way, would turn out to be only another way for reaction more effectively to fight democracy. The

very fact that such a grandiose financial plan should be projected and supported by powerful political leaders, indicates a deep conviction in capitalist ranks that present American imperialist policies in Europe are not succeeding and that they must be greatly strengthened. Behind it is also a great fear for the stability of capitalism in Europe.

The Marshall plan is a scheme to place all of Europe in economic and political bondage to the United States. This has already been made clear by statements of its supporters. Behind this plan also lurks the reactionary Churchill proposal to establish an anti-Soviet bloc of West-European powers, the so-called United States of Europe. It is an attempt to split the world into two armed, hostile camps. Of course, our Party supports financial loans, as large as possible, to the impoverished democratic countries of Europe. Perhaps our Party needs to formulate a general program of American aid for Europe. A major part of such a program must be to fight against the dictation by Wall Street imperialists of reactionary political conditions for loans, and to insist that these loans be formulated in the common interests of the people of Europe and the United States. We must clearly understand that the Marshall plan is not a substitute for the reactionary Truman Doctrine, but an extension and reinforcement of it. What comes out of the Marshall plan will depend upon the resistance of the European peoples

to the political conditions laid down by Wall Street for financial help.

American imperialist foreign policies of war threats and sabre-rattling serve several major purposes. First, they are a weapon for blackjacking economic and political concessions out of weaker nations and for reducing them to the status of puppet states of the United States. Secondly, they are a means of stiffening the reactionary forces in Europe, of giving them hope for their expected war between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Thirdly, such warmongering, by setting up an ideological terrorism in this country, is a convenient smokescreen behind which to put across the Big Business program of political reaction and fascist forms in the United States. Fourthly, the deliberately cultivated wars scare offers a plausible excuse for maintaining and extending the present unprecedented 16 billion-dollar yearly peace-time military establishment in the United States.

Behind these immediate purposes of American warmongering there lies a real war danger. Obviously, the Truman Doctrine, by promoting civil war in support of reactionary minorities, is thereby a menace to world peace. A civil war in France or Italy, for example—and there is actual danger of this because of American imperialist intervention and plotting—might possibly cause a far-spreading international war tragedy. There is also real danger when the most powerful capitalist country in the world is feverishly

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arming, as the United States is now doing, and when it is carrying on a veritable diplomatic, economic, and propaganda offensive against the U.S.S.R., accompanied by military threats which are becoming less and less veiled. In view of all this, it would be folly for us to ignore the existence of a potential war danger. This would be an ostrich policy that could lead to disaster. The only tenable conclusions we can draw from the whole situation is that the Truman foreign policy, if unchecked, will lead to war; and that, therefore, we must combat it as essentially a war policy.

\* \* \*

In determining the degree of war danger that exists we should not reduce the war danger to a theoretical abstraction, nor should we paint a picture that would make it appear war was just around the corner. We must particularly oppose all ideas that a war is inevitable. We must make a sober Marxian analysis of the situation, dialectically weighing the factors that are making for and against war. A major element in this analysis, and one we have rather neglected so far, is to analyze the groupings in the American capitalist class regarding foreign policy, and the social forces at work upon these groups. This is fundamentally necessary; for, since the capitalists constitute the ruling class, their moods and policies are of decisive importance in the great questions of war and peace.

At this point let me remark that

a basic element in Browder's revisionism was his grossly false estimate of the capitalist groupings in this country. He saw the extreme Right elements and he also saw the Roosevelt group, but he did not see the main body of capitalists lying between these two extremes. He made the ridiculous error of trying to classify the decisive sections of finance capital as part of the Roosevelt group. This absurdity completely wrecked all his calculations. We must make no such error, neither to the Right nor to the Left, in analyzing the trends among the capitalists.

On the question of foreign policy there are roughly three groupings among the capitalists. The first, a lesser section of the capitalists, constitutes the definite war party. Among them are Democrats as well as Republicans. This pro-war group is made up of the most consciously fascist elements in our country. The essence of their position is that they believe an American imperialist peace can be fastened on the world only after the U.S.S.R. is crushed militarily. Typical voices among these war jingoes are the Hearsts, Pattersons, McCormicks, Bullitts, Earles, MacArthurs, and the like. They consider a war with the U.S.S.R. as inevitable, and the sooner it comes the better. They fill our press and radio with flamboyant war-mongering. They are more or less open advocates of a "preventive" war against the U.S.S.R. They want to use the atom-bomb against that country while, as they assume, the

United States still has a monopoly of it. They are ultra-militarists and insolent advocates of the get-tough-with-Russia policy. They are now demanding a showdown on Russian policy. Numerous labor leaders, such as Matthew Woll and David Dubinsky, must be classed in this definite war group, as well as many Right-wing Social-Democrats and renegade Communists. Numbers of prominent Catholic clericals are also in this strong pro-war group.

The second, the most powerful, group of the capitalist class has largely contradictory conceptions of what American foreign policy should be, especially with regard to the question of war. In the main, with some reservations, they believe that a war with the U.S.S.R. is perhaps inevitable, they support the get-tough-with-Russia general line, and they back the Truman Doctrine of direct intervention against the democratic forces in various countries. They are likewise champions of the present so-called bipartisan foreign policy of manipulating food reserves, and of making reactionary, politically conditioned financial loans to war-ravaged countries. They support the huge anti-Soviet propaganda and military program of the Administration, including the three great anti-Soviet air salients the government is building over the North Pole, through the Japanese Islands, and via the Mediterranean and the Middle East, as well as the establishment of war bases all over the world.

This largest and most decisive sec-

tion of the capitalist class, although it mainly has an eventual war perspective, equivocates on the actual question of war. Having an inkling of the fact that the forces on a world scale are definitely against the initiation of another war, these capitalists are plagued with many doubts and fears. Many of them waver as to the wisdom of the Truman Doctrine, and many others will hesitate on furnishing the huge funds needed by the Marshall plan, and will lay down reactionary political conditions for such aid. They also doubt efficacy of the atom-bomb as a decisive military weapon. They fear that Great Britain will not go along in an anti-Soviet war. They view with alarm the war-weariness of the European peoples and especially the strong anti-war spirit of the American people. They dread the strength of the U.S.S.R. and the new democracies. They are skeptical that they could win an anti-Soviet war, and they fear that such a war might bring about the end of capitalism and the world victory of Socialism. Hence they waver on policies actually making for war. These contradictions and waverings in this broad group of capitalists are intensified by the partisan rivalries between the two big parties.

Sometimes this broadest of the capitalist groups, leaning toward the open advocates of war, sharpens up dangerously its anti-Soviet, anti-democratic policies, as seen, for example, in Hoover's proposal for a separate United States treaty with

Germany. But, on the other hand, they still have lingering hopes that, short of war, they can impose, by negotiations, their imperialist peace on the Soviet Union and the rest of the world. Their governmental leaders even occasionally come to agreement with the U.S.S.R. on some major points, although with much travail and anguish of spirit. This even makes possible a certain amount of agreement at the coming November conference of foreign ministers.

Chief spokesmen of this decisive capitalist group are the Hoovers, Vandenberg, Trumans, Marshalls, Dulleses, Deweys, Connallys, etc. It is the most decisive capitalist group, the one that is at present shaping American foreign relations. Most of the labor top leadership now tails along after this capitalist group in international policy.

The third capitalist group, decidedly a lesser faction, has, as its outstanding spokesmen, Henry A. Wallace and Senator Pepper. This is the residue of the old Roosevelt section of the capitalists. It represents mostly small capitalists. Among it there are very few, if any, big finance capitalists. This group follows a line of international peace; it is for friendly collaboration with the U.S.S.R. and for Big Three unity. This group's support among the capitalist press is minimum, but it has a very large following among the lower category of trade union officials and among the broad masses of the people.

As for the democratic masses of the American people — workers, farmers, Negro people, intellectuals, small businessmen, etc.—they are heavily anti-war, and this is the most decisive factor of all in our calculation. A recent Gallup poll showed that 62% of the people believed that American cooperation with the Soviet Union is possible. And in a poll by the Town Meeting of the Air, specifically on the question of giving financial and military aid to Greece and Turkey, 75% of the replies stated that the so-called Truman Doctrine is a policy that leads to war. The American people are stubbornly non-militaristic. They fought to have the troops returned from overseas and demobilized immediately the war ended. They are very generally against universal military training, military control of atomic energy, huge military budgets, and various other militaristic projects dear to the hearts of the warmongers and imperialists.

While recognizing this basic anti-militarism of the mass of the American people, our Party, however, would be dangerously deceived if it did not at the same time note certain dangerous moods among some sections of the masses. It is a fact that, due to the incessant Red-baiting in the press and on the radio, large numbers of democratic elements, including many workers, have been deeply poisoned against the U.S.S.R. and against the new European democracies. A dangerous

example of this was seen at the Red-baiting, Soviet-baiting convention of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Many generally progressive labor leaders have been also affected by the current anti-Communist hysteria. Such prejudices not only cripple the workers in their general struggle against the domestic program of Wall Street reaction; they especially confuse them regarding foreign policy. There is the gravest danger that, in the event of a real international crisis, these contaminated elements would be an easy prey to the fascist-minded warmongers. All of this leads to the conclusion that there is the keenest need to awaken the workers and their progressive allies to the serious danger represented by Red-baiting, imperialist jingoism and anti-Soviet warmongering to the establishment of a democratic world peace.

The three capitalist groupings that I have briefly analyzed earlier are not, of course, static. Their size and influence vary under different pressures and conditions. The war danger could be sharpened materially by forces that would increase the strength and prestige of the first, or most definitely warlike group. And, vice versa, the war danger would be lessened by a weakening of these extreme right forces.

An increase of the war danger might occur under at least three conditions:

1. The group of warmongers could become really dangerous in the event of a serious weakening of

the democratic forces in this country through the loss of major strikes, through the enactment of reactionary legislation in Congress, such as the Taft-Hartley slave labor law, or especially through a big Republican victory in the Presidential elections of 1948.

2. The warmongers could also become a menace with the onset of a severe economic crisis, one in which many capitalists would turn toward a government program of munition-making in order to keep their factories going.

3. It might also become menacing should moods of desperation be generated among the imperialists by a sharp sense of the failure of their international policies, that is, by the creation of a situation where they might try to solve, by military means, the control problems which they are unable to solve by diplomacy, money, and food.

Any one of these three conditions, or all of them together, might render the war danger acute by putting more power into the hands of the worst and most jingoistic capitalist imperialists and warmongers in this powerful country.

On the other hand, a victory by the democratic forces in this country, especially in the 1948 elections, would cut the ground from beneath the rabid warmongers and render them powerless. There are many signs that such a victory is now in the making.

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sufficient reason why we should be on the alert to fight the war danger. This country is the center of that danger, and we American Communists have special responsibilities in combating it. We must ruthlessly expose and fight against every move of the warmongers, whether in the shape of jingoistic propaganda or of actual military preparations. With the passage of the Taft-Hartley Law there is now a fascist danger in the United States, which means that there is also a war danger. We must carefully analyze the origins, character, and urgency of this incipient fascist danger. In the developing national 1948 elections, too, we must raise both anti-fascist and anti-war slogans. The American people are correct in their war fears, in the eagerness with which so many thousands are now rallying around the peace program of Henry Wallace. They sense the danger of another world war and they want to take precautions against it. We must support and help them in carrying out this determination.

In our struggle for a democratic peace, against the warmongering imperialists, there are several major factors that we should always bear in mind.

The first and most basic of these is to show the workers and other progressive forces that the foreign policies of the Government are highly detrimental to the national interests. A most dangerous menace is the attempt of the reactionaries to make it appear that their so-called

bi-partisan foreign policy is a national policy, initiated in the interests of all the people. This is akin to the nonsensical but widely believed idea that class politics stops at the ocean's edge. At all costs, we must make it clear to the masses that the foreign policy of our Government is the foreign policy of Big Business, and as such it is injurious to the masses. We must make them understand that the big capitalists, in order to rob all the people that they can get into their clutches, both here and abroad, formulate both foreign and domestic policies, which are but two phases of the one policy. Thus, the fight against imperialism must be linked up with all the immediate interests and daily struggles of the workers, with the fight against fascist trends in the United States.

Secondly, we must aim to make the masses understand that American foreign policy is reactionary, imperialist, and aggressively expansionist in character. In Great Britain, which every Britisher understands is the heart of a great empire, it is a relatively easy matter to give the people at least an indication of the imperialist content of the government's policy—even the Labor government. But as our country has only a few minor colonies, it is much more difficult to make the masses understand that the United States is nonetheless an empire and that the government is carrying on an imperialist policy. This requires endless A-B-C educational work on our part to uncover the imperialist nature of Wall Street's

ruthless drive to establish its dominating control in the many parts of the world. We must teach the masses that such a war as the warmongers are now propagating would be reactionary; it would be directed against democracy and would be aimed to establish world fascism.

Thirdly, we must convince the masses that the war the jingoes are agitating and preparing for would be a needless war. We must show them tirelessly that there is no conflict between the interests of the American and Soviet peoples, and demonstrate that, on the contrary, with correct policies, mutually highly profitable trade and cultural relations can be established between these two great nations. We must pin the responsibility for the present international tension squarely where it belongs—on the Wall Street imperialists, who want to conquer the world for their profits' sake even if they have to provoke a most frightful world war to do so. Day in and day out, we must champion the Roosevelt policy of collaboration among the Big Three powers. This we must do concretely on the basis of the long and friendly relations that have prevailed between the American and Russian peoples.

Fourthly, we must show the masses, too, that the war the Hearsts and their likes are preparing for would be not only a needless war, but a lost one as well. In the two world wars the American people escaped lightly because other peo-

ples did most of the fighting and suffering and dying. In our country the workers actually enjoyed steadier employment and higher living standards than ever before. Consequently, they have never really felt in their hearts the iron terror of real war. The warmongers try to play upon the easy wartime experiences of Americans by making it appear that the anti-Soviet war would be a sort of picnic. We must completely deflate this deceptive notion. We must show the masses that a war directed against the world democratic forces would be a two-sided atomic war, overwhelming in its horrors and destruction: that the United States would have to fight the war virtually alone, and that the war could not possibly be won by us. We must make it clear that a third world war would result in the utter devastation of our country, as well as of other parts of the world.

Fifthly, we must systematically demonstrate to the masses the immediately harmful effects of the hysterical warmongering that is now going on in this country. That is, we must make clear to them that when the reactionaries shout from the housetops about an imminent danger of war, and when this warmongering goes unchallenged, then they can more readily frighten the people into adopting their dangerous program of militarism, they can easily force through anti-labor union legislation and, generally, they can make headway toward their goal of

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ultra-reaction or fascism. We must clearly show the masses that the fight for a people's peace presupposes an energetic fight against the Red-baiters, imperialists, and warmongers. One of the major reasons why the reactionaries were able to drive the Taft-Hartley anti-labor bill through Congress was precisely because of the wild orgy of Red-baiting and warmongering now going on in the United States.

Sixthly, we must resolutely combat every suggestion that an American-Soviet war is inevitable. Here we can learn much from Communists in other countries. In many lands the reactionaries are banking everything on their hopes for an early U.S.-Soviet war, as such a war would give them a new lease on life. But the Communist Parties in these countries are firm in their position that no such war can or will be allowed by the peoples to take place. Although as Marxists they know that imperialism breeds wars, they do not give aid and comfort to their enemies by accepting a war perspective for the measurable future. Most resolute of all in this respect are the Soviet people. Imagine what a profound shock it would give the world, and how joyful the warmongers would be, if Stalin were to state that in his opinion the present international tension was leading to war. In the recent official Soviet statement on the abolition of capital punishment, it was asserted that it may now be considered that peace has been secured for a long period of time.

Such a categorical declaration of the certainty of peace has behind it a firm conviction that the democratic forces of the world are now strong enough to prevent another world war from occurring. But if this optimistic prediction of the long period of peace is to come true, the militarist warmongers in the United States will have to be decisively beaten by the American people.

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Peace does not develop automatically; it must be fought for. So long as capitalism lasts, the struggle against war and for peace must go on. In the United States we Communists have an especially urgent task in this respect at the present time in combating the warmongers, for American big capital is on a world rampage for power and is recklessly seeking to force its type of imperialist peace on the world. We must frankly recognize the war danger involved in such interventionist policies as the Truman Doctrine and we must warn the people to be on guard against them. As I remarked earlier, we must be careful not to overestimate the war danger, but we should also not reduce this danger to merely a theoretical abstraction. It is for us to consider the situation dialectically as Marxists, to weigh the war danger for what it is, and to fight the warmongers clear-headedly and without letup. In this crucial struggle, the Communist Party must stand in the front line.

# CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE PLENUM DISCUSSION\*

By EUGENE DENNIS

IN MY OPINION, this has been one of the most important meetings of our National Committee in the history of our Party. Its importance is highlighted by the seriousness of the war and fascist danger facing our country, and by the gravity and significance of the decisions arrived at by us to help the American people meet and defeat these dangers.

I shall not attempt to present a rounded-out summary of our deliberations. It is made unnecessary, in the first place, by the scope, richness, and soundness of Comrade Foster's report and the supplementary reports of Comrades Williamson, Gates, and Winston. Furthermore, the essential agreement of this Plenum on all main questions makes a summation in the usual sense somewhat superfluous. I feel, however, that some additional remarks on several vital questions are necessary before we close this meeting, and I should like to begin by making clear why added emphasis on these points is not out of place.

Since the November, 1946, elec-

\* Summary delivered at the June 27-30 meeting of the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

tions, the offensive of American monopoly reaction has sharpened considerably. In conjunction with this, the threat of fascism within our country is becoming more and more menacing. Precisely as the American imperialists and especially their most aggressive and reactionary sections drive toward world domination, they strive to establish an internal regime, an internal relationship of forces, that will advance their predatory expansionist aims and war program. They move in the direction of trying to achieve the total destruction of free trade unions, the outlawing of the Communist Party, the nullification of the Bill of Rights, and, thereby, the substitution of some sort of fascist rule for our traditional constitutional government.

This domestic drive toward a fascist solution of the problems created by monopoly capital is being stepped up today on all fronts. For American imperialism, which in the post-war period has become the center of world reaction, is facing mounting difficulties as it attempts to impose its will on the rest of the world and as the American people meet the attacks of the economic royalists with increasing resistance. Moreover, the approaching economic crisis in the United States, which threatens to engulf and shake our national economy, impels the monopolies to seek a more desperate and reactionary way out of the crisis. It is for these reasons that the reactionary drive here at home is being accelerated.

Imperialist reaction, it is true, has not yet succeeded in attaining its major pro-fascist objectives. But, as the reports and the discussion have confirmed, it has made serious headway in introducing a number of reactionary measures which promote the rise of fascism. Under Truman's Loyalty Oath, and with the new stature granted the Un-American Committee by the 80th Congress, reaction is succeeding in developing the frame-work and atmosphere of a police state, of a system of "totalitarian" thought-control. Through the enactment of the Taft-Hartley Bill, a drastic step has been taken toward regimenting the trade unions and placing them under reactionary government control. In the states and nationally, through the vesting of increased powers in the executive branch of government and through the reactionary use of the legislative branch, the camp of reaction is steadily encroaching on the Bill of Rights, chipping away at the U.S. Constitution, and undermining and bypassing the orderly processes of constitutional democracy.

That is the meaning of the Presidential Executive Order and the Loyalty Oath, the adoption of the Taft-Hartley Bill, and the enactment of a series of state measures, symbolized particularly by the Callahan Bill in Michigan. That is the significance, too, of the expanding militarization of our country and the proposals advanced on behalf of monopoly and government circles for peacetime

industrial mobilization now for war. That is also the meaning of the extensive pro-fascist demagoguery and propaganda now being conducted by the trusts among the youth, the veterans, the nationality groups, and Catholics.

All this is evidence, not only of a general reactionary trend, but of steps which specifically strengthen the position of the pro-fascist monopolies such as DuPont, Standard Oil, and General Motors.

It is clear, even from this limited examination, that the postwar growth of monopoly reaction is being accompanied by a definite rise of fascist tendencies, of the danger of fascism. This is taking place under conditions in which both the concentration and power of the monopolies, as well as the sharpening of their contradictions, are proceeding at an accelerated pace.

In this connection it is essential to bear in mind the warning of Comrade Dimitroff, uttered in 1935, which has a special meaning for us today in estimating the course of events within our country. Comrade Dimitroff stated that:

... before the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, bourgeois governments usually pass through a number of preliminary stages and adopt a number of reactionary measures which directly facilitate the accession to power of fascism.

He also warned that:

... Whoever does not fight the reac-

tionary measures of the bourgeoisie and the growth of fascism at these preparatory stages is not in a position to prevent the victory of fascism, but on the contrary facilitates that victory.

We know, both from Comrade Dimitroff, from European experience, and not least of all from our own experience, that to check the rise of fascism and to prevent its victory, the development of the following is essential:

1. The maximum militant activity of the working class, including its Communist vanguard.

2. The unity of action of the working class.

3. The broadest people's anti-fascist front and, in a country like ours, the broadest democratic coalition.

Today we are on the eve of some of the most decisive political struggles in American history. As we help to rally labor and the progressive camp to counteract and cope with the infamous Taft-Hartley Act, as we work to mobilize all democratic forces for the fateful 1948 elections, it is essential that we orient our policies and mass work toward achieving these three indispensable prerequisites for victory over the pro-fascist forces.

It is because of their crucial importance, therefore, that I should like to deal briefly with these three points, even though they have received great attention in all of the reports and in much of the discussion.

In discussing the promotion of the militant activity of the working class, our Plenum has correctly focused its attention on the organization of mass resistance to defend the rights of the trade unions, as well as the living standards and general democratic liberties of labor and the people, from the effects of the Taft-Hartley Act.

The starting point in the development of this militant activity, as stressed in Comrade Williamson's report, must be the organization and setting into motion of many-sided actions aimed to implement the recent decisions of both the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. for combating the Taft-Hartley Act and the developing attempts of the employers to use this law to cripple and smash the unions. These decisions call for a manifold expansion of independent political action by labor to help bring about the repeal of the Act and to retire from political life the supporters of this legislation. They call for the bypassing of the National Labor Relations Board; for effective mass action to compel the employers to bargain collectively, to force them to enter into agreements that will enable the trade unions to safeguard existing contracts, as well as to secure new contracts providing for the security, rights, and standards of the workers; for action to challenge the host of unconstitutional provisions contained in this law, particularly the curbs placed on the political activity of the trade unions; and

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finally, for the strengthening at all costs of the unions. These decisions must be made the starting point for the development of this campaign.

Our Plenum has also correctly supplemented this main point by placing great weight on the importance of rendering full support to the just demands of the miners, to the current fight of the shipyard workers, and to all struggles that will challenge the Slave Labor Act and protect the interests of the workers from the corporations.

It is also clear that the required heightening of labor's militant activity must not be confined solely to a struggle against the Taft-Hartley Act. There must also be a greatly increased organization of the struggle for the rights of the Negro people in terms of jobs, protection in employment, etc., and against the increased wave of lynching which was legalized, momentarily, in Greenville, South Carolina. Militant labor activity likewise can and must be generated, as Comrade Gates emphasized, in connection with such issues as housing, rent, and a people's tax program; and not least of all, as Comrade Foster indicated, in connection with a concrete and many-sided struggle against the Truman Doctrine and its sugar-coated version, the Marshall Plan.

We recognize that, in a broad sense, struggle, and struggle alone, decides everything. But at this time, when major stress must be placed on the development of the militant ac-

tivity of the working class, particularly of its organized section, precisely at such a moment, as always, we must not confuse mass struggle with adventurous, desperate, and sectarian actions. If, let us say, certain top leaders of the trade unions place obstacles in the way of developing essential mass activities, ways and means will have to be found by labor to overcome such obstacles. If central labor bodies are hamstrung by the national federations and prohibited from undertaking militant activity in the interests of labor, then the workers will have to exercise the necessary initiative so that appropriate action could be undertaken by the Internationals and their various affiliates, and directly in the shops and factories.

But whatever obstacles may be placed in the way of the development of mass struggles of the workers, and the people generally, the Left Wing must not permit itself to be forced into the position of throwing itself single-handedly into abortive or ill-timed actions. It must orient itself upon, and resolutely organize, struggles that will enlist the active support of broad sections of the working people. In helping to set in motion these mass activities, our Party should display the necessary political and organizational initiative.

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Now, comrades, a few words on the second question—the united ac-

tion of the working class. We have spoken many times before of the need at all costs, to forge such united action. Today, this need takes on a new significance in view of the growing dangers of war and fascism. We must, therefore, quickly master and apply the tactic of the united front. If we do not, we shall miss a golden opportunity, made possible by present conditions and the fighting sentiment of the workers, to advance the unity of action of labor. If we do not, we shall be derelict in our duty to mobilize the working class in such a way as to check reaction.

Conditions in the United States are quite different from those which prevail in Europe where, among other things, the question of the united front usually involves relations between mass Communist Parties and large Social-Democratic Parties. The problem of united working class action in the United States is primarily one of achieving united labor action and trade union unity. However, in this connection we are confronted with a problem which we share with the Marxists of other countries. That problem is one of forging the common action of workers of different political ideologies, of different political trends and moods. It is the problem of working out a united front policy and approach that will bring together in united action, Communist and non-Communist workers, progressive and conservative-minded workers,

and workers under Social-Democratic influence.

This is the central problem for us, one that presses for a positive and rapid solution. Correct application of the united front—especially the united front from below in the trade unions, the factories, and the working class communities—is the key if we are really to move from words to deeds, if we are to help in the organization of united labor action and labor unity.

But it seems to me that we cannot make any serious headway toward the solution of this problem unless, among other things, a halt is brought to a certain harmful practice prevalent today. This is the practice in which invective against the Reuthers and Lewises, and now a little more frequently against the Murrays, is substituted for a positive approach to the broad masses under their leadership for establishing united action. For what is really needed is not name-calling, but really practical means of reaching the workers and organizations under the influence of such leaders so as to develop, on whatever issues are possible, joint action to meet the common danger, such as common struggle against the iniquitous Taft-Hartley law. This approach is essential if we are to develop the united front from below.

Furthermore, and I want to stress this point, we cannot make substantial progress if we do not combine the united front from below—about

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which there is much talk, but little being done to reach masses under different ideological and political leadership—with the united front with respect to certain of the top, as well as many of the middle, layers of the trade union leadership.

We must not for a moment forget that today the entire labor movement is facing a life-and-death struggle. Hence, we must base ourselves, in the first place, on the Leftward trend of the workers, on the militancy of the rank and file, and establish ever closer ties with these workers. But we must also without fail take into account and utilize the unstable and, yes, often contradictory position of scores and scores of A. F. of L. and C.I.O. top leaders. These officials, even though they wish to, cannot truly accommodate the unions they lead, the mass of the workers to a Taft-Hartley Act and to the ever more furious attacks of the corporations.

Obviously, for one thing; this means that much more serious consideration must be given to the difficult problem of maintaining and improving cooperative relations with the Murray forces in the C.I.O. on the basis of the need to resist the offensive of reaction.

It is no secret that in the recent period the Murray forces have capitulated on a number of key questions to all sorts of reactionary pressures. The Murray forces, even at this late date, have not broken with the Truman Administration. Also, they

have not only aided and abetted, but directly participated in, a number of Red-baiting attacks against unions under Left-wing leadership. But it is also a fact that the Murray forces do not desire to see the C.I.O. destroyed; that in their own way, inadequate as it may be, they opposed the passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill; and that they are fighting for its nullification today.

Naturally, it is imperative that the progressive forces in the C.I.O. resist the Red-baiting from within and without the C.I.O., and all encroachments on the various C.I.O. affiliates. Naturally, it is necessary to develop timely and appropriate mass activities against the monopoly offensive, and the progressive-led C.I.O. unions can by no means confine themselves to the limited program of action that the top officialdom may offer nationally. It is also necessary further to strengthen and extend the trade union organizations under Left-wing influence.

But it is equally clear that a halt must be brought to existing tendencies to resolve the differences within the C.I.O., by adopting, advertently or otherwise, a go-it-alone position, *e. g.* by seceding from the C.I.O. or by breaking relations in one way or another with the Murray forces. On the contrary, a course must be steered that will counteract every vacillating or reactionary step of the C.I.O. leadership. In doing so, those issues and points of a program of struggle must be singled out that are accepted by

the majority of the C.I.O. and that will strengthen the unity and fighting capacity of the C.I.O., and all the progressive features of its official program.

Perhaps we can more effectively grasp what is at stake and apply our tactical line correctly if we do not obscure the real issues or engage in academic arguments as to whether or not there are center forces in the C.I.O., and whether or not the relations between the Left and Center forces should be strengthened. Let us rather understand that what is involved in the relations between the Left and the Murray forces, is a policy of struggle and cooperation to reinforce the unity of the C.I.O. for progressive aims. Let us grasp the fact that this fight to establish the unity of the C.I.O. as a progressive trade union organization is indispensable, if the united action of the entire labor movement is to be effectively promoted and the movement for organic labor unity thereby advanced.

Finally, one more word on the question of the united front, although from a different aspect. It seems to me that much more thought must be given to working out a practical program of action for all organizations of our Party. We must not overlook the importance of the role of every single organization of our Party, particularly the branches, as well as the role of our individual members. The united front develops, at least in the first stages, not only

between organizations as such, but also between individuals. If each and every one of us has only limited contacts with non-Party people, or has contacts only with people sympathetic to our Party, then we cannot most effectively further the development of the united front.

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The development of united labor action is the key to checking the offensive of big capital against the labor movement and the living standards and rights of the people generally; it is particularly the key to preparation for a progressive victory in the 1948 elections. But it is evident that united labor action in itself is not enough. Simultaneously with forging the unity of action of labor, we must bring into action, in this fight for jobs, democratic rights and peace, an ever wider circle of non-labor forces, especially from among the Negro people, the farmers, the veterans, and all pro-Roosevelt forces.

In other words, we must bend every effort to organize, on all levels, the broadest democratic coalition. It is apparent, if we bear in mind the lessons of the struggle against the Taft-Hartley Bill, not to mention the 1946 elections, that reaction and the pro-fascist forces in a country like ours cannot be curbed and defeated unless there is crystallized the widest coalition of all progressives and democrats, of all those who desire peace and are opposed to fascism and war.

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It is certain indeed that to win a progressive electoral victory in 1948, it will be necessary to achieve a democratic coalition that embraces much more than the adherents of a third party. A coalition must be built that will embrace, not only these third-party forces and all other anti-fascists, but also other progressives and other democratic elements.

This point will be even more obvious if we realize that today, and undoubtedly for some time to come—even in the first stages of the actual organization of the third party—the third party movement will represent primarily the advanced political expression of this developing democratic coalition. Furthermore, the democratic coalition developing today does not and cannot function on the parliamentary field alone. A kind of democratic coalition actually came into being in the last phase of the struggle against the Taft-Hartley Bill; there was a common stand and parallel action on the part of a host of organizations of the broadest and most varied types. On other issues, and with correct initiative on the part of labor and the progressive forces, similar coalitions can be developed, even though they are limited only to one or another issue. Certainly this is true of the fight for Negro rights, of such movements as those developing around housing and rent, and the struggle for peace. We can and must help to organize democratic coalitions on a community basis, on a state and national

scale, on a number of burning domestic and foreign issues, that will embrace not only the third-party forces but also a much broader combination.

It is obvious that it is struggles around issues, and the progressive coalitions that will develop around them, that will strengthen the third-party movement. This was demonstrated by the fight led by Wallace against the Truman Doctrine, which brought new strength to the third party movement, and by the democratic front struggle against the Taft-Hartley Bill; which brought new forces closer to an understanding of the need for organizing a third party.

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The question is being asked—can a third party or independent presidential ticket win in 1948, and won't such a ticket, if it enters the field, facilitate a Republican victory?

We know the answer to this question, but it seems to me that we have not given the necessary thought to how we shall bring this answer in the fullest and most forthright manner to those very broad sections of the people who hesitate to participate in a third party movement because of their fear of a Republican victory in 1948.

I think that we Communists want it clearly understood that we, no less than millions of other workers and progressives, are fearful of a victory in '48 of the G.O.P.—the main party of monopoly reaction. At the same

time, however, we cannot be indifferent to what the consequences would be for the people if Big Business were to continue its control of the government through the Democratic Party and the Truman Administration if it continues, as it probably will, on the basis of its present reactionary policies.

Furthermore, we must drive home the understanding that it is possible, actually possible, for the third-party movement to facilitate the election of a progressive presidential ticket in 1948. Such a victory will be possible if this movement is so organized and broadened as to bring about a situation in which there can be a coalition candidate, backed by the independent and third-party forces, running as a Democrat. To put it realistically, no matter how theoretical it may sound, this is the *only* way for the third-party and pro-Roosevelt forces to ensure the defeat of the G.O.P. candidate in 1948.

What, however, if the Wallace, labor, and other anti-war and progressive forces, including the Communists, do not succeed in crystallizing a third-party movement powerful enough to influence the Democratic National Convention? In such a situation, the most probable one as of this moment, the democratic coalition will have no other alternative than to run an independent ticket to give organized political expression to the anti-monopoly people's coalition in the electoral battles of 1948 and thus to influence the

further course of the struggle against reaction.

In my opinion, these questions should receive further attention, both for our thinking and for raising them publicly.

The allied question of the election of a new Congress in 1948 is a special problem. It seems to me that to secure the election of a progressive Congress it will be necessary for the majority of the progressives to enter and win the Democratic primaries. But, as was stressed in Comrade Gates' report, victory in the primaries and in the elections can be achieved in 1948 for the progressive forces only if there is a strong third-party movement and machinery in every Congressional district, in every ward and precinct. This thought, too, has to strike much deeper roots in the thinking and action of the progressives.

In connection with the preparations for 1948, it is necessary to bear in mind what many progressives are emphasizing, namely, that the Wallace-for-President movement is the key for bringing about a certain realignment in sections of the Democratic Party, for strengthening the Wallace-Pepper forces, and for advancing at the same time all forms of independent political activity and organization, including the third-party movement. In view of this, it is quite understandable why most consistent progressives consider that the Wallace-for-President movement must be developed at all costs,

both through the independent activity of labor and other progressive forces, as well as within Democratic Party circles. If it is not developed on both these fronts, these progressives correctly believe, the third-party movement will be narrowed and, together with this, the progressive forces will lose all possibility of seriously influencing the Democratic National Convention.

Finally, in connection with 1948, I think it is worth stressing the point, elementary though it is, that it is vital to raise constantly and more boldly before the American people what is really at stake in these elections.

It is not enough that we Communists understand what is at stake. Since we very often take too much for granted, our discussions, both before the public and within our Party, center around questions of tactics, of how to get on the ballot, etc. These are important questions for us to discuss, but we are not simultaneously working hard enough to create the necessary mass understanding of what the 1948 elections will mean as far as domestic affairs and international developments are concerned. We must find many, varied and convincing ways of saying to the American people, to all who hunger for peace, democracy, and security, that it is not enough to fight defensively and merely on this or that issue; that what is decisively urgent today is a counter-offensive and many-sided struggle to ensure the election of a

progressive Congress, of a pro-Roosevelt presidential ticket.

What is it that we must say concretely to those who are becoming increasingly concerned with the economic situation and the approaching economic crisis, to those who are disturbed about the course of international affairs and democratic progress at home, as well as to those who are busy working out fine points of program and platform? We must say that to cope in a serious fashion with the vital problems facing the American people, with the problems of checking reaction, fascism, and war, with the problems of peace, democracy and jobs—that the crucial thing now is to take those steps that will guarantee the election of a progressive Administration and Congress.

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A few words, comrades, on my last point, on the attacks against our Party. It was not so long ago that Drew Pearson confidently announced the deadline that had been set for outlawing the Communist Party. But this prediction of things to come was not fulfilled. The stage was set, the bills were in the hopper, but the Un-American Committee and its Wall Street masters were forced to revise the time-table and modify their tactics.

We can all be proud of our Party, of its membership and leadership, in those critical days when our Party proved itself in a crucial test. We acted promptly. We marshalled our

forces with skill. We fought back militantly. And, despite many obstacles, we succeeded in bringing our case to the American people.

But we can all be equally proud of the American people. Many who are not sympathetic to us, smelled the odor of Hitlerism in the attack on our Party, and they defended our constitutional rights for only by so doing could they preserve the Constitution itself. And others who have been indoctrinated with hostility toward us, demonstrated their unwillingness to travel the road marked out by reaction, and, however inadequately, they defended the Bill of Rights by defending the right of Americans to be Communists.

But the fight is far from over. Monopoly reaction is out to harass and cripple our Party by every legal trick it can devise and every extra-legal measure it can get away with. In the category of legal deception are the contempt citations of the House Un-American Committee and the perjury trials which Hartley of New Jersey incited in Milwaukee to heighten the hysteria conducive to the passage of his infamous anti-labor bill.

The press is more and more becoming another extra-legal arm of the Un-American witch-hunters; private detectives even get the Pulitzer Prize for wire-tapping and spying. Following the example of the Dies-Wood-Rankin-Thomas Committee, little Dies Committees are springing up all over the country,

stopping our own and other meetings and raiding our Party organizations. The Callahan Bill is a prime example of an extra-legal act disguised as legislation, and the same is just as true of the so-called anti-Communist provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act.

We are not so foolish as to try to laugh off the attack against our Party. It is real and menacing, and those who are pushing it mean business. But even the most naive must know that the dragnet is out to catch all who choose the Roosevelt way and even in their most secret thoughts hate the Hitler path. Trickery and extra-legal measures are being prepared, not against us alone, but against many, many other patriotic and anti-fascist Americans.

For our part, we shall continue to defend the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Charter of the United Nations by defending our Party, the labor movement, the Negro people—the vast mass of the American people. We shall answer the offensive of Big Business by a still bolder counter-offensive.

In times of reaction and crisis, hardship does not spare the Communists. But neither does it spare the non-Communist workers and the common people generally. It spares only the economic royalists and profits only the men of the trusts. And the masses will not fall for the Big Lie that it is we Communists who hope to benefit from economic crises. If we go to them

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now with our program of struggle for delaying the coming crisis and for defending the people when it breaks, a bold program for really curbing the monopolies—and alleviating the suffering of the masses—the people will not fail to listen to us. They will come to understand that we are truly the champions of a democratic, people's solution, the most consistent fighters against the fascist "solution" offered by monopoly reaction.

The American people have a great devotion to the Bill of Rights and a healthy respect for the Constitution. Loyalty tests, police spies, and thought control go against their grain. By our deeds they shall come to know us as the most trustworthy guardians of America's democratic institutions, as the staunchest advocates of peaceful progress through the free exercise of the will of the majority.

Moreover there are in this peace-loving country of ours millions of people who seek peace through the United Nations and American-Soviet cooperation. They fear the consequences of unilateral action by the United States or any other nation. They reject any by-passing of the United Nations. They rebel against paying the cost of a huge military establishment, and they resist peacetime military training. Many of these people will turn from us if we come to them only with negative criticism of the Truman-Hoover Doctrine. But they are waiting for positive and

constructive answers. And they will listen, understand, and agree if we advance realistic perspectives and policies that will help solve the problems of this war-weary world and achieve a lasting peace through American-Soviet friendship and the unity of the United Nations.

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We have said many times that America needs a strong, mass Communist Party, and that is truer now than ever before. Hence, it is our duty to see to it that this need is met fully and in time.

The work of building and strengthening our Party, as the discussion under Comrade Winston's report revealed, is now encountering numerous obstacles. As we go about our work, in the interests of the American people, we are meeting new and great difficulties because of the atmosphere of hysteria which reaction is generating and because of the discriminatory and unconstitutional legislation that is being enacted, locally and nationally.

But we must learn to turn even these difficulties to good account. We must develop the tactical skill to overcome them, and develop in our comrades the spirit that says "can do" to what seems impossible.

Ofttimes, as we know, new difficulties are pregnant with new opportunities, because what is difficult for us is also difficult for the American workers. Thus, for example, the problems posed for the functioning

of the unions and the growth of our Party by the Taft-Hartley Law will also serve to rally scores of unions and certain non-labor forces to help us collectively overcome those problems.

Surely, it is not by brooding over our inner problems but by looking outward, to the people, that we shall find the answers. We Communists cannot, by ourselves alone, build the united front and democratic coalition that can spell victory in the 1948 elections. But neither can we effectively help to build the united front and the democratic coalition unless we simultaneously build our Party.

Among the masses of the people now turning to the united front and a democratic solution of the problems facing our country, there are many thousands who are looking for more fundamental answers. There are such people in every community, in every trade union and mass organization, and, as Comrade Winston pointed out, they are waiting for us. When we have learned how to find them and work with them, nothing will be able to block our Party's growth.

Finally, comrades, you will recall that in his historic "House Divided" speech Abraham Lincoln stated that if we could but know where we stand and whither we are tending, we should then know what to do, and how to do it. We Communists know where we stand, and whither our

country is tending; therefore, we also know what to do, and how to do it.

If we are able to see further and more clearly than others into America's future, it is not because of some sixth sense or through the repetition of some magic formula. It is because we alone in the United States base ourselves on the science of Marxism, a science we must strive to master in all its fullness.

It is Marxism that enables us to make clear to the American working class how great the danger is that our country may be driven down the Hitler road, the road to imperialist expansion, fascism, and war, to national ruin and shame.

It is our Marxist understanding that enables us to state confidently, as our Plenum has established, that the die is not yet cast, that the American working class and people do have an alternative in this hour of great decision, that by their united action they can still open wide the anti-fascist and the democratic Roosevelt path to peace, security, equality, and democracy.

But the time left for the American workers and people to build the united front and a broad democratic coalition is short. We Communists have the historic responsibility of guaranteeing that not another moment is wasted. And with firm faith in our class, our Party, and our people, we accept this responsibility.

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# THE TAFT-HARTLEY LAW AND LABOR'S TASKS\*

By JOHN WILLIAMSON

The Taft-Hartley slave labor law and what has to be done about it—this must be our starting point today in discussing all aspects of trade union work. This is so because its very adoption creates a new situation, with accompanied new problems and tasks for the labor movement. Before dealing extensively with the Taft-Hartley Law, I want to make some general remarks that will set the framework within which I want later to discuss a number of questions relating particularly to the struggle for unity in the trade union movement.

The struggles of the past year, and especially those against the adoption of the Taft-Hartley Bill, revealed both the growing strength and the glaring weaknesses of the trade union movement. It is obvious at the outset that events could have turned out much differently had the unions drawn the necessary lessons from the debacle of the 1946 Congressional elections and the defeat of the railroad workers' and coal miners' strikes. Had the 15 million trade

unionists acted unitedly, not to speak of having realized a united labor movement, such vicious legislation as the Taft-Hartley Act would never have been passed. The same is also true of the law weakening the Wages and Hours Act, and of the scuttling of price and rent controls. Similarly, united labor action would have won even higher wage increases for the workers.

Another major weakness, from which other consequences flow, is that the trade unions, both the A. F. of L. and many C.I.O. unions, failed to speak out in any serious manner against the imperialist foreign policy embodied in the Truman Doctrine. Nor did the labor movement, except in isolated instances, conduct a consistent fight for all progressive legislation and against such reactionary threats as that represented by the House Un-American Committee.

Furthermore, the reactionary influences in the trade union movement are not limited to the A. F. of L. unions where, indeed, the rank and file have shown an increasing movement toward the Left in the recent period. In the C.I.O., the Right-wing forces, consisting largely of a combination of Social-Democrats and A.C.T.U. elements, have gained commanding influence on some recent occasions and have sometimes determined the stand of such Center forces as Philip Murray on a number of vital questions. Unfortunately this has included, on occasions, increased Red-baiting.

The present situation presents a

\* Abridged text of a report delivered at the June 27-30 meeting of the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

real test of the ability of the progressive forces to hammer out and operate a correct policy. Such a policy must base itself primarily on the needs and interests of the rank and file who are moving Leftward. But at the same time it must be gauged to maintain maximum unity of action with Center forces in the trade union leadership, who tend to capitulate to reactionary pressures and move to the Right. How to advance the workers' struggle and exercise leadership initiative on policy, while simultaneously striving to preserve the closest possible relations with these Center forces—and yet not do anything that will permit isolation—this is a major problem for the Left-Progressive forces within the trade union movement.

The application of the united front tactic under these conditions will obviously create some stresses and strains. This, however, merely re-emphasizes the need for clarity, the need to be firm and yet patient, and never to permit oneself to become infatuated with some reckless "Leftist" move. What is essential to influence the workers of even the most reactionary or conservative-led unions, including those led by Social-Democrats, such as the I.L.G.W.U.? It is the continued fight for united labor action, for organic trade union unity, for unity of the Left and Center in the C.I.O., for united action of labor and all anti-fascist forces in the nation—always based upon a fighting minimum program, yet never giving up principles and

always guarding against false illusions.

#### MONOPOLY'S OBJECTIVES

The adoption of the slave-labor bill, by a majority of the Republicans and Democrats in both Houses of Congress, means that the American labor movement has suffered its single greatest blow in legislative history. It is a blow that will also affect other sections of the American people, such as the Negroes, veterans, farmers, and professionals.

The big monopolies and their political agents hope to achieve, by its adoption, a number of things, such as:

1. The weakening of the organized might of the workers in securing further economic gains from the employers. In fact, they hope that the Act will make impossible, or at least more difficult, labor's struggle against the effects of the coming economic crisis. In addition to these general objectives, the Southern Democrats voted almost solidly for the Taft-Hartley Bill because they hoped it would be a weapon to smash the Southern organizing drives of the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. and thus insure larger profits for the absentee owners in Wall Street.

2. The more rapid and effective carrying through of the full meaning of the Truman Doctrine. This, as we have emphasized many times, demands a lowering of the living standards of labor and the people at home, so as to make available billions of dollars for the present bi-

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partisan imperialist foreign policy, whether in the form of loans or armaments.

3. The prevention of the development of third-party sentiment, either through intimidation or through prohibition of the use of union funds for political campaigns or for the exposure of the reactionary conduct of present members of Congress.

4. The isolation of the Left and Communist forces in the trade unions, thus creating further divisions in the unions and a further weakening of labor's capacity to fight against all forms of reaction.

Reduced to a single sentence, the Taft-Hartley Act is a step toward fascist reaction in the United States. However, once the trade unions fully grasp the significance of this fact, the result of the Act's passage will be contrary to that anticipated by Big Business. For then the labor movement and all other democratic forces will learn historic lessons and enter into a struggle that will not only force the repeal of this law, but advance their own political interests, through their own party, as against those of the Republican and Democratic Parties.

At this moment the labor movement must be alert to two main dangers. The first of these is the idea of the trade unions accommodating themselves to the "inevitability" of the Taft-Hartley Act and discouraging the legitimate feelings of the workers against it. The second is a tendency toward defeatism, the feeling that labor has lost everything.

Our Party has a grave responsibility to help the labor movement to be alert to both of these dangers. We must unmask the approach of many newspapers that labor should be a "good sport" and that the employers "shouldn't take advantage." The entire labor movement must now put flesh on the bones of the bare statements made by both C.I.O. and A. F. of L. leaders, before the enactment of the Taft-Hartley Bill, that its passage would represent a "step toward fascism."

This means that we, as a part of the working class, must convince the workers that their indignation must express itself in demonstrative actions now, as well as in a determination to continue to fight back against the effects of this anti-labor law. If labor understands the full meaning of this Act—and it is beginning to understand it—then we can be sure that the trade unions will never allow their hard-won rights to be taken away from them. They will fight as one united force and in a hundred different ways, whether it be in the shops or in the courts, for they will never surrender the rights won during the Roosevelt era and the decades preceding it.

It is clear that from today on the employers and all the forces of reaction are going to challenge labor and "get tough" wherever they can get away with it. However, the tactical line of reaction may not be an immediate frontal attack on all trade unions at the same time. Rather, it may be a tactic of selecting certain

trade unions for specific attack immediately, while opening up constant guerrilla warfare to harass all trade unions and attack particularly weak spots in their ranks.

Undoubtedly, the entire trade union movement in the course of its struggle against the effects of the Taft-Hartley Act will prove the correctness of President Truman's own estimate "that this bill would prove to be unworkable" and that "it contains seeds of discord which would plague this nation for years." In fact, in the days ahead when the trade unions fight to prevent this slave act from destroying their organizations, they will refer many times to Truman's own estimate that:

The bill is deliberately designed to weaken labor unions. . . .

The bill would deprive workers of legal protection of fundamental rights. They would then have no means of protecting these rights except by striking. . . .

. . . the Taft-Hartley Bill goes so far that it would threaten fundamental democratic freedoms. . . .

. . . I predict that if this bill should become law, they [the employers] would regret the day that it was conceived.

The attitude of the trade unions toward such legislation can only be that they will challenge and fight against every effort to take the closed shop away from them, to disfranchise labor politically, to deny labor its democratic right to choose its

own leadership, or to turn back the pages of history to the days of anti-labor injunctions. It is encouraging that there is already talk that the C.I.O. Executive Board and the A. F. of L. Executive Council may decide that they and their affiliates will not avail themselves of the National Labor Relations Board or the Wagner Act, now amended into its opposite. They will rather deal directly, on the basis of their bare union strength, and enter into agreements improving the conditions of their members without recourse to the Taft-Hartley Act and its variety of anti-union clauses.

The feelings of the workers have already manifested themselves in these few days since June 23. Yesterday, William Green had to refer to the demands of substantial sections of A. F. of L. members and even leaders for protest stoppages against the Act. The coal miners have demonstrated their feelings without asking anyone. The sentiments of C.I.O. workers have been expressed in resolutions from the Detroit Ford local, as well as in the demands of various Councils for protest stoppages. Although Green and others are throwing cold water on these requests, every local union meeting, shop meeting, or trade union conference must sound a note of struggle to defend the trade unions.

The workers expect their leaders to find effective means for defending their free trade unions from state control, from employer or state interference in the election of union offi-

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cers, from strike-breaking and open-shop intimidation, from government and employer interference through injunctions, and from every attempt to abridge labor's political rights. The workers demand that the gains made by the Negro workers be preserved and extended. They will not tolerate the surrender of a single gain won by labor in a century of bitter struggle. The trade union movement, with support from other democratic sections of the population, will not yield a single inch of ground, but through struggle will advance forward.

#### RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADOPTION OF BILL

The entire trade union movement having been struck such a blow, we must help labor estimate who is responsible for it. Clearly, the driving force behind the Taft-Hartley Act was the Economic Royalists—the 60 ruling families and their trusts and monopolies—and the Republican Party. We must keep this before the workers and the labor movement and help cultivate a class hatred toward these fascist-like forces.

It is equally necessary, however, that labor never forget the responsibility of the Democratic Party and especially of President Truman. It is a known fact that the Democratic Party had the votes to uphold the veto of the Taft-Hartley Bill. But the Democratic Party did not seriously try to muster these votes. From the beginning, Senator Barkley said it was "hopeless" and he tried to dis-

courage the splendid efforts of Senators Pepper, Taylor, and Kilgore. Senator Thomas was left in Geneva, and Wagner in New York, and the whip of Democratic Party discipline was not applied to the 20 Democratic Senators who joined with the Republicans. Instead, the Democratic Party engaged in the "slick" politics of vetoing the bill but not sustaining the veto, thus trying to hold labor's support while allowing the bill to be adopted.

While many workers will undoubtedly be influenced momentarily by the President's veto message and radio speech—both of which made some important points—we must help labor not to fall victim to this message through its forgetting the other actions of the President. Labor must understand that neither Truman nor the Democratic Party exerted their power to sustain the veto. Furthermore, labor must never forget that President Truman himself opened the door to this bill with his own anti-labor legislative proposals in his State of the Union message to Congress. The President actually gave the signal for many of the very clauses in the Taft-Hartley Act when he broke the strikes of the railroad workers and coal miners a year ago, as well as when he prescribed the witch-hunting "loyalty" oath for all government employees. Nor can labor overlook the basic political affinity between the Taft-Hartley Act and the Truman Doctrine, which laid the political foundations for this anti-labor law.

## LESSONS OF THE FIGHT AGAINST THE BILL

It is also necessary for labor to examine its own role and activities in the fight against the bill and to draw lessons from the consequences of its enactment.

With all its weaknesses, the labor movement during the last few weeks finally organized against this bill the best fight seen in many years. Of particular significance was the tremendous upsurge of A. F. of L. activity. Nevertheless, the fight was not a good enough one. While unity of labor was developed to new heights in various localities, it was never realized on a national level. In fact, it was discouraged on top levels.

The top level trade union leaders of the nation made militant speeches, and organized considerable activity within both major trade union centers, such as the C.I.O.'s Defend Labor Month, and the A. F. of L.'s radio and newspaper publicity campaigns. But in different ways they each failed with respect to certain types of decisive action that might have turned the tide. A. F. of L. President Green and his associates must assume responsibility for rejecting the C.I.O.'s sound proposal for immediate joint action on a national level without waiting for organic unity. C.I.O. President Murray must assume responsibility for rejecting protest stoppages as a means of struggle, as well as for not wholeheartedly supporting at any time national demonstrative actions such as,

for instance, the motorcade to Washington, initiated jointly by the A. F. of L. Central Labor Council and the C.I.O. Regional Director in Los Angeles. The overcoming of such weaknesses might well have meant the difference between victory and defeat when it came to the vote, because the absence of unity in labor's ranks was viewed by these "practical" politicians as a cancelling out of the possible loss of labor's vote in their respective areas as far as 1948 was concerned.

Outstanding among the many lessons that labor will have to learn from the fight against the bill's passage, and apply in the struggle to defend itself from the Act and secure its repeal, are:

1. *The indispensability of united labor action that will lay the foundations for a united labor movement based upon the best interest of America's trade unionists.*

Without a doubt the sentiment for labor unity in the ranks of labor is going to rise to a new high. This sentiment should immediately result in convincing both C.I.O. and A. F. of L. of the urgent need *now* for an emergency national conference of all trade unions to map out a plan for the battle against the Taft-Hartley Act and for the establishment of a Joint Action Committee of the C.I.O., the A. F. of L., and the Railroad Brotherhoods. Acting as a stimulus to such an action would be the organization of emergency joint trade union conferences for similar purposes in hundreds of localities

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from coast to coast. The sentiments already being expressed by the workers could be channelized without delay into a national day of protest. This would make clear to the forces of reaction that labor has not been intimidated and will not take their attack lying down.

2. *The need for the entire labor movement to understand that it can have no confidence in either the Republican or the Democratic Party.*

It is now possible for American labor to make a historic step forward, by shedding its illusions and by no longer being tied to either of these two parties. There has been a substantial shattering of these illusions as far as the Republican Party is concerned. Not as much progress has been made regarding the Democratic Party, due to the demagogic maneuvers of Truman, as well as the prestige that party has, still remaining from the days of F.D.R.—even though Truman and the Democrats have long deserted Roosevelt's program. However, it is necessary to help the workers come to the same conclusions about the Democratic Party as they have with regard to the Republican Party, and to help them understand the urgent need of a new people's party, with the labor movement as its cornerstone.

A growing number of important International unions have already gone on record for a third party and the outpouring of tens of thousands to hear and support Henry Wallace also reflects the thinking of great sections of the labor movement that

"it is time for a change" from the two capitalist parties to a new third party of labor and the people.

The trade union movement would do well to establish a blacklist of all Representatives and Senators who voted for the Taft-Hartley Act, and develop activity now in each area that would unite the great majority of the voters—labor and non-labor—in support of a candidate and a movement to replace each of these anti-labor and anti-people's politicians.

3. *The necessity for labor to realize the need for unity in its own ranks.*

This in turn makes it mandatory that Red-baiting and all other divisive weapons be thrown overboard. And this requires a recognition on the part of all—Left, Center, and Right—that after democratic discussion, which is devoid of Red-baiting, there should be strengthened unity and discipline in the ranks of the trade union movement.

In this connection, it must be made clear that the anti-Communist clause in the Taft-Hartley Act is clearly intended to be used against every trade union leader who is progressive and militant, whether he be a Communist or not. It is clearly unconstitutional and must also be challenged on that basis, although the main fight must be made by the workers and the unions.

It aims at denying to the trade union members their elementary democratic right to elect their own leaders. It aims at interference by the government in the unions, dictating

to the workers whom they can or cannot elect as their officers. The workers and the trade unions will undoubtedly recognize this, irrespective of their opinion of the Communist Party and its program, and they will fight this clause as part of the general struggle against the entire Act. To do otherwise would be fatal for labor because it leaves a weapon in the hands of the employers and reaction generally to use against every official who fights for the interests and rights of the workers and union he leads.

One additional point must be made with regard to the problem of developing mass struggle against the Taft-Hartley Act, as well as the interconnected question of united front tactics. Some of our members approach this problem one-sidedly. There are those who say that the greatest danger is accommodation, because substantial sections of labor's leaders are still tied to the imperialist Truman doctrine. There are also those who say that the effect of the slave act upon the trade unions will be so all-inclusive and threatening to elementary rights that the "impact of events" will force even conservative trade union leaders to resist and fight.

Each of these contentions has truth in it, but each by itself is one-sided. In our estimate we recognize a fusion of these two and many other factors, and then recognize the great urgency—yes, the great possibilities—that exist for a united mass struggle of labor and the other

democratic forces of the people against this Taft-Hartley onslaught. We also know that such united mass struggle never occurs spontaneously. To develop it, there is needed a fusion of the growing consciousness and resentment of labor and the people with the determined and experienced force of political leadership and struggle.

A further consequence of the absence of united labor action was reflected in the present round of wage struggles. First, the A. F. of L. leadership never changed its attitude of opposition to demanding wage increases even though the membership never agreed with this attitude. This of necessity weakened the wage increase demands of the C.I.O. unions. Secondly, there was little joint strategy on the part of the Big Three of the C.I.O. when they were all concurrently negotiating with the giants of monopoly capital.

The crassest example of lack of unity was in connection with the maritime struggles. The West Coast unions developed the incorrect theory that present-day circumstances make it impossible to place any wage and hour demands upon the shipowners. Starting from the premise of a changed situation, they failed to grasp the contradictions in the situation, just as they also ignored the so-called pattern established by the large C.I.O. unions. They allowed other considerations to disorient them. They then proceeded to renew their old contracts as they were. Clearly, this placed the East Coast

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and Gulf C.I.O. maritime unions in a most difficult position. These unions, some of whom had originally adopted demands that did not appear realistic to their members, correctly pressed for minimum demands and secured them. These minimum demands later accrued to the benefit of the West Coast seagoing maritime unions. It is clear that if all the maritime unions had had one common approach to wage and hour demands, even within the inadequate framework of the C.I.O. Maritime Committee, even greater concessions could have been wrung from all shipowners.

In the maritime industry generally, we must recognize that not only does disunity exist as between C.I.O. and A. F. of L.; it also exists because of the high degree of craft unionism in that industry. The present situation in the maritime industry demands the championing of the idea of maritime labor unity and industrial unionism. As a first step in that direction, what is required is united labor action, with common demands and common expiration dates of contract.

#### UNITED LABOR ACTION THE CENTRAL PROBLEM

As I said previously in discussing the Taft-Hartley Bill, unity of action on the part of labor is more vitally necessary today than ever before. In fact, it is *the* central question confronting labor in every problem before it. However, in properly developing this tactic, we must recog-

nize that while united labor action is the road to organic unity, today one should not pose the one against the other, but continue the fight for both.

More than a half year ago, our Party placed in the very forefront of our agitation the slogan originally projected by Comrade Foster of "United Labor Action—Or Else." In over 20 cities some beginnings took place in establishing either local joint committees or joint actions. We welcomed the fact that the C.I.O. projected the proposal for joint action of C.I.O. and A. F. L. on a national level to combat the reactionary anti-labor attacks and pending legislation. The A. F. of L. Executive Council responded with a demand for immediate organic unity and a refusal of immediate joint action. We all know how the C.I.O.-A. F. of L. conference negotiations ended—in rejection by the A. F. of L. of the C.I.O. proposals for immediate joint action, during which further exploratory work toward organic unity would continue.

We correctly pointed out that this conference was a failure and placed the main responsibility for its failure on the A. F. of L. Executive Council. Some comrades questioned this estimate, especially the critical attitude toward the A. F. of L. These comrades felt that our criticism was too negative and placed one-sided responsibility on the A. F. of L. They also felt that the C.I.O. had placed demands that were too extreme.

Our critical estimate of the unity negotiations was based upon the fact that the rejection by the A. F. of L. of the C.I.O. proposals for immediate joint action against pending anti-labor legislation was a blow to all labor. We know how true this is today, since we can see its consequences in the Taft-Hartley Act. Actually, the A. F. of L. proposal for immediate organic unity to the exclusion of even considering joint action, represented a desire to arrest and behead the local united actions that were developing. That, however, is not the whole answer, for undoubtedly the proposals of the A. F. of L. also were made because of the pressure of the rank and file, and because of a certain fear, even among some A. F. of L. leaders, of the consequences of anti-labor legislation. However, as I said in an article in the April issue of *Political Affairs*, the A. F. of L. leaders "demonstrated that they are still motivated by reactionary considerations of refusal to deal with the C.I.O. as an equal, and they still feared the joint mass struggles of the workers more than they feared the attacks of reaction."

At the moment when the A. F. of L. proposal for organic unity was the issue in the negotiations, we took a forthright position on this question. The article in *Political Affairs* previously referred to, stated that the road to organic unity was through united labor action, and that organic unity would only be achieved in struggle. However, the article par-

ticularly centered fire against sectarian opposition to organic unity. A decided weakness in our work at that moment was that we did not press forward a hundred times more energetically to help activize the local united action committees and try to influence their extension to scores of new cities. In many cases the same forces who opposed organic unity on "principle," did little or nothing to realize local united labor action.

To summarize on this point, we can say that we were correct in taking a positive stand on both united labor action and organic unity, without posing the one against the other. Our decided weakness was that, at the moment of the unity negotiations, we did not combat the consequences of the demagogic maneuvers of the A. F. of L. leadership, which were undermining and scuttling the activity of the local united action committees.

Today the fight for united labor action must be continued, for this is the most decisive way to achieve ultimate organic unity. In the weeks prior to June 23, united labor actions were realized in almost a hundred cities or areas. In the fight against the Taft-Hartley Act now the workers should extend such actions to hundreds of localities.

But at the same time the workers should favor the resumption of negotiations for organic unity, on the basis of a minimum program that will advance the interests of

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labor as a whole, a program that must particularly include independent political action. But such negotiations can be meaningful and successful only if they occur simultaneously or develop out of a real extension of united labor action below. Otherwise, they would only represent an arrangement between top leaders. To expose the slanderers of our Party who falsely charge that we fear a united labor movement, we must be in the forefront of the fight for both united labor action and organic unity.

#### OTHER ISSUES FOR UNITED LABOR ACTION

Today there are a series of burning issues on which united labor action on all levels is a life and death question. Most important of these is the immediate struggle against the Taft-Hartley Act and the winning of the labor movement for a third party. I have already dealt with both of these.

There are a whole series of other issues on which united labor action should be built, including immediate maximum support to the demands of the coal miners. There is also the need to defeat the 15 per cent rent increase, and to force the re-enactment of rent control. An issue that affects every single worker, regardless of what union he belongs to—an issue on which it should be possible to develop one of the broadest united front movements—is that of increasing the present unemployment benefits. Today, increased social insur-

ance and unemployment contributions are being paid into the social security fund on the basis of the new dollar wage. But the unemployment benefits remain at the old rates established 12 years ago, despite the fact that the present dollar has only a fraction of the purchasing power it had when the social security law was adopted.

#### THE APPROACHING ECONOMIC CRISIS

We can anticipate that Big Business will use the approaching crisis further to sharpen its attack on wages, hours, working conditions, and the unions. They hope to use the Taft-Hartley Act now, and with even greater success in a crisis period. They are at the same time sharpening their attacks against the people's liberties. They will try to divide labor from the farmers, from the Negro people, pitting one against the other, and blaming the labor movement and the farmers for the crisis. In other words, the monopolies will use the crisis itself as a weapon to strengthen their hold on the government, and their position in the country.

Our Party has the job now to prepare the labor and people's movement to meet this situation. We must expose who is responsible for the developing crisis and who aggravates the conditions making for its outbreak. We must expose the lie that the Communists want a crisis and are working for it. We must show how the Truman Doc-

trine will hasten and aggravate the crisis. We must bring forward the economic program we adopted at our last Plenum as the only means of saving the people from the worst ravages of the crisis.

The consequences of this developing economic crisis and the immediate impact of the Taft-Hartley Act can provide the impulse for a new historical step forward by the American labor movement—the establishment of labor unity, the participation of labor in a movement for a third party, and greater initiative by the trade union membership in influencing their unions to adopt a Leftward course. But all this will necessitate a great change in the functioning of the trade unions.

Such a step forward cannot be made unless the political consciousness of the workers is raised to new high levels. This demands greater trade union democracy and the involvement of the members in the making of decisions. This demands a union consciousness concerning payment of union dues and not merely a system that is based on the closed shop or check-off as vital as these are. Above all, it demands a real shop steward system that will educate, organize, and give daily leadership and discipline to the membership. Such a system must be predicated on shop stewards with real devotion to a fighting democratic union and not just to the payment for time lost in functioning as a steward.

#### THE UNITY QUESTION WITHIN THE C.I.O.

When we emphasize the urgency of united labor action, we must also recognize that not the best situation exists within the C.I.O. The relations between the Left-Progressive forces and those Center forces associated with Murray, are probably more strained today than at any time since the formation of the C.I.O. This has expressed itself in Red-baiting speeches by Murray as well as in a series of organizational measures against the Left-Progressive forces and against some unions with Left-Progressive leadership. This has, of course, given encouragement to every Red-baiter and Right-wing force within individual C.I.O. international unions and has made some middle-of-the-road leaders more timid than usual. I have already dealt with this development in a general way in a series of articles in the *Daily Worker*, where I showed that it was only a registration of certain trends that began to develop at the Atlantic City Convention of the C.I.O.

This strange situation within the C.I.O. leadership, arises out of the impact of the attacks of reaction. On foreign policy, Philip Murray has associated himself with the Truman Doctrine. From that develops his attitudes and moves on domestic issues, including his occasional unfortunate anti-Communist Red-baiting remarks, his anti-Wallace-Pepper attitude, and his fear of demonstrative actions. Other subordinate

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factors explaining this development are the increased pressure of the reactionary hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

While recognizing that there is something new in this development from which every worker must draw lessons, it must not mean adopting a negative attitude to the C.I.O. On the contrary, despite this development, the C.I.O. remains a progressive force in the labor movement; and through a line of struggle for correct policy, combined with skillful application of the united front tactic, the C.I.O. will continue to pursue a consistent progressive course. The impact of the present attack of reaction demands a united C.I.O. and, since *all* forces in leadership will be under attack, the door is opened for a renewed effort to re-establish the unity of Left and Center forces in the C.I.O. leadership in struggle on concrete issues.

At the same time, within the C.I.O., and on all levels, it is imperative that the Left-Progressive forces adopt the initiative in advancing a policy and program that represents the best interests of the workers and the trade unions. The effort should always be made to do this in agreement with other forces and to achieve unanimous support.

It is also necessary for all the unions in the C.I.O. further to consolidate themselves. The progressive-led unions must defend themselves from attack and resist any effort to achieve their dispersal or a denial of their democratic rights. Within the

C.I.O., Red-baiting must be exposed as a divisive weapon of reaction copied from the pages of the vicious Taft-Hartley Act itself. In answering the anti-Communist attacks, workers and trade union leaders should defend the Communist Party as a part of the working class and a pro-trade union and anti-fascist force.

But, at the same time, the progressive workers must learn to master the united front tactic much more skillfully. In this connection let us emphasize that irrespective of a shift of position of any individual, the specific form of the united front in the C.I.O. that has previously been referred to as the Left-Center coalition tactic, should not be thrown overboard. On the contrary, in the C.I.O. the urgent need is for unity of all forces.

The forces of reaction are on the offensive against the entire C.I.O. movement. *Today, no current within the C.I.O. can win battles against reaction fighting alone.* While every opportunity should be taken, in accord with C.I.O. democratic practices, to adopt greater initiative and freedom of action in proposing policies, it would be harmful to the entire C.I.O. to consider as frozen or unchangeable any given relationship of forces. There should be an acceptance and a mastery of the tactic of criticism within the framework of a Left-Center coalition, whether in the C.I.O. nationally or in individual unions. This will not be easy for some people, but if everyone keeps his eyes on developing events

and realizes the key role of the trade union movement in advancing democracy in our nation, then such constructive criticism can and will be accepted, and much will be done to upset the calculations of those outside the trade union movement who hope to create divisions by stimulating Red-baiting.

To be successful, this policy requires that all progressive-led unions pay maximum attention to the development of concrete programs to advance the present needs of the workers, such as the combatting of new speed-up systems; that they stand out as champions of the upgrading of Negro workers in industry and their election to actual leadership in the unions; that they help develop genuine democracy in their own unions; and that the united front tactic be applied in every shop and local and not limited merely to top levels.

Our comrades must never forget that the same reactionary offensive which pushes any given leader to the Right also results in the beginning of a Leftward trend among the workers. Being a part of this broad Leftward movement of the rank and file is one of the best guarantees against isolation.

#### OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

There are a number of other questions in the field of trade union work, which time does not allow me to develop. I want to say a very few words about some of these, recogniz-

ing that justice cannot be done to any of them in so brief a space.

1. The problem of following up and consolidating the gains registered in the new contracts in such industries as steel, auto, electrical, etc. The employers are determined to worsen conditions and cripple the effective functioning of the unions as defensive instruments. Some trade union leaders are inadvertently giving encouragement to this by trying to tie the hands of workers and preventing them from fighting back. In some unions this fear of the rank and file leads to the limiting of the effective machinery of a broad shop steward system. Main attention must be directed to the shops, to help build a strong union apparatus there, and defend both the conditions of the workers and the very existence of the trade unions at that level.

2. The continued existence of a number of vital problems confronting the Negro trade unionist. Little is really being done to solve these problems. There has been no real effort to mobilize the trade unions, and especially the white workers, to fight for the upgrading of the Negro workers, to achieve re-employment for them, and to realize their equality as members and their right of election to top leadership in the big trade unions of our country. The Communist trade unionists must make a decisive change and fight with utmost energy for these rights of the Negro people.

3. The need for every trade union, even now, to ready itself to cope

with the problems arising from unemployment. A few unions have already adopted a generally good program on this question. In addition to the general struggle for the right to work, for a guaranteed annual wage and a shorter work week, for severance pay, etc., it is especially important that trade unions service their unemployed members, as they do those in the shops. In every case we stand for the continued exercise of the full rights as union members of all unemployed workers, including participation in the affairs of their own locals. It is only when the trade unions refuse to organize their unemployed members that consideration should immediately be given to some form of independent or-

ganization of the unemployed. Even today, every trade union needs a program to meet this problem and a functioning committee to handle and supervise it.

Finally, we must recognize, as Comrade Winston's report will point out, that there has not been a satisfactory growth of our Party membership in the basic industries over the past year. This definitely retards the development of effective policy. In this connection, it is necessary that, in addition to continuing our unstinted support of the everyday demands and programs of every union, the Party popularize its own program for various industries as a means of establishing who the Communists are and what they stand for.

# THE 80th CONGRESS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR 1948\*

By JOHN GATES

THE RECORD OF THE FIRST SESSION OF the 80th Congress, which will draw to a close at the end of July, is one of the most reactionary in the history of our country. Continuing in the wake of the 79th Congress, which wrecked price control and the veterans emergency housing program, the present Congress, its reactionary character strengthened by the 1946 elections, is moving with giant strides to impoverish the American people and to destroy our democratic liberties.

## A REACTIONARY RECORD

Bilbo of Mississippi, who was not seated by the Senate, would have acquiesced in every action taken by Congress. He can sit back and look with utmost satisfaction at its accomplishments. Bilbo may not sit in Congress but his imprint is on its every act. The 80th Congress is N.A.M.-ism and Bilboism in action.

The 80th Congress has given legal sanction to the imperialistic Truman Doctrine. It has thrown the enormous weight of American resources

and power behind the objective of Wall Street domination. It is pursuing a policy of military and economic support to reactionary governments and forces all over the world. It is supporting the Truman Administration in instigating civil wars against governments that will not knuckle down to Wall Street. All of this, if not checked, will lead to a war that is not in the interests of our people or any other people, a war that can only benefit the American trusts and monopolies.

The 80th Congress has done the bidding of the National Association of Manufacturers by enacting into law, first the so-called portal-to-portal bill, and then the infamous Taft-Hartley Bill. The aim of the slave-labor act is to destroy labor's gains, not merely of the past decade, but of the past half century, and to weaken the unions sufficiently to place them completely at the mercy of a capitalist class on the rampage.

The 80th Congress has acted as the agent of banking and real estate interests and the building construction industry by passing a so-called rent control law that in reality wipes out rent control and paves the way for a general 15 per cent rent increase. This was the same method used last year to destroy price control, and everyone can now see how little it resulted in the combination of "lower prices and higher production" promised by the N.A.M. At the same time, nothing has been done about enacting legislation to build homes, except the elimination of

\* The text of a report delivered at the June 27-30, meeting of the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

more of the government controls over construction. Fewer new homes will be started this year than last, and in some states more homes are being torn down than are being built.

What is more, despite the terrible wave of lynchings that has swept the country since the end of the war, and despite the mass firing of Negroes from industry in the growing unemployment, this Congress could not find time in six months to pass anti-lynching, anti-poll tax, and F.E.P.C. legislation.

One can anticipate, now that Congress has finished a major task for reaction, that some lip-service may be paid to housing. Veterans will not get any housing, but Taft may try to parade as a liberal on that issue.

Anti-Communism, the weapon by means of which Hitler almost enslaved the world, is no longer the sole property of the House Un-American Committee. It has become the pet instrument, not only of both parties in Congress, but also of the Truman Administration. It has become a standard procedure for anyone who wants to get anything out of Congress to shout that it is needed to stop the "Reds," and it is almost sure to be granted. President Truman outdid the Un-American Committee when he issued his decree setting up a "loyalty" test and thought control for government employees. Moreover, he designated the Un-American Committee as one of the bodies that would judge who was subversive or disloyal. This fascist committee now

has the sanction of Congress and the federal government for an authority and power that it never enjoyed under the Roosevelt Administration. It played a key role in paving the way for the Taft-Hartley Act and in the persecution of men like Marzani, Eisler, Josephson, the members of the Joint Anti-fascist Refugee Committee, and our own general secretary, Comrade Dennis.

Additional proof that Administration and Congressional policy is based on a war rather than a peace perspective, can be seen in the growing militarization of all phases of American life. Our military expenditures are enormous for peacetime, and generals and admirals are increasingly taking over key functions in government, industry, and even in universities. The plan to unify the armed services and to standardize armaments in the Western hemisphere; the report of the President's Commission on Universal Military Training, which recommended not only conscription of the nation's youth, but the militarization of the entire nation, its industries, resources, science, education, etc.—all are part of this ominous trend.

While military expenditures take up the lion's share of the budget, Congress has drastically slashed funds for the non-military departments, chiefly affecting vital services for farmers, workers, veterans, etc. Congress almost succeeded in handing a substantial gift on a silver platter to the large income group through the Knutson tax bill, but was unable

to pass it over the President's veto. However, according to the latest news, its proponents have not given up hope yet. And they are also trying to pass the Reed-Bulwinkle bill, which would exempt railroads from the anti-trust laws.

The record thus shows up the 80th Congress as an obedient servant and tool of Wall Street imperialists, banking and real estate interests, railroad barons, profiteers and warmakers, Negro haters, the N.A.M., and the Chamber of Commerce. This record is a product, in the main, of a bipartisan coalition of Republicans and Democrats.

While a bipartisan coalition rules the roost in Congress, important differences have expressed themselves. The Truman Doctrine was supported by a majority of both parties, but an important opposition took shape.

The opposition came from two opposite political groupings and for different reasons. One group was composed of so-called isolationist and economy bloc adherents—no less reactionary than the majority of the Representatives and Senators of both parties. The other group was composed of progressives of the Taylor-Pepper type. For example, the G.O.P. majority, with an eye to 1948, responded to popular pressure in the case of Bilbo. Although a majority of the Democrat and Republicans voted for the Taft-Hartley Bill, the veto, reluctant as it was, showed the weakness of the Truman Administration and its vulnerability to pressure. These differences reflect parti-

san interests, competitive business interests, sectional interests, tactical differences, etc., all of which are responsive to public pressure. While these differences are not of a fundamental or decisive character, they are nonetheless important. A powerful movement of the progressive forces can use these differences, and sharpen them, in their own interests.

#### THE 1946 ELECTIONS AND AFTER

Only 8 months have passed since the congressional elections of 1946, but they have been months of the greatest significance for the people of our country. Reaction won a great victory in 1946 with the election of a Republican Congress and the strengthening of the power of the Southern Bourbons and the Morgan interests in the leadership of the Democratic Party. Following the death of Roosevelt, and the desertion of his program by Truman under the hammer blows of the big monopolies, the progressive coalition that had grown up around Roosevelt fell to pieces. Red-baiting was one of the principal and most successful weapons of reaction in achieving this division of the progressive camp. The reactionary offensive last year reached its climax in the 1946 elections, while the labor and progressive movement reached its greatest disunity in many years.

The 1946 Republican victory was interpreted by many to mean that the United States was in for a long period of reaction. They saw the

elections as proof that the people had given a reactionary mandate to Congress and that the people were swinging to the Right. They took a dim and gloomy view of the possibility of the people reversing the trend. Our Party, while not blinking its eyes to the fact that the popular forces had suffered a very serious defeat, analyzed the reactionary victory as not signifying a trend of the people toward reaction. We attributed the defeat to the disgust of many people with Truman's betrayal of Roosevelt's program; to their war-weariness and desire for a change; to the lack of a suitable alternative to the Democrats because of the disunity of labor, the deals of some A. F. of L. top officials with the G.O.P., the consequent weakness and apathy of the labor and progressive camp, as well as the ability of the G.O.P. to sow confusion and demagogically capitalize on the situation.

The experience of the people with the 79th and 80th Congresses and the Truman Administration has brought about a growing and fundamental change in their moods and understanding. As a result, events have occurred that indicate that the tide is slowly but surely beginning to turn, despite the very serious setbacks for labor; that there is a revival of the people's progressive movement; and that the old Roosevelt coalition is beginning to develop again, but with the important difference that this realignment is developing on a new and higher level than under Roosevelt, though not

yet strong enough to be victorious.

I want to deal now with the major features of this people's resistance to the reactionary offensive.

#### THE PEOPLE'S DEVELOPING RESISTANCE

The bitter and disillusioning experiences of the A. F. of L., the C.I.O., and the Railroad Brotherhoods with the wave of anti-labor legislation, on a state and national scale, have resulted in a considerable expansion of labor activity and political action. (Since Comrade Williamson has dealt with this in detail, I shall only make some general observations on this point for my own purposes.) Following the relative apathy and demoralization of labor last year, this is a very welcome and heartening change. Most significant, because of its newness, is the activity of the A. F. of L.

These activities of the unions have resulted in the formation of united labor committees in many cities and states—though not yet nationally, unfortunately—and in city and statewide stoppages, demonstrations, parades, etc. These reached their highest point in the Cadillac Square demonstration and stoppage in Detroit, the A. F. of L. Madison Square Garden mass meeting, and the New York C.I.O. parade. The White House and Congress received an enormous amount of mail on the Taft-Hartley Bill, far greater than on any other occasion in history.

Many state chairmen of the Democratic Party were forced by the tre-

mendous pressure to come out in support of a veto. There was action by numerous City Councils, the A.V.C., the N.A.A.C.P., the National Farmers Union, church leaders, the California State Convention of the V.F.W., etc. The pressure was great enough to force Truman to veto a bill he really wanted to become law, but not powerful enough to make it more than a token veto for the record, or to have a decisive effect on the Senate. The main reason for this was the lack of national united labor action and the restraints placed on the militancy of the workers by top A. F. of L. and C.I.O. leaders. Nevertheless, labor put up its best fight in many years, and the workers have learned and will learn many important lessons from the fight against the bill and from the fight now to resist and nullify the legislation.

Without question the most important phase of the resurgence of the people's progressive movement is the Wallace movement—his tour abroad and at home, his campaign against the Truman Doctrine, his fight for progressivism within the Democratic Party, and his announced intention to leave the Democratic Party and help form a new party if the fight to reverse the trend in the Democratic Party fails.

When Wallace was excluded from Truman's Cabinet he was written off as "through" by leaders of both political parties and the reactionary press. Events have proved exactly the opposite. How can one explain the unprecedented and phenomenal

success of his European and American tours? He is certainly no brilliant orator or magic personality. Some say his success is because of curiosity aroused by publicity. But in the beginning there was a conspiracy of silence against Wallace's meetings and they were successful just the same. Others ascribe it to the organizing genius and zeal of organizations like the P.C.A. and those of the Left. While this is partially true, it attributes to the Left an extraordinary strength it unfortunately does not yet enjoy. The fundamental reason for Wallace's success is that he has identified himself with the deep American and world-wide longing for peace; he has exposed the Truman Doctrine as a war policy and led the fight against it. The columnist Marquis Childs quotes a Minnesota farmer to this effect on Wallace: "Well, he seems to want peace, and that fellow in the White House talks like he wants war." Wallace has also identified himself with the fear of an economic crisis and has projected a program for full employment.

The open break of Wallace and the forces around him with the Truman Administration, and the active campaign he is waging, have served to revitalize the progressive forces, to give them new hope and courage. Although most trade union leaders have not spoken out on the Truman Doctrine, the turnout of rank and file trade unionists to Wallace's meetings shows the opposition of the membership. The Democratic Party

of Minnesota, Los Angeles, and several counties of Washington, have gone on record against the Truman Doctrine. The response of farmers, Negroes, students, student-veterans, educators, churchmen and middle class groups to Wallace's meetings proves the true feelings of a majority of the American people, a fact which has been confirmed by all public opinion polls. Wallace's tour was so successful—between May 2 and June 16 more than 200,000 people attended the meetings—that the leadership of the Democratic Party has been forced to take heed.

The Democrats know that they must have the labor and liberal vote in order to win in 1948. Until recently, they felt they did not have to do much to win that vote, on the theory that labor had no place else to go. But the Wallace movement and the great campaign of labor against the slave labor bill have changed all that. A real alternative and choice for the people is beginning to shape up.

Some Democratic leaders are demanding that Wallace and Pepper be read out of the Democratic Party. Unquestionably, the Democratic high command would like nothing better, but they have not done so yet because they fear the threat of a third party. It is a sword of Damocles hanging over their heads. Consequently, the Truman Administration has begun to hedge and maneuver, to make a pretence of being pro-labor and liberal; but, fundamentally, its reactionary character has not changed

in the slightest. Truman's veto was such a maneuver.

Thus, the Wallace movement and the growing political action of labor, not only point to the perspective of victory in 1948 but constitute the chief weapons the people possess right now in the *everyday struggle* to influence the affairs of the nation in their own interest.

#### RECENT ELECTIONS

The beginning of a swing away from Republican reaction is to be seen in the results of various city and Congressional elections.

In Oakland, California, a united labor and progressive coalition won four out of five vacancies in the City Council. In Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the organization of the tobacco workers into the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers, C.I.O., resulted in the election of Kenneth Williams, a young Negro minister and veteran, to the City Council. He is the first Negro to be elected to such office in that area in 50 years, but assuredly not the last.

In a special Congressional election in Wisconsin, the Republican majority of 29,000 last November was cut down to 832. In a similar election in Washington, former Congressman Savage lost by only 1700 votes as against 7000 last November. After defeating the Truman candidate in the Democratic primary by campaigning on a pro-Wallace program, Savage then tried to get the united support of his party by watering down his program. His narrow de-

feat is to be attributed, not to his pro-Wallace position, but rather to Savage's own failure to make the issues clear. As Wallace said: "Savage would have been elected and there would have been a bigger turnout of voters if he had campaigned strongly on the foreign policy issue . . . he didn't stress the issue and sought instead to keep the party together." This was a vain hope, because in one of the largest counties in the District the Democratic machine supported the Republican. The lesson of this important campaign is that progressives cannot win by compromising with the Truman Doctrine, nor by sole reliance upon the Democratic Party apparatus even when they win party nomination.

The old corrupt Democratic Party machines are fast losing popular support and are breaking up in many cities. Former Mayor Kelly of Chicago chose not to run because the opposition to him in the ranks of labor was such that his candidacy would have meant a certain victory for the G.O.P. Labor and the progressives were not strong enough in Chicago to force the Democratic Party to nominate a pro-labor candidate, or to put forward a mayoralty ticket of their own. They went along with the Democratic reform candidate, who has ties with Big Business interests, and who defeated the *Chicago-Tribune* candidate by a bigger majority than did Kelly four years earlier. The old machine mayor of Hoboken, New Jersey, was turned out and Mayor Hague of Jersey City

resigned—a sign of the times. Independent forces ran in the Chicago City Council elections and were able to influence the results. Both in the St. Louis and Chicago municipal elections, the Republican Party gained votes among Negro voters, while Democrats lost ground as compared with previous elections.

Probably the most significant of these elections were those in Oakland and Winston-Salem. In Oakland the key factors were a progressive coalition made up mainly of a united labor movement and the Negro community, and a ward and precinct organization. Winston-Salem shows what can happen in many parts of the South if the new strength of labor, resulting from the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. organizing drives, exerts itself politically. The results of all these elections show a definite trend away from the Republican high tide of last year, but one that is not strong enough to win victory for progressive candidates unless they put forward militant programs and receive the united support of labor and other forces. Nor can a real progressive rely upon the regular old party machinery; he must build up his own independent forces in precincts, wards, and districts. The old corrupt city machines are tending to disintegrate. Whether they will be replaced by good government administrations that serve honestly but serve Big Business, or by administrations that honestly serve labor and the people, depends on the strength of the progressive forces.

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The gains, in some instances, of the G.O.P. among Negro voters are the result of the disgust of Negroes with the failure of the Truman Administration to do anything effective about lynch terror; of Republican demagogy on the seating of Bilbo (there will be an increase of G.O.P. demagogy in the last month of Congress); and, above all, of the lack of any alternative to the two capitalist parties.

If the gains of the G.O.P. among Negroes are to be no more than a temporary and passing phenomenon, then it is necessary to understand that the fight of labor and progressive forces for Negro rights has been extremely weak during the past six months, and that this situation must be overcome in order to reverse the trend. This must be done immediately, and it is especially necessary in the last remaining month of this session of Congress to develop the broadest possible campaign for F.E.P.C. and for the anti-lynching and anti-polltax bills. The weakness of the labor and progressive movement on this essential question not only endangers the whole coalition, but hinders the formation of a united Negro people's movement.

New sections of the nation are being drawn into the fight against reaction. White collar and professional workers and foremen have gone out on strike for higher wages and improved conditions. Workers who have never before been involved in struggle, such as the telephone

workers, have become active participants in the labor movement. The Congressional cuts in federal department appropriations are bringing large sections of farmers and government workers, as well as sectional interests—such as the Far West on the power question—into motion. The reactionary offensive is laying the basis for a far broader and stronger struggle against it.

One of the most outstanding examples of the progressive mood of the people is to be seen in the fact that reaction failed to legalize our Party and was forced to change its tactics. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the government planned to ban our Party. Reaction would have succeeded had it not been for widespread disagreement with this objective by important sections of the country, most of whom do not sympathize with our Party, but who understand and are alarmed about the danger to our democracy such a step would represent.

We can be proud of how our membership and leadership reacted to the danger, how we rose to the occasion and fought back, how we brought our case to the people and organized broader forces. We know, of course, that the fight has only begun. Reaction is still trying to accomplish by flank attacks what it could not achieve by direct assault, *i.e.*, through such blows as the Truman Executive Order, the Taft-Hartley Bill, the conviction of Eugene Dennis and others, and such state laws as the

Michigan Callahan Bill which aims to illegalize our Party as a "foreign agent."

But reaction is overreaching itself and is clarifying for millions of people whom our Party could not hope to reach that the attack against our Party is tied up with the attack against the rights, living standards, and desire for peace of the mass of the people. There is no doubt but that a powerful movement must and will develop against the setting up of an American system of thought-control, a movement that will involve unions, the Negro people, members of the arts, sciences and professions, and Communists.

In the nearly two years since the end of the war, and especially in the last six months, the people of our country have gone through a tremendous experience. Even a superficial examination of the situation underscores the fact that masses of workers, of members of the middle class, etc., are in ever larger numbers becoming dissatisfied with the policies of both major parties and are becoming ripe for a big step forward toward independent political action and a new Party. This is proved by labor's campaign against the Taft-Hartley Bill, the Wallace tour, the municipal and Congressional by-elections, the mass campaign in many states on state legislation, and other mass actions. While we must not exaggerate this development, we cannot afford to underestimate it. It is the vital new feature of the political situation that we must bear in

mind as we assess today the correctness of the policy we outlined at our December plenum.

Essentially, that policy was correct. That meeting put forward the slogan: Elect a pro-Roosevelt President and Congress in 1948. This slogan made possible cooperation and unity between those forces who felt that this objective could only be realized through the Democratic Party and those who were convinced it could only be accomplished through the building of a third party. We proposed to the people of America a 3-point program—no point of which could be separated from the other, and all of which had to be carried out together: 1) to build the broadest possible unity of the labor movement and its allies, irrespective of party affiliation, around the basic needs of the people; 2) to support and encourage the pro-Roosevelt Wallace-Pepper forces within the Democratic party; 3) to build and strengthen all organizations and movements for independent political action.

The new features that must be taken into account since December are: first, the rapidly maturing political consciousness and understanding of large numbers of people; and, second, the fact that the movement for a pro-Roosevelt president in 1948 is being transformed into a movement, both inside and outside the Democratic Party, for Henry Wallace for President; and, third, the united aim of labor to defeat those

Congressmen who voted for the Taft-Hartley Bill.

The 3-point program we outlined in December is still sound, but the new situation requires that we expand on it.

First let me deal with the problem of united action for the people's needs. The major issue before the labor movement will be the struggle in resistance to, and for the nullification and repeal of, the Taft-Hartley Bill. This fight will have the inevitable effect of drawing the various sections of labor closer together. It is essential, however, that the campaign of labor in defense of its rights, and the Wallace campaign against the Truman Doctrine, be merged.

We must work to get unions on record against the Truman Doctrine, on which they have spoken out very weakly. We must put forward a positive program of support of the U.N. based on Big Three cooperation and unity, as well as a program of American assistance to world reconstruction, but without political strings attached and without any intervention in the affairs of other nations. Since the policy of our government is one that leads to war, the militarization program is not for defense but for aggression and world domination. In that sense we must oppose increased armaments, militarization, and universal military training. Reduction in armaments will also make it possible to increase expenditures for the people's needs and to reduce taxes on the lower income groups.

Of key importance is our program to meet the approaching economic crisis, as well as the serious problem of unemployment, already upon us, and bound to grow more serious in 1948. This program must include the fight for jobs, the rights of the Negro people, a large scale housing program, and against rent increases.

Other sections of the population must be drawn into the fight against the Taft-Hartley Act besides the labor movement. But if this is to be done labor must understand not only that its own fight has been too defensive, but that it must simultaneously fight for the needs of other sections of the population and for its own needs and rights. This will win allies for labor and will immeasurably strengthen the fight against reaction in Congress which has benefited from the separate struggles carried on by separate sections of the people. The last month of this session of Congress is of key importance in this respect. After adjournment a fight should be put up for a special session to enact housing, rent, and Negro rights legislation.

Finally, the way should be prepared to confront Congress from the very beginning in 1948 with the demands of the people. Labor and the people were almost entirely on the defensive all through this session of Congress. We must prepare now to take the counter-offensive in January, 1948. This can be done by organizing committees and movements on the above nation-wide issues, as well as on state and city

issues. The excellent beginnings of the past six months in mass action on a state and city scale must be extended. These movements, while not necessarily directly connected to the movement for a third party, cannot but help facilitate it, objectively, because they will inevitably be directed against Big Business and the two parties in Congress.

With respect to the second point, the fight within the Democratic Party, newspaper reports state that a committee has been set up in the Democratic Party in California to run Henry Wallace for the Democratic presidential nomination in that state's preferential primaries. There are reports that similar moves are afoot in at least a dozen other states. While many progressive feel that there must be no illusions as to the ability of Wallace to capture the nomination at the Democratic National Convention, they are nevertheless convinced this movement should be developed to the maximum, that the fight to be victorious must be waged on the issues and a program, and that labor must give attention in time to the Democratic primaries, which means starting right now. The Democratic primaries, and in some cases the Republican, are important not only for the Presidential fight, but in the campaign to elect a progressive Congress through the defeat of those who voted "yes" on the Taft-Hartley Bill and through the election of real progressives.

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

have adopted parallel positions on working to defeat those Congressmen who voted for the Taft-Hartley Bill. However, unless labor unites on this objective in each Congressional District the progressive camp may go down to defeat, just as it did in case of the slave labor bill. Furthermore, Congressional District conferences should be organized to fight on people's issues, to build ward and precinct machinery, and to prepare for the nomination of progressive candidates. Where united labor political action is achieved on a Congressional District basis, the Left-Progressive forces should strive to strengthen and to advance such action as far as possible, but to go along with it even though it does not go as far as necessity actually demands. It must be kept in mind that a narrow approach to the Congressional elections may help to throw Congress even more completely under the domination of reactionaries than at present.

We must be clear on one thing—that the only possibility whatever of influencing the Democratic National Convention to any important degree is through the development of a really powerful third party movement. Those progressives in the Democratic party who do not believe that a third party is practical should nevertheless assist the third party movement as a means of strengthening their own fight.

The third point is the most important of all, *i.e.*, the need for independent political action for a new

party. Activity in this direction must be stepped up in every way possible to meet the new problems and the new opportunities. Millions of people are going through some very deep thinking and discussion as to the lessons of the 80th Congress and the passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill. We Communists should encourage and stimulate this discussion in the unions and everywhere else, so as to help the people to draw the right conclusions; to place the blame where it belongs, on both major parties; to show the need for a new party; and to draw organizational conclusions as well.

Existing political action organizations like the Progressive Citizens of America and the American Labor Party will undoubtedly have to expand their activities and, above all, build organization on a ward and precinct basis. It is to be hoped that the A. F. of L. will carry out its promise to campaign to defeat those who voted for the anti-labor bill and form a non-partisal political action league. The C.I.O. should repair its fundamental error in allowing C.I.O.-P.A.C. to go to seed, and it should revive, revitalize, and expand this essential instrument. The North Dakota Farmers Union has set up political action machinery, a far-reaching step which deserves the widest emulation. This is the time to bring into being every possible kind of independent political action and to strive to unite all these forces engaging in such activity around common objectives.

The unique feature of the Wallace movement is that while it is trying to win the Democratic Party, it is stimulating and creating sentiment for independent political action. More and more progressives agree that the key for building a third party is the development of a Wallace-for-President movement. They are in increasing agreement that the forces in favor of a third party must themselves begin to form Wallace-for-President committees, greatly expand their propaganda for a new party, issue literature, tell the history and draw the lessons of previous third party movements, answer all the arguments against a third party, and give information as to what technical machinery is needed to set up a third party, etc. Finally, those forces who favor a third party now must begin to take the necessary technical measures to get a third party on the ballot in the states. There is no time to be lost, for it is already late.

It is necessary to take into account certain retarding factors in the third party movement and the movement for Wallace. The record of the 80th Congress has just about killed any illusions some workers may have had last year about the G.O.P., although we should not underestimate the possibilities of the G.O.P. still influencing sections of the workers. The question before ever larger sections of the people now is: Can reaction be defeated through the Democratic Party or through a new party? Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley

Bill will hinder the breakaway of many workers from the Democratic Party. Many will hesitate to build a new party because they believe that it is not practical and that it will facilitate a G.O.P. victory. Many leaders of the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. will consciously try to halt the organization of a new people's party by labor. Lastly, the Social-Democratic leaders of the A.D.A., the Liberal Party, and some unions will try to buttress illusions in Truman and the Democratic Party and obstruct the formation of a new party. If they find this impossible, they will join the new party movement to head it and steer it into pro-imperialist, anti-Communist channels.

Clearly, those who favor a new party must patiently and convincingly answer the arguments that are in the minds of many people. It will also be necessary to direct united front appeals on issues to organizations led by Social-Democrats as a means of exposing those who obstruct unity, and winning the rank and file for a correct policy.

It is not possible at this moment to make the final decision as to the presidential ticket, nor to state definitely whether a third presidential ticket or a third Congressional ticket will be formed in time for the 1948 elections. But regardless of whether or not a third ticket can be formed, the movement to build a third party must continue and be accelerated. The formation of a third party is possible even without a

presidential ticket. Such a party must be broadly based if it is to be effective. The decision to form such a party does not lie only in the will of the Communists, Left-wing forces, and all others who favor a third party at this moment. Much broader forces that are now committed to a new party will have to join the movement to make it possible for it to come into existence in 1948. Practically, this means that such unions as the United Auto Workers and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers must favor it. It is not necessary that the entire top leadership of the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. favor a third party before active steps are taken to form it, but certainly more substantial sections of labor must favor it than do so at present. Furthermore, there can be no third party without a significant breakaway from the Democratic Party, and the winning of the support of large sections of farmers. In any case, the present narrowness of the movement must not be allowed to paralyze all the necessary activities that must get under way now to stimulate the movement, to win new adherents to it, and to prepare it to take advantage of a developing situation. Moreover, there is increasing agreement among many progressives that the situation is ripe to develop the Wallace-for-President movement in many unions, people's organizations, etc., and that this is decisively important.

In all these activities, the G.O.P. must still be fought and exposed as

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the main party of reaction, particularly the attempt of a Stassen to pose as a liberal while favoring the Taft-Hartley Bill. The Democratic Party is the second party of reaction, and since the main illusions in the ranks of labor and the progressives are with regard to Truman and the Democrats, the more difficult task will be to rid the people of those illusions.

The key to defeating the G.O.P. and reaction is to direct greater and greater pressure on the Democratic Party, to make maximum use of rifts and differences within the Democratic Party. The greater the movement for independent political action, the more concessions will be forced out of the Democrats, and at the same time it will be possible to expose the Democratic Party to new masses of people because of its failure to meet their needs.

If we are faced with the situation in 1948 that there will be no choice between the two old party tickets (which is the picture at the present moment), and that a national third party or ticket is not possible and will not be formed, then in that event our Party may nominate its own ticket. Under such conditions it may also be possible that other Left forces will join with our Party in putting forward a broader ticket in which the Communists will be an accepted force. But such a ticket will obviously not be a major third party.

It is clear that, as regards 1948, our Party will have to play a key role, will have to exhibit greater

political and organizational initiative and activity, and will have to win greater support for our independent and coalition policy. While we are making headway in a few places, in others we are moving too slowly and in too many places not at all. Not all of our Party organizations and members understand how to apply our policy for 1948 concretely, in their organizations, cities, and states. The main thing is that we must not delay; we must move and move fast, and move broad sections of the progressive camp along with us.

In conclusion, decisive issues are at stake as we approach 1948. Although the progressive camp is on the upswing, reaction is not resting but is taking the fullest advantage of the decisive position it won in November, 1946. We are in a race with reaction, and as yet the progressive forces are not moving fast enough or well enough to win victory. To win the race requires on our part, that our Party contribute, first of all, to the building of the greatest possible unity and action for peace, for jobs, for a higher standard of living, and for the preservation and extension of our democratic liberties; secondly, to the struggle for progressivism within the Democratic Party; and, thirdly, to the greatest possible extension of independent political action. The main lever for progressives to advance this process is the development of the movement for Wallace for President and the building of a new people's party led by labor.

# NOT AGAINST BUT WITH THE STREAM\*

By HENRY WINSTON

OUR PARTY FACES MANY new problems and tasks that grow out of monopoly's pro-fascist offensive against democratic liberties in general and the rights of labor in particular. A comprehensive program to meet this offensive has already been outlined in the reports of Comrades Foster, Williamson, and Gates. Ours is the task of reaching and winning the millions for such a program as the only alternative to the growing fascist danger. This places upon us a tremendous responsibility that emphasizes the need for increased political and organizational initiative on all fronts by our Party. Our attention therefore must be directed toward the problems and tasks flowing out of the new situation, and also toward the old problems that must be resolved in the light of this situation.

## NEW MOODS AMONG THE MASSES

Both Comrades Foster and Gates emphasized yesterday the growing fascist danger in our country, expressed so sharply in the passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill. It was also

\* Excerpts from a report delivered at the June 27-30 meeting of the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

made clear that the passage of this bill introduced a new quality into the people's struggle against monopoly reaction.

Many workers are now beginning to sense that what the Communists said a few months ago is correct, that Wall Street is determined to destroy American democracy; that Big Business is preparing now to place the burden of the approaching economic crisis on the backs of the people. Deep concern and fear exist among the masses, expressed both in spontaneous movements and in consciously-led struggles on a variety of fronts, against that offensive of monopoly. There is no doubt that these movements will grow and embrace ever-larger sections of the people.

It is against this background of a Leftward-developing mass movement, in which our Party is beginning to play a much greater role, that we can see more clearly the growing desperation of the enemy. The attacks on our Party are an expression of this desperation. The enemy is determined to isolate our Party from these developments and from the masses. That, for one, is the meaning of the Taft-Hartley Act.

## THE ATTACKS ON OUR PARTY

The attacks on our Party are many-sided. The Catholic hierarchy, through such media as the A.C.T.U. with its hypocritical "moral" pretensions, engages in practical everyday politics in the labor and mass

movements, in reactionary, union-splitting activities, generally directed against our Party. More and more it is playing a conscious role in the service of Wall Street and pro-fascist reaction. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ of America, in which Dulles' influence is so great, also lends it support to this anti-Communist drive, and gives support to the Taft-Hartley Act on the grounds that it is opposed to the closed shop because it brings together "believers and non-believers" in one united organization. The House Un-American Committee, citing Eugene Dennis for contempt, spearheads the attack on the Bill of Rights, and its first target is the Communist Party as an entering wedge toward the destruction of the entire labor movement and progressive people's organizations. And, as reported by the *New York Post*, Eric Johnston called in his screen writers and briefed them on a new twist for Hollywood movies. Mr. Johnston's approach to the question of Communists is to try to make them a laughing stock throughout the country. And he doesn't want to use the so-called "Russian" type, but "handsome" young American types!

Furthermore, as we now discuss the Taft-Hartley law, it must be recalled that the Executive Order of the President already established a precedent for this type of legislation, an order that not only makes it unlawful for Communists to hold office in unions of federal employees, but denies Communists the right to

be employed by the federal government. As regards the clauses of the Taft-Hartley Act relative to Communists and trade union leadership, it has already been reported that, in a number of cities, the right of Communists to be employed at all in industry had been challenged. And side by side with this, we see developing what seems to approach the state of affairs that existed in Japan and Hitler-Germany—"near-neighbor" groups, thought-control, gestapo groups, the extension of the spy system within the labor movement, etc.

It would be a mistake, however, to look upon these developments as single, isolated, unrelated events. We must see them as a reactionary program woven into a single system of struggle against our Party, the labor movement, and the people generally. Thus, we see the leading exponents of this anti-Communist crusade, such gentlemen as Lindbergh, Bullitt, Earle, Dulles, Rankin, etc., being directed from a single center—Wall Street; we see the evolving of what might be termed a fascist front in this country against democracy. It is with this situation in mind that we must pose the problem of building our Party.

#### BIG LIES THAT MUST BE EXPOSED

Obviously, the situation today is quite different than that of two, four, or six years ago; and in discussing the building of the Party, we must take that fact into account. It

is unfortunately true that some leaders of the labor movement do not yet grasp the full meaning of this anti-Communist barrage, and that in certain sections of the labor movement much confusion on this score, much doubt, still exists. But it is also true that the very impact of this reactionary offensive is producing a growing political consciousness among larger sections within the mass movement.

The enemy has been able to achieve some degree of success in influencing the masses because of a campaign of political demagogy, blackmail, and intimidation, unequalled in the annals of American history. Thus, for example, the issue posed before the American people is—"Are you for Communism or for the United States?" The choice presented to the American workers is: "Either reject Communism or reject the United States." This is not the issue in the country. It is a deliberate falsification of the problem now faced by the American people. But it is done in order to sell the American people a bill of goods—that the Communist Party is an "alien force," that it is a "foreign agent," etc. And all this is directed toward one end—to isolate the Party from the masses. But no victory can be permanent that is built on deceit and lies.

It is our task to expose this whole attempt as a scheme on the part of a desperate enemy to stampede the American people into an acceptance of fascism. Just as on a world scale, so in the United States the issue is

not "Capitalism vs. Communism"; it is—Reaction versus Democracy. The issue is rather: the great body of democratic Americans, of which our Party is the most advanced sector, as against the small, pro-fascist groupings within our country which represent the interests of a dying class. The struggle against this Red-baiting attack must be developed simultaneously with our fight on every other front. The masses must come to see that the rejection of this Red-baiting is the best way to defend the national interests of our country. Thus, our Party has a great responsibility today—to expose the Big Lies, of reaction and to help win the masses of the American people for a democratic program of struggle against monopoly.

The "crusade" against our Party is an admission of what is increasingly true—that our Party is not divorced from the workers; that there is a growing identification of our Party with its class, the working class; that our Party is becoming a more effective spokesman of this class and a more effective fighter for the true national interests of our country; that millions are beginning to question the program of Big Business, and are searching for a program of economic security, civil liberties, and peace; and that more and more people are beginning to see that there is no difference between the top commands of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, and hence are beginning to draw fundamental conclusions.

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## NOT A DILEMMA, BUT A CHOICE

These attacks are taking place at a moment when the American working class, and the American people generally, are on the eve of making a historic leap forward in the anti-monopoly, anti-fascist struggle, an advance that can expand democracy in our country by building united labor action and the third party movement. Ours, then, is a great responsibility, for not only must we help to expose the enemy, but help the masses to find those transitional forms by which they can move forward in the direction of victory.

In this connection, it is necessary for our Party to present its program for the defeat of monopoly's program of chaos and destruction and for the building of a broad democratic coalition—and to win millions with our program. It is only in this sense that we can think in terms of building a mass Communist Party through the process of building up the fighting, mass unity of the people.

Here it seems to me that a major ideological task before us is to expose the so-called benevolence toward labor of the Truman Administration. For example, the President said, after approving the objective of the anti-Communist provision of the slave labor bill: "The only result of this provision would be confusion and disorder, which is exactly the result that the Communists desire." Obviously, this means we must give

some plain answers to the workers. We must make clear that this "confusion and disorder," will not come from the Communists, but from the enactment of the Taft-Hartley law at the dictate of Wall Street, from the bipartisan coalition of reactionary Republicans and Democrats in Congress, and from the Administration itself. Only reaction is able to profit from confusion and disorder, which is why they did not take the President's "efforts" seriously, and aggressively pushed through the Taft-Hartley Bill. The President also asserts that the law will increase, rather than decrease, the disruptive effect of Communists in our labor movement. Does the President mean that Communists would disrupt the efforts of Big Business to further increase speed-up, to lower the living standards of the workers, to increase racial strife in industry? If this is what he means, then certainly we plead guilty. But then the labor movement would benefit from this type of program because it will strengthen the labor movement, help to speed up the process of labor unity, and consequently strengthen the struggle of labor against monopoly reaction.

Hence, at this juncture in American history the working class is faced, not with a dilemma, but with the choice of making historic advances that can result, not only in checking reaction's offensive, but in unfolding in a new way a people's counter-offensive against the trusts. Whether the workers will be able to draw the

full conclusions, whether this opportunity will be seized by labor, or whether the fight will be narrowly restricted to extremely limited reforms, will depend in large measure upon the ability of our Party to give that type of leadership which can unify labor's ranks on a platform of struggle. It is in this setting that we are discussing our Party today. There is nothing more important, more decisive than this problem of influencing millions and involving them in a great social crusade.

#### NOT AGAINST, BUT WITH THE STREAM

The recognition of the fact that we have entered a new period of struggle requires that we adopt new methods, a new emphasis, and new approaches in our work. But in order to work effectively our Party must understand exactly what is new about the present period.

There are some among our comrades who see in the offensive of Wall Street only its negative features, that is, the omnipotence of monopoly capital. They do not see the desperation of the enemy, a desperation that reflects the weaknesses of the enemy and the growing strength of the democratic forces in our country. They do not see the possibilities of victory, and consequently are not able to project our program among the masses.

There are also those who draw the conclusion that our Party is moving against the stream. What do they mean by "going against the stream"?

Do they mean that Wall Street has won the masses for its program, that the masses are actively supporting this program? Can it be said that such is the situation today? The picture is the exact opposite. The recent meeting of the C.I.O. Board, with all its weaknesses, is indicative of this fact. The call of the A. F. of L. for action against the slave-labor law, the wide mass movement against the lynchings; even the recent conference of the N.A.A.C.P.; and, in general, the fight of the people against the high prices, higher rents, and on many other fronts—all make clear that it is not true that our Party is moving against the stream.

Indeed, the very opposite is true. Our Party is moving with the great body of democratic-minded Americans in one direction—the direction of struggle against the trusts, against reaction, in the fight for democracy in this country. It is in such a situation that our Party works today, and that we pose the question of building our Party. It is only by thus correctly estimating the situation in our country today that we can be in a position to speak to the rank and file, to the millions, and win them for the program of our Party.

It is in this light that this National Committee meeting should discuss what is needed to build our Party to the great extent demanded by the present situation.

#### A NEW APPROACH NEEDED

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of all, the mass extension of our agitational and propaganda work, and the development in a new way of practical activity among the rank and file of the workers in industry, of the workers in the communities.

Here it seems to me that the starting point must be to take the central point in this plenum discussion to heart, namely, that a winning program does exist, a program such as that projected by our Party, on the basis of which the masses can be rallied to check and defeat reaction's offensive. This is the road the masses must take, this is the real alternative they must grasp, in order to prevent chaos in this country by the curbing of the power of the monopolists.

But where must we begin if we are to speak concretely of building and activating our Party so that it can fulfill its independent role in spurring the development of united and militant mass action, and the organizational unity of labor and the people? I believe that we must begin by emphasizing the necessity of developing in a new way the concentration policy of our Party. Our concentration work is not only an organizational process; it is also a political one. Hence, our concentration policy must have as its aim the development in industry and in the communities, of the political mass work of our Party, by taking our program to the masses and organizing them around that program.

What must be borne in mind, however, is that even though masses

are in motion, it does not mean the automatic building of our Party or, for that matter, of the mass movements of labor and the people.

#### PRIMARY, NOT SECONDARY

The building of our Party is possible only when we are able to further, in everything we undertake, the building of the mass movement of the people, and in this process consciously win the best elements for our Party. In this connection it should be noted that there is a tendency, expressed in many districts, to place the Party in the background. In practice, the Party becomes a secondary matter; everything else is primary and the Party is secondary.

This is placing the cart before the horse, in my opinion, and rejects in practice the primary and vanguard role of the Party. This is expressed concretely in the work of many of our shop and industrial clubs. Sometimes, the individual comrades in these clubs, the club leadership, and even the club as a whole, do not fully understand that the Party organization must educate its members on questions of policy, help initiate struggle, bring our program to the masses, and thereby contribute to the strengthening of the working-class and people's movement. In these instances, the comrades, without actually desiring it, in fact reduce the Party to a caucus or a fraction. This results in two serious mistakes. First, we lay ourselves open, no matter what our intentions may be, to charges that we are acting as an or-

ganized group to "interfere" in the internal affairs of the unions and other mass organizations. Secondly, our comrades individually, and the Party clubs as organizations, fail in their duty of giving political leadership to the labor and people's movement. Under such conditions, we do not educate our own members. We do not educate the workers. We do not act as the advanced section of the labor and people's movement. We do not lay the basis for increasing our influence. We do not establish the conditions for the growth of our Party. Under such conditions, the workers are robbed of our leadership, and this hurts the labor and people's movement. We do not build the stronger Communist Party so badly needed by the American people today.

One of the problems we must solve is how to present the Party as an *independent* party of the working class. This does not mean that we are advocating sectarianism or that we are putting Party work against mass work. It does mean that we are placing the problem in the only way that will make it possible for us to do effective mass work, and to build the type of mass Communist Party our country needs.

#### EVERY-DAY ISSUES AND COMBATING SECTARIANISM

On this very point, we must emphasize that ours must not only be a Party that carries on wide agitation and propaganda, a Party that reflects national and international issues.

Ours must be, at the same time, a Party that reflects the little issues, the every-day issues with which the people are concerned. Our Party must be concerned with the little grievances of the workers, particularly in the shops and plants, because it is only in this way that we will be able to win the broadest masses for the big tasks ahead. This point alone should make clear why the Party Club is the key to spreading our roots among the masses, to developing the mass activity of our Party and expressing its independent role.

For example, we understand from our Chicago comrades that a certain progressive leader who toured through downstate Illinois had this to report to his organization on his return. In that locality, in neighboring Tennessee, because of the Tennessee Valley Authority electricity costs  $1\frac{1}{2}\phi$  per kilowatt hour. But just across the border, in Illinois, where there is no Missouri Valley Authority, the cost is  $6\frac{1}{2}\phi$ . When this particular person spoke to some farmers in that area, one farmer said that he wanted an M.V.A. On being told, "You want the M.V.A. Why, that's socialism!", the farmer replied: "If it's  $5\phi$  cheaper, then I want socialism." Obviously, it is not just a question of cheaper electricity; the floods we have been reading about indicate that it is also a question of defending homes and lives. But it is around such issues as cheaper electricity, etc., that our Party can project its full program and build itself in the process.

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Why so much emphasis on this point? Because inside our Party the problem of sectarianism remains a serious one at every level. And the fight against sectarianism means, concretely, to become more closely linked with the masses; to take up the issues, large and small, that the masses are concerned with; to develop, at the very bottom, the unity movement of the masses; and to build the Party in the process of this work. This, it seems to me, is the second question we must face, as far as Party building is concerned.

#### THE PARTY AND THE MASS MOVEMENT

Third is the key question of defining exactly the role of the Party in relation to the mass movement. This question is sometimes posed incorrectly as the "independent role of the Party vs. coalition." Unclearness on this problem creates debates and confusion that make it impossible to move our comrades, as they should be moved, to build the Party in this period.

In this connection, it seems to me that the basic question that should be posed is: What kind of leadership are we giving to the mass movement? For, when we talk about the independent role of the Party, we do not mean thereby a role that isolates us from the masses, that causes us to move ahead of them too quickly, or to lag behind them. By the independent role of the Party, we mean that ours is a vanguard party, *i.e.*, one that is integrally linked with the

masses, not separated from them, helping them to move forward, and leading them in their forward movement. We have the task of ourselves understanding, and making clear to the masses, the oneness of our Party with the masses, and of showing that within this unity the Party is the most advanced sector. We must bring to the people the increasing understanding that we are the advanced sector, not just by saying so, but by helping to increase the fighting capacity of the people at all levels of struggle. And this we can do precisely by increasing our own fighting capacity, and by improving the quality of the leadership we give to the mass movement on the basis of our scientific understanding. That is what we must grasp, and the sooner we end all talk about "independent role of the Party vs. coalition," the better it will be.

The leadership of the Party is oftentimes blunted, and its work is developed unevenly, because of the failure of many of our comrades to see clearly what is meant by the independent role of the Party. Too often it is reduced merely to a question of holding a mass meeting, of issuing a leaflet, of the sale of our press, etc. The building of the mass movement, of the Party, becomes something other than the expression of the vanguard role of our Party. But this is an unnecessary, mechanical division; it is not an "either-or" process. We must learn to see the oneness in our Party work—developing our line and activity among the

masses, and in this way, and at the same time, building our Party.

Why is this question so important today? Because it is directly tied up with how our Party can spur on the general anti-fascist struggle; work with organized masses; lead those masses, and at the same time abide by democratic decisions; and, at all stages, maintain and extend the mass influence of our Party, and build it in that process. This, it seems to me, is the way in which the question of the independent role of our Party should be posed. It is this approach that should be applied by our shop clubs and by our community clubs, the general approach to apply to every phase of Party activity.

#### A BASIC TASK FOR THE SHOP CLUB

But, in stating this general truth, we come up against the fact that our shop clubs have the task of working to find those forms by which they can build themselves and contribute to building the unity and strength of the Party. Today the shop clubs function mainly on an emergency basis, a crisis basis, and have other weaknesses, already mentioned. But one of the central functions of a Communist shop club is not being adequately fulfilled. This function is the training of educated Communist workers, educated in the sense that they understand not only the scientific principles and policies of our Party, but are also able to share this knowledge with their fellow-work-

ers, and with them transform it into action that will defend their vital interests.

But it cannot be said that our shop clubs fully understand that one of their key tasks at this moment is to develop educated Communist workers. We must see to it that our shop clubs do understand this. This will, in my opinion, require all the skill, all the collective thought of our entire Party and its leadership. But if we solve this problem, we will be able to make progress everywhere in terms of building, consolidating, and strengthening our Party in every phase of its activity.

It need hardly be emphasized that what has just been said about our shop clubs, also applies to our community clubs, and these clubs can grow just as the shop clubs can grow, if the general principle just stated is applied to them.

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In conclusion, comrades, all of us recognize the new features in the situation existing today; all of us recognize the new problems and difficulties faced by our Party. But we can also see new and favorable opportunities. It is our job to seize hold of these opportunities, and thereby build the people's mass movement, build our Party, beat back the offensive of reaction, and make effective contributions to the advance of democracy, security, equality, and peace. And this will enable us to build the strong Communist Party of 100,000 we can and must build!

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# THE MARSHALL OFFENSIVE FOR IMPERIALIZING THE RUHR

By JAMES S. ALLEN

AS THIS IS WRITTEN the second Paris Conference on the Marshall plan is ending its hasty session, without the Soviet Union and without eight nations of Eastern Europe. The division of Europe has been deepened. Prospects for a Big Four settlement on the German question at the November meeting of Foreign Ministers have become dimmer. The government of Ramadier and Bidault has followed the Labor Government of Britain in accepting without qualifications the Marshall plan, thus opening the door wide to the American expansionists in Western Europe and facilitating American monopoly control of a Ruhr to be revived as a threat to all Europe.

Within one month after Marshall's Harvard speech, and without definite commitments from the United States as to the amount and the terms of future loans, 16 European nations are being shoved into a Western bloc, which can solve not a single major problem of peace or economic security and which can lead only to the deepening of the economic and political crises.

If, among other things, it was

hoped that the Marshall plan could be used as a lever with which to break down cooperation among the new democracies of Eastern Europe and to isolate the Soviet Union, this hope was shortlived.

Only four days after it convened, the Big Three conference in Paris broke down on July 2, when Bevin and Bidault refused to budge an inch from the plan they had drawn up in advance, obviously in consultation with the United States. On the following day, with the speed characteristic of the entire Marshall maneuver, the Anglo-French invitation was issued for a "European" conference to be held nine days thereafter—a record for haste in the convening of an important international conference that was not exceeded even during the supreme emergency of war.

With this onswep and with typical Bevinesque bravado it was hoped to gather in the recruits of a future Western bloc before the full impact of the scheme would be felt by the people and to spread consternation and confusion everywhere, especially among the nations of Eastern Europe. When Czechoslovakia first provisionally accepted the invitation to Paris it was said, as *The New York Times* put it (July 9), that the Marshall plan "had pierced the Iron Curtain" and had "wrought confusion among the Communists and their fellow-travellers." These hopes were soon dashed by the unanimous decisions of the governments of all eight East-European democracies to reject the Paris invitation on the

grounds that the Marshall plan is directed toward the revival of German imperialism and is a new effort at intervention in the internal affairs of other nations.

Instead of spreading confusion and chaos in Eastern Europe, the first effect of the attempt to implement the Marshall plan was to cause the new democratic states to broaden and extend trade and cultural agreements among themselves and with the Soviet Union. While Paris and Washington spun many fine words about self-help and cooperation, Eastern Europe was demonstrating how democratic countries could help each other on the basis of mutual respect and equality, in defense of their advanced democratic gains. On top of their colossal efforts at democratic reconstruction—through nationalization, agrarian reform, and people's control—these states extended mutual self-help. In the new five-year trade agreement with the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia was assured more grain and raw materials in return for equipment and machinery than was even in faint prospect at Paris.

Other East European nations, including Bulgaria and Albania, were also negotiating for similar mutual aid agreements to supplement those already made with the Soviet Union, while a new trade pact was signed between Czechoslovakia and Poland, strengthening the position of the two economically strongest countries of Central Europe. Yugoslavia, Albania, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary

were also concluding new agreements among themselves, without in any way closing the door to commerce with the nations of Western Europe or the United States. The continued negotiations between the Soviet Union and England for a trade agreement, prospects for which seemed bright even during the second Paris Conference, underscored the traditional Soviet policy of maintaining business relations with any country so disposed. And immediate prospects for the extension of commercial relations were greatly improved by the expected bumper harvest in the Soviet Union.

This cooperation in practice proceeds on the basis of defending and extending democratic reforms, and not of suspending them. It is cooperation to supplement each other's national needs and economies, and not coordination with the aim of subjecting one national economy to a more powerful one. It is cooperation for swift national development within each country, in accordance with the will of democratic majorities whose mass energies have been released and whose initiative is encouraged. Thus, while Western Europe is in the midst of deeper economic and political crises, and is being subjected to new and unprecedented demands by the United States, Eastern Europe continues to set an example of democratic reconstruction, safeguarding itself against imperialist intervention and against the repercussions of a depression in America.

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The speed of the Marshall offensive is matched by the shallowness of the justification for this splitting of Europe, for completely sidestepping the Potsdam agreement on Germany, and for by-passing the United Nations. As was shown in our article last month, the Marshall plan was conceived in the spirit of the Truman Doctrine and is adapted to the specific task of gaining control of the Ruhr as the center of an American imperialist sphere in Western Europe. It is an outgrowth of the entire line followed by the United States since the end of the war, and specifically of the policy of permanently partitioning Germany, begun with the merger of the Anglo-American zones and now carried forward by the Marshall plan.

In view of this record and the continuing expansionist policy of the United States throughout the world, including support to Chiang Kai-shek in China and the provocation of full-scale civil war in Greece, it would seem short of the ridiculous to blame the Soviet Union for the present split in Europe. Yet every effort is being made to make it appear that the Soviet Union had been given every opportunity to participate in the Marshall plan, but remained aloof, thereby herself forcing the organization of a Western bloc. Even some leading elements of the third-party movement seem to have succumbed to this line of argument. In addition, it is being said that the Soviet Union is opposed to world recovery, having everything to gain

from chaos, and is therefore sabotaging European and world recovery.

It is highly worthwhile to examine and answer these arguments; for it is imperative to safeguard the developing labor-progressive coalition leading toward a third party from the confusion and division spread by the authors and supporters of the Marshall plan.

The first thing to note in this connection is that the Soviet Union was not involved by the United States or by Britain in any of the preliminaries to the first Paris Conference. Marshall's original offer of June 5 was widely interpreted as an offer of assistance to Western Europe only. It was as obvious then as it is now that Congress would never appropriate funds to aid the reconstruction of the Soviet Union or the new democracies of Eastern Europe, even if the Administration were to make such unlikely requests. A week after his Harvard speech Marshall added a casual footnote to the effect that the offer was open to all European countries. The purpose of this afterthought was to provide the ground for the claim that the Soviet Union had spurned the door opened to her, which she was not expected to enter in the first place. Only then did Bevin and Bidault gather in Paris to draw up a common plan even before it was known whether the Soviet Union would accept or reject the invitation to meet with them.

When, to the obvious consterna-

tion of official Washington circles, the Soviet Union accepted the invitation, Bevin immediately presented the British proposals, which apparently were based on preliminary discussions with American officials and with the French. The Paris correspondent of *The New York Times* (June 29) described Bevin's position as follows:

Its outstanding feature is the way it conforms to the suggestions made by United States Ambassador Lewis W. Douglas in his speech to the American Chamber of Commerce in London Thursday. The British proposals also fit so well into what suggestions have been coming from Washington that one must suppose they were partly based on the conversations held with William L. Clayton [U.S. Assistant Secretary of State] in London before Mr. Bevin came here. Finally the British plan dovetails neatly into the French proposals put forward by Mr. Bidault and hence lines up the two countries against the Soviet Union.

In its note accepting the invitation to the Big Three conference, as well as in subsequent statements dealing with that conference, the Soviet Union emphasized that the "primary task of European countries is the speediest possible rehabilitation and further development of their national economies disrupted by the war," a task which could and should be "facilitated by United States aid."

The Soviet acceptance of the invitation to Paris, despite everything that had preceded, and the constructive spirit with which she approached

the task of reconstruction, reveal how hollow is the charge that she is opposed to world recovery. It was obvious that she would not miss a single opportunity, no matter how slight, to avoid the European split and to prevent the complete rupture of the wartime alliance.

From the start, the Soviet Union noted that neither the amount nor the terms of the Marshall offer of assistance were known, and that this was a rather flimsy basis from which to approach the tasks of European recovery. The Soviet Union did not reject the offer of American economic assistance, as is so often made to appear. Molotov merely requested that this aspect of the Marshall plan be clarified, a question which remains just as important now as it was then, and just as obscure. Despite the brusque refusal of Bevin even to raise the question with the United States, Molotov proposed that the conference proceed on the basis of each country estimating its own needs, indicating what additional assistance it would require, and from this the Conference would proceed to arrange credits from the United States. He hoped that in this way cooperation would develop among all European countries, as well as between them and the United States. Thus, far from rejecting American aid in principle or cooperation with the United States, Molotov emphasized that as far as the Soviet Union is concerned these ends are desirable and should be sought. That he meant business is attested to

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by the fact that he brought 89 economic experts with him to the Paris conference.

But this plan, in which the national sovereignty and economic development of each country would be safeguarded, did not suit the purposes of Bèvin or his American sponsors. Molotov's suggestions were rejected offhand, and the French produced a so-called compromise, which retained every essential feature of the British proposals, except that it abounded in many verbal assurances against intervention by Britain, France, or the United States.

Since the French "compromise" plan serves as the basis for the second Paris Conference and its future work, it is well to recall Molotov's objections to this plan and his warnings. He pointed out that the British and French governments, in their proposal for an all-European steering committee that would determine the use and allocation of American credits, were attempting to impose a new economic organization standing over and above the countries of Europe and inevitably interfering with their internal development. He warned that Britain and France were seeking to dominate the Steering Committee, which, by operating on the prime basis of foreign loans instead of the internal measures and national efforts of each country, would give to the United States a dominant voice in European affairs. He said the Soviet Union would not lend itself to the plans of other big

powers to dominate the smaller nations of Europe.

He objected to the provision in the Anglo-French plan for the utilization of German resources, before the question of Germany had been settled by the Big Four and before just reparations claims had been met. He said that the countries suffering most from the war should receive priority, and that German industrial products should be used in the first place for their reconstruction, instead of being used for other purposes and at the expense of the war-devastated countries. He pointed out that the partition of Germany was still being carried out, instead of restoring Germany as a unified democratic state forming part of the European family of nations.

Finally, he warned that setting up the Steering Committee, as proposed in the Anglo-French plan, would mean that Britain and France are dividing Europe, and American credits would serve this purpose. He cautioned Britain and France against the consequences of such action—a warning of the consequences to their own economic and world position as a result of submission to the expansionist aims of American imperialism.

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Events since the breakdown of the first Paris Conference seem to have organized themselves for the single purpose of proving Molotov right. At this late date, when sixteen European countries have been gathered into the Steering Committee and are

about to begin work on a reconstruction plan based upon American assistance, no one, not even the American government, knows how much will be made available to the Marshall contingent in Europe.

As a correspondent of *The New York Times* (July 4) put it, "the lack of certainty as to United States intentions is a source of gravest anxiety in Europe." Joseph and Stewart Alsop (*New York Herald Tribune*, July 9) reported that high planners in Washington are worried about the "rear" of the Marshall offensive. Even if the European Steering Committee should come out with a first-rate plan, they wrote, Marshall would be "turned down flat by an overwhelming majority in both Houses" of Congress. They noted bi-partisan demands that countries must abandon "socialization" measures before becoming eligible for loans, and remarked that such a plan would have little chance of acceptance anywhere in Europe. And should it be necessary to bully Congress into making appropriations by a new and bigger anti-Communist hysteria, this in itself would merely add fire to the reactionary temper of Congress, and lead to the imposition of such impossible conditions for loans that, say the Alsops, "we would bludgeon them [European nations] into a Soviet dominated, anti-American alliance."

How little assurance there is that reconstruction loans for Europe would be provided was revealed by Marshall himself in his speech to the

Governors on July 14. He indicated that a long campaign of "public enlightenment" would be required, and also demonstrated the kind of pressure that would be employed by appealing for support of appropriations for Western Europe to avoid its drift into the "Russian sphere." And, as if to mock the haste with which Bevin was railroading his proposals through the second Paris Conference, both President Truman and Senator Vandenberg indicated that no special session of Congress would be called in September to consider loans under the Marshall plan, and that the matter might well wait until the regular session next January.

As to the charge that Britain and France were attempting to impose their will upon the rest of Europe, Bevin and Bidault both protested too much. They devoted most of their speeches at the Big Three conference and then at the second Paris conference to professions of pure non-interventionist sentiments. But the major fight at the second Paris Conference, which opened on July 12, was over the composition of the Steering Committee, or the Cooperation Committee, as it is now defensively termed. When the participation of all 16 nations in the Steering Committee had to be conceded, the Anglo-French organizers of the Conference won their point by forcing through an executive committee of five members (Britain, France, Italy, Holland, and Norway), through which they would be able

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to control the work of the Conference committees.

Throughout the brief conference, the uneasiness of the smaller nations could not be hidden, the Scandinavian countries especially insisting upon safeguards of national sovereignty and demanding assurances that an anti-Soviet bloc would not be formed. An atmosphere of uncertainty and pessimism hung over the Conference, despite its apparent smoothness (a great ado was made over the fact that it could get along in English and French, without uncomfortable questions being raised in Russian).

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To confirm the worst fears with respect to the Marshall plan, the program approved at Paris provided for negotiations between the Steering Committee and the Anglo-American military governments of Germany for the purpose of bringing the Ruhr into the "recovery" scheme. Delegations were dispatched by the German military governments to Paris for consultation.

In fact, it is no longer a diplomatic secret that the central objective of American policy in Europe is to revive German imperialism, under the aegis of the United States. General Clay, U.S. Military Governor in Germany, repeated almost daily that Ruhr production is the all-important key to European reconstruction. Secretary of Commerce Harriman, who appears to have been sent to Europe with the special mission of making this clear, stressed in

his talks in Germany that the United States is prepared to do all in its power to restore Western Germany to its former position of dominance in Europe. And General Clay was not the least bit vague when he described the purpose of Harriman's trip as "to see to what extent he can revive German trade with the United States and to what extent the United States can restore the German economy." To make matters even clearer, Clay added that the failure of the first Paris Conference would hasten the political unification of the Western zones. (*The New York Times*, July 4.)

The same theme appears monotonously in the leading editorials of *The New York Times* (July 7), a reliable transmitter of State Department views. One such editorial boldly outlined the conditions upon which loans should be granted under the Marshall plan: priority to the "restoration of the German economy," complete political unification of the three Western zones of Germany, and "at least a pause in the confiscations and nationalizations which now terrify and paralyze the private sector of European economy." A subcommittee of the House Foreign Relations Committee chose the day on which the first Paris conference broke up to release a report calling for the revival of Western Europe and the Far East, with Germany and Japan as the key centers. The subcommittee, which includes outstanding Congressional spokesmen for blatant imperialist expan-

sion, demanded the cancellation of all reparations and urged the "writing off" for good of Soviet cooperation.

Even more eloquent than these and other pronouncements, was the convening of an Anglo-American conference in Washington on the problem of the Ruhr, even while Bevin was telling the 16 prospective recruits to the Western bloc that they were embarking on a program of genuine self-help and cooperation, without foreign intervention. At this parley it is hoped to straighten out the differences between Britain and the United States (at Britain's expense, of course), by establishing American control over key sectors of the Ruhr economy in return for a large International Bank loan for the purpose of "reorganizing" coal production in the Ruhr. And a new Anglo-American plan for raising the level of industry in their zones, although this is a matter for Four-Power decision and is inseparably bound to the question of reparations, underscored the central objective of restoring the Ruhr economy on an imperialist basis.

Further confirmation was also supplied by President Truman and other authoritative American spokesmen of the charge that obnoxious political conditions would be demanded in return for loans. In his July 4th address from Jefferson's home in Virginia, the President stormed against the powers "blocking world reconstruction" and warned against the "folly" of ex-

treme nationalism, that is, of resisting atomic dollar diplomacy. Paralleling an earlier speech by Marshall, President Truman demanded "economic and financial policies supporting a world economy instead of separate, nationalistic economies." In every-day words this means that other nations subordinate their own economic needs and political development to the American plans for global hegemony.

Despite Marshall's pretense of non-intervention in the European conferences, Assistant Secretary of State Clayton briefed Bevin before the first Paris Conference and later held a similar briefing of the French. According to the Paris correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune* (July 9), Clayton revealed that American conditions for loans included "the reduction of tariff barriers and the abandonment of social reforms, such as nationalization, whenever these conflicted with rapid and efficient reconstruction."

Whatever the Truman Doctrinaires and the Marshall planners may say about non-intervention, Greece becomes every day a more perfect model of their brand of cooperation. Immediately following the arrival of the first American mission to Greece and the signing of an agreement with the fascist-Royalist regime providing for complete American supervision, thousands were arrested and deported to prison isles in new mass raids at Athens and other cities. The illegalization of the Communist Party was taken as a foregone con-

clusion. The dictatorship, prating about "new invasions" from abroad and spreading unfounded and provocative rumours about the organization of "international brigades," ordered complete mobilization.

As Dwight Griswold left to administer Greece for the United States, it was admitted that \$35,000,000 of military supplies had already been sent to Greece, as the new Consul put it, on "an anti-bandit basis." Following Austin's earlier warning that the United States would demand armed measures against Greece's Balkan neighbors the United States attempted to use the fabricated hysteria in Athens to force through the Security Council its proposals for the "policing" of the Greek borders, and, in general, to prepare the ground for the dispatch of American troops to Greece.

Thereby the United States was threatening to do exactly what the British had been doing for the past three years in Greece, with as many as 50,000 troops and all kinds of mechanized equipment. Today every implementation of the Truman Doctrine in Greece results in increased activity and popularity of the Greek guerrillas and greater political strength of the democratic forces gathered in the E.A.M., which is again the leader of the Greek people in their fight against the fascist regime and American imperialist intervention.

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Despite Bevin's unrestrained eulo-

gies of the Marshall plan and his pretentious claim to leadership of the projected West European bloc, it is by now clear that Britain—the biggest power of West Europe and the prime junior partner of the United States—will be among the first victims of American generosity. On the eve of the second Paris Conference, Harriman came to London fresh from Germany to pour ice-water on those Britons who may have shared in Bevin's heated enthusiasm.

In Parliament, Morrison and other Government leaders, pointing to the melting away of the American loan of \$3.5 billion, had expressed hope that new credits under the Marshall plan would enable Britain to overcome its economic crisis. But Harriman dashed these hopes by making it clear that Germany and not Britain held priority in the American plan, and that when Marshall used the word "piecemeal" in his Harvard address he meant that no separate loan would be considered for Britain. As the London correspondent of *The New York Times* (July 14) put it:

The American officials evidently want the British leaders to realize that they must not count too heavily on American aid; that Britain is only one European country among many [instead of kingpin of a West European bloc!]; that the Ruhr is the central feature of American economic planning; and that Britain, especially in the vital field of coal production, does not seem to be doing as much for herself as possible.

From being a main recipient of American economic assistance, it turns out that Britain is to be a chief giver, surrendering its exclusive position in the Ruhr to the Americans. Harriman underlined this with cruel frankness, sharply criticizing the "inefficiency" and "mismanagement" of the Ruhr mines as well as the recently nationalized British coal industry, by implication inferring that superior American management under "free enterprise" would set it right. All in all, Harriman seemed to tell the British: you will share in whatever future credits may be forthcoming only if you do your share by handing the Ruhr over to us, and with that also inevitably surrendering your claim to leadership over the West European sphere. The proposition was placed bluntly by the same House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee that had "written off" Soviet co-operation. It asked:

Are we prepared to insist that Britain come to terms on the pooling of the Ruhr with our own occupation zone on our terms as a condition to the continuance of further extension of credits to Britain?

If Britain is treated in this cavalier fashion, France can hardly hope to fare better. At the end of the first Paris Conference Bidault had reasserted French reparations claims and demanded for France a share of Ruhr control. In one of the most revealing passages of Bevin's July 4th oration, in which he lumped the Marshall plan with our Bunker

Hills and Yorktowns, the pretender to West European leadership appealed to the United States not to let France down. For if France is to be shut out of the Ruhr, if its Lorraine ore is to be used to build up the German steel industry rather than its own, if it is to receive American loans which are to be devoted to the purchase of German products, even the Blum-Ramadier Social-Democrats could not justify this policy before the French people. They would either have to revive a joint government with the Communists, who would never submit to the Marshall plan for restoring German imperialism, or attempt to transfer power to the Right. And the French Socialists, with their unqualified acceptance of the Marshall plan, have staked their entire political future and the security of their country upon the hope that Washington will not let them down. But already one of the first steps of the Marshall offensive to conquer the Ruhr is to call a conference in Washington on the Ruhr problem without the French!

Bevin and Ramadier may delude themselves with the thought that the United States would support a Western bloc in which Britain and France, assuming that they can overcome the differences between them, would enjoy leadership. Or they may think that they can take advantage of the Marshall plan to establish their leadership over such a bloc, which they may hope to maintain politically through the So-

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cialist Parties of Western Europe. But events are already demonstrating that the central drive of American expansionist policy in Europe is for control of the Ruhr, and that the only Western bloc that will be permitted is one dominated by the United States.

If the two main organizers for the Marshall plan in Europe are treated so unceremoniously, one can well imagine the fate of the smaller nations, should they come along with the plan.

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Like the initial "get tough" policy and the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall plan met its first defeats in Eastern Europe. Now it must demonstrate what it can do for Western Europe, in terms of its professed aims of reconstruction and recovery, and not in terms of further division, chaos, and foreign intervention. But since the Marshall plan is essentially an offensive for the Ruhr, and is directed against Western as well as Eastern Europe, it can solve none of the major problems of reconstruction or peace, and like the Truman Doctrine of which it is part, it only creates new obstacles to world recovery and new threats to peace.

The third-party movement should not permit itself to be befuddled and divided by some of the secondary aspects of the Marshall plan, such as its more moderate tone as compared with the original Truman Doctrine or its pretenses at world recovery—features which are intended to create the impression that the pro-

gram for democratic world reconstruction supported by the Wallace progressives is now embodied in Administration policy. The developing labor-progressive coalition cannot be satisfied with these outer adornments as long as the basic reactionary policy of both major parties remains unchanged. The gloss on the Marshall plan is already wearing thin, and American progressives will soon enough recognize the utter deception of the scheme, especially as reaction within the country and the continuing expansionist drive abroad deprive the Marshall plan of its remaining glamour.

We can save ourselves and the world from the consequences of the Truman Doctrine and its Marshall plan offshoot, not by depending upon this or that nuance or tactical shift in the anti-labor and expansionist policy which now dominates both major parties. The threat of reaction and fascism within the country and the accompanying aggressive direction of foreign policy must be countered by the rapid development of the labor-progressive coalition toward a third party, which will mobilize all democratic forces among the American people in a program directed against the trusts and reaction, and for economic security and world peace based upon global cooperation with all our wartime allies.

The essentials of this program are generally accepted in the ranks of the labor-progressive movement that is now striving for a third party. It

remains to carry on a consistent fight against all Congressional appropriations intended for the revival of German imperialism and for the creation of a Western bloc, which run counter to the interests of the American people and our erstwhile allies in the war against Hitler Germany. A broad and persistent struggle should be carried on against the concrete application of the Truman Doctrine in Greece and Turkey, which is leading us down the road to war. The question of economic aid to Greece should be referred to the United Nations, and the United States should be induced to end immediately its political-military aid to the fascist-Royalist dictatorship of Greece and to the Turkish police state.

A positive program for democratic world reconstruction with American aid has been advanced by Henry A. Wallace. In the interests of America's own economic security and world peace, the American people should be rallied for the program of economic assistance for

peaceful reconstruction to those countries that have suffered most from Axis aggression and have contributed most to the defeat of our common enemies. Without interfering in the internal affairs of other nations or placing obnoxious and impossible political demands, American resources should be used to assure higher standards of living and rapid development of national economies, in accordance with the will of the people, thus also contributing to our defense against the approaching economic crisis.

Our government must be held to its obligations under the Potsdam agreement for a Big Four settlement that will assure a democratically unified Germany, able and willing to pay just reparations, and ready to rejoin the family of democratic European nations. Any other course, such as the present maneuvering for control of the Ruhr and for a West European bloc under American cartel domination, would lead away from peace and would strengthen the forces of reaction here at home.

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# SACCO AND VANZETTI—TWENTY YEARS AFTER\*

By ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN\*

TWENTY YEARS HAVE passed since the electrocution, at Charlestown State Prison in Massachusetts, of two innocent victims of legal frame-up—Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. Many millions of innocent human beings have been done to death in these two tragic decades. Millions of youths have died in the uncompleted struggle for human freedom. Why do we recall, then, with special meaning, these two obscure foreign-born workers—"a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler," as Vanzetti described himself and Sacco?

At their deaths, a roar of indignation swept around the world. The Massachusetts of Plymouth Rock, Bunker Hill, Paul Revere, and the Minute Men, faded out and the Massachusetts of witchcraft hangings in Salem and on Boston Common was reborn. The Wilsonian promise of America as crusader for "a world safe for democracy," was

\* The author of this article, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, worked on the case of Sacco and Vanzetti as a member of their defense committee for seven years, from 1920 to 1927. As Chairman of the International Labor Defense, she toured the country on their behalf, and ceased in her arduous campaign for their freedom only when she became seriously ill in Portland, Oregon, in 1927, in the course of a speaking tour.

—The Editors.

blasted by this hideous travesty of justice, the frame up system which is a long-standing institution traditional to American class justice.

In 1916 it was Mooney and Billings in California; in 1920 it was Sacco and Vanzetti arrested in Massachusetts. Forty years before, it had been the Haymarket martyrs in Chicago, and before that the "Molly Maguires," Irish coal miners in Pennsylvania. Many other names were known in Europe, identified with injustice in the U.S.A.—Frank Little, lynched in Butte, Montana; Eugene Debs in Atlanta Prison; the Bigbee deportations; the Centralia and Ludlow massacres; Joseph Hillstrom (Joe Hill), done to death in Salt Lake's prison. The reservoir of good will abroad toward the United States ran dry in the 20's, during the vicious post-war attacks against labor, and especially against the foreign born. There was then, as now, a loss abroad of faith in our promise as "liberators," and deep resentment mounted against the Herbert Hoover use of food as a political blackjack. How history repeats itself, though under changed conditions!

January, 1920, saw the defeat of the Great Steel Strike of 365,000 men, led gallantly by William Z. Foster. November, 1919, had marked the retreat of half a million coal miners, crippled by injunctions and the dictum of John L. Lewis that: "You can't fight the government." The company union and the open shop were the order of the day. The new year had ushered in the infamous

"Red Raids" of Attorney General Palmer. Nationwide arrests were made simultaneously on January 2, 1920. Homes, offices, schools, and meeting places were forcibly entered and searched without warrants. Property was destroyed or confiscated, and people were beaten unmercifully. Citizens were held on suspicion of violating state sedition laws. Non-citizens were turned over to the immigration authorities for deportation. Agents' reports on their hauls were marked "*Attention Mr. Hoover*"—the same J. Edgar Hoover who dealt quite otherwise with wartime fifth columnists, saboteurs, and seditionists, as well as with race rioters and lynchers, but who is now busy as usual attacking the Reds.

The dragnet netted several thousand "suspected Communists." Immigration stations—at Ellis Island, New York; Deer Island, Boston; Fort Wayne, Detroit, and elsewhere—were crammed to overflowing. 810 "alien suspects" were deported, many to certain death in countries from which they had fled as political refugees.

One "suspect," Andrea Salsadeo, was not deported with others of his ill-fated Italian comrades. His dead body was found at dawn May 3, 1920, crushed to death on the pavement outside the Park Row Building in New York City, where the Department of Justice had its offices on the 14th floor, and where he had been held a tortured prisoner for two months, without a hearing. His companion, Roberto Elia, who was

likewise held, was immediately deported before an investigation could take place. Sacco and Vanzetti, with the few of their group who were left, had arranged a protest meeting on May 9, in Brockton, Massachusetts. Vanzetti had made a trip to New York in April to investigate the arrest of Salsadeo. (While there, ironically enough, he had visited the Statue of Liberty.) The meeting was never held. They were arrested on May 5, a few days before it was scheduled to take place, accused of murder and hold-up.

This is the tragic and sinister background of the Sacco-Vanzetti case of twenty-seven years ago.

The first pamphlet on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti, *Are They Doomed?*, was written by Art Shields, now a staff reporter on the *Daily Worker*. The cover design, showing the death of Salsadeo, was drawn by a famous cartoonist, Robert Minor, today a leading Communist. The International Labor Defense, from its birth in 1925, was extremely active in their defense. I was a member of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee.

Sacco and Vanzetti were unknown radicals who belonged to no union or political party. They espoused a vague anarchistic ideal of human freedom which they called "The Idea." But Vanzetti had helped to organize the Cordage Works of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and had been blacklisted in consequence. Sacco had helped to raise funds for the iron miners' strike on the Mesabi Range

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in 1916. They helped in all labor causes.

The struggle for their vindication and liberation made these two unknown workers a symbol for unity and justice that assumed gigantic proportions. Vanzetti said of this, before his death:

Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man as we do now by accident.

The case against them was so palpably a frame-up that, even after a confession by a professional hold-up man, the prejudiced Superior Court of Massachusetts and the sadistic Judge Thayer would not grant them a new trial, which they knew would surely have vindicated Sacco and Vanzetti. The brutal Governor Fuller even went to the prison cell to taunt the poor confessing convict Madeiros, who was awaiting the death sentence for another crime. "So you are a double murderer. I will do nothing for you," Fuller said, implying that if Madeiros retracted his confession the Governor might save him. This was one of the most shameful scenes in legal history.

After the death of Sacco and Vanzetti the story of *The Untried Case* was written by Herbert B. Ehrmann, one of the counsel for defense in the case, which gives the wealth of new evidence the defense attorneys were never permitted to submit to a jury. It fulfills a sacred pledge to Vanzetti to "clear my name" of the despicable charge of hold-up and murder. It

tears to shreds the shoddy manufactured "evidence" against Sacco and Vanzetti and proves the crime to have been work of the well-known Morelli criminal gang.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR THEIR FREEDOM

American labor reached a high point of unity in the Sacco-Vanzetti agitation, unequaled before or since. International solidarity was demonstrated before the American consulates of London, Paris, Rome, Brussels, Berlin, Vienna, and in Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Canada, South Africa, China, Japan, and elsewhere. Great mass meetings were held in the Soviet Union. Mrs. Fernanda Reed told me recently of attending three such gatherings in Moscow, where she was asked to speak as an American from Massachusetts. Some of the names and episodes I find in my notebook of those days are the following:

The A. F. of L., 3½ million strong, passed resolutions for a new trial for Sacco and Vanzetti in three successive conventions. The All-China Federation of Labor, 2½ million strong, sent cables. Victor Berger, Socialist Congressman from Milwaukee, introduced a resolution calling for a Congressional investigation of the case. Eugene V. Debs issued a "Call to Action," of which the I.L.D. distributed millions of copies. Tom Mooney, from his prison cell, appealed for Sacco and Vanzetti.

Marcel Cachin, Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Maurice Rostand,

grandson of Lafayette, and Alfred Dreyfus, famous victim of an anti-Semitic military frame-up in France, joined in the French movement. *L'Humanité*, the Communist daily, warned the American Legion not to come to Paris for their convention if Sacco and Vanzetti died. When Governor Fuller went to France for a vacation, under an assumed name, he was driven out of the country by the fury of popular resentment. On a National Petition Day, 1,500,000 signatures were collected in France. An appeal made by Romain Rolland to Charles Lindbergh when the latter landed in France on his famous trip, was ignored by the cold-blooded careerist.

Heywood Broun, first president of the Newspaper Guild, lost his job on the New York *World* for his spirited defense of these heroic martyrs. Professor Felix Frankfurter of Harvard University, now a member of the U.S. Supreme Court, wrote a book, *The Case of Sacco and Vanzetti*, which is a caustic criticism of Judge Thayer's methods and of the evidence. Professor Frankfurter asserted in his book: "Every reasonable probability points away from Sacco and Vanzetti; every reasonable probability points towards the Morelli gang."

Over 50 members of the British Parliament signed petitions; the Chamber of Deputies of Uruguay memorialized Massachusetts; a group of German Reichstag members headed by the President, Paul Locke, cabled their protest. In Buenos

Aires there was a two day-strike; the dock workers of Bordeaux struck all American ships; in a demonstration in Lyons the police killed four workers; there were strikes in Argentina, Uruguay, and a twenty-four hour strike in Paris. In Sofia, Bulgaria, the American capitalists were warned of European reprisals if Sacco and Vanzetti died. In Mexico City, "Boycott American Goods" became the slogan.

When Sacco and Vanzetti were executed, an American flag was burned in front of the consulate in Morocco and a bomb was hurled at the American consulate in Paris. In that capital, at a demonstration, twenty workers were wounded by the police. Americans were unwelcome even as tourists in Europe and felt the scorn of the European people for a long time after the execution.

The names of Sacco and Vanzetti are not forgotten abroad to this day. In 1941 a Soviet ship, named "Sacco and Vanzetti," arrived in a Pacific port. When I mentioned their names at a Paris meeting in December, 1945, eyes kindled with recognition.

In our own country the campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti could well serve as a model of joint action today against the prosecution of anti-fascists, against the drive on labor and the Communist Party. From the liberals on the extreme Right, to the extreme Left of the Anarchists, all were united around the common demand—"Free Sacco and Vanzetti!"

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Locals of the United Mine Workers contributed over \$5,000 to their defense. The Sons of Italy, then 200,000 strong, fought for their release. The Sacco-Vanzetti Emergency Conference in New York City represented half a million organized workers. Clarence Darrow, Upton Sinclair, Sidney Hillman, and scores of other prominent Americans came to their defense.

Meetings of tremendous proportions were held on the Common in Boston; Union Square, New York; Cadillac Square, Detroit; the Cleveland Public Square; Union Park in Chicago, and similarly from coast to coast. In Cheswick, Pa., on July 10, 1927, the police broke up a Sacco-Vanzetti meeting with tear gas and clubs. Meetings were broken up in scores of cities, among them those held in Union Square, New York, in Philadelphia, Scranton, Newark, and Binghampton.

On April 8, 1927, Judge Thayer sentenced the two men, whom he had called "anarchist bastards," to die in the electric chair. For seven long years the agitation had mounted until it reached the climax. The whole world waited for the U.S. Supreme Court to act. But both liberal Justices, Holmes and Brandeis, failed to meet their historic duty and denied the necessary writ. It is an eternal blot on the memory of the ever so liberal Justice Brandeis, close friend of Felix Frankfurter, that he hid himself throughout that fateful week-end to avoid the eleventh-hour pleas for the lives of the two men

whose innocence must have been known to him. The doom of Sacco and Vanzetti was sealed. In Massachusetts, the Governor's star chamber investigation committee, appointed to give sanctity to the legal murder, and which was headed by President Lowell of Harvard and Stratten of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, reported adversely on the plea for a new trial. The full Supreme Court of Massachusetts denied the plea for a new trial on August 10, 1927. Rosa Sacco, wife of Nicola and mother of his two young children, and Louisa Vanzetti, sister of Bartolomeo, who had come from Italy, made a last unavailing personal appeal to Governor Fuller.

On August 22, at midnight, Sacco and Vanzetti, accompanied by the unfortunate Madeiros who gave his life trying to save theirs, were led to the electric chair. Sacco had written to his son, Dante, "We are not criminals. Soon you will understand." Vanzetti said calmly, "I am an innocent man."

100,000 people gathered in Boston, in a drizzling rain, for the death watch. Speakers were arrested, including Ella Reeve Bloor, William Patterson, and others. As the news was flashed around the world, workers wept for their dead brothers and cursed American capitalism which had taken the lives of the flaming, ardent Sacco and the calm, philosophical Vanzetti. By such foreign-born as these two was America built, and ever their blood has watered its tree of liberty.

While Sacco and Vanzetti were in prison in 1922, Mussolini marched on Rome and fascism first reared its ugly head. When some misguided liberals proposed an appeal to Mussolini and the Italian government on their behalf, the two heroic martyrs scorned the proposals and attacked Mussolini as "the murderer of many Saccos and Vanzettis." They would accept aid only from the Italian people. Those who cold-bloodedly sent Sacco and Vanzetti to their deaths in Massachusetts were actually the potential fascists within our gates. We see this more clearly today after the intervening twenty years' experience with the enemies of mankind.

#### LESSONS WE MUST HEED

The ashes of these good, innocent workers—Sacco and Vanzetti—were long ago mingled with the warm earth, after their seven years of Gethsemane. But fascism remains as yet unconquered, even after a military victory as a result of a world war. We had unity and understanding in the days of Sacco and Vanzetti—but not enough to save them. We had international solidarity—but not enough to save ourselves from the holocaust created by the same fascist reactionary forces that murdered Sacco and Vanzetti.

What is the lesson to be drawn now, in 1947, twenty years after this tragic crucifixion of two workers in Massachusetts?

August 22, 1947, the twentieth anniversary of the death of Sacco and

Vanzetti, finds the Taft-Hartley slave labor bill the law of the land. What a significant coincidence! Just such another onslaught on the people's movement as happened in the '20's! Arrests of anti-fascists and Communist Party leaders; trumped up perjury charges against two leaders of the largest union in Wisconsin, the Allis-Chalmers Local 248 of the U.A.W.; repressive legislation, such as the Callahan Law in Michigan—these are in full force today. Convictions for "contempt" of the American Committee already total nearly twenty, including the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Eugene Dennis; the German Communist and anti-Nazi refugee within our shores, Gerhart Eisler, who desires only to return to his own country; the Communist attorney, Leon Josephson; and the Executive Board of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee, headed by Dr. Edward Barsky. If all who share the feeling of contempt for the Rankin-Thomas outfit were to be imprisoned, a large-size concentration camp would be needed in Washington, D. C., and that would not be enough. Legal persecution and unpunished acts of violence multiply against the Negro people, particularly in the South. There will undoubtedly be many arrests of labor leaders and prosecutions under the slave-labor law in the near future.

The Truman Doctrine and its sugar-coated "amendment," the Marshall Plan, serve notice that once again the U.S.A. proposes to use

ood and other material aid as a political weapon to bolster reaction in Europe.

American workers need to revive the tradition of *labor defense*, the shield of the working-class movement, and to re-establish even greater solidarity than was exemplified in the cases of Sacco and Vanzetti, of Mooney and Billings, of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone. International solidarity is needed once again, stronger than ever before, for us to help defend the democratic rights of workers elsewhere—in China and Europe especially—against the same American imperialism which is attacking our own rights at home. All victims of the Un-American Committee, all targets of the Taft-Hartley Act, all foreign-born workers—such as the Yugoslav men and women in Farrell, Pa., who are being denied citizenship because of their activity for relief of their war-torn homeland—must be equally defended by all, on a non-partisan basis. The International Labor Defense merged a few years ago with the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties and other similar groups to become the Civil Rights Congress. This organization is responsible today for the legal defense of all the contempt cases, and has the potentiality of becoming the necessary mass defense organization, if given prompt and adequate support

by all groups in all key cities. The splendid fighting traditions of the I.L.D. at its best, the mass character of its agitation, can and must be recreated in this hour of great need, when civil liberties and the labor rights of the American people are in the gravest danger.

Labor defense, as is evident in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, does not consist only of what lawyers are able to say in the courtrooms, bound by precedent, red tape, prejudice of the courts, and arbitrary selections of juries. Labor defense consists basically of meetings, literature, demonstrations of a mass character, including strike actions, mustering of public opinion on a large scale, so that the real issues will be known and the real enemy will be exposed to the white light of publicity, and the pressure of the people. Such a mass movement can and must be created once again in America, on the broadest possible basis.

Let us have no illusions—stormy days of struggle are ahead that may make the 1920's seem like child's play. Let us profit by our past experiences to muster again the forces of the people to defend their liberties. If Sacco and Vanzetti could speak to us, that is the advice they would give us. And in the successful onward march of such a united militant movement, they would see "*Our Triumph!*"

# LESSONS OF THE RECENT MARITIME STRUGGLES

By AL LANNON

THE CHARACTER OF THE recent struggles between the shipowners and the maritime workers, around the June 15 contract negotiations, was determined by the internal relationship of forces in the maritime industry, as well as in the country as a whole.

This struggle, which culminated in the smashing of the shipowners' political lockout and the achieving of economic gains by the workers, was completely interrelated to the larger issue centered around the struggle to defeat the Taft-Hartley slave labor bill.

When we speak of the shipowners we speak, not of some separate or related grouping of Big Business, but of *the ruling-oligarchy of monopoly capital itself.*

The major shipping companies of the country are directly and completely dominated by the giant industrial corporations. In some cases ownership is direct, with major lines operated as direct subsidiaries of huge combines. Eleven steamship

companies are tied in with the Morgan-First National Bank financial interests. This is the most powerful aggregation of financial control in the country, with assets in excess of 37 billion dollars. Four other companies are dominated by Kuhn, Loeb and Company, third in the national finance-capital hierarchy. The directorates of the shipping industry interlock with those of the nation's railroads, coal mines, steel mills, public utilities, banks, insurance companies, and manufacturing establishments.

It is this fusion of the maritime industry with, and its control by, the ruling sectors of finance capital that accounts for the close tie-up between the government and the shipping barons.

It also accounts for the direct role of the government in subsidizing the super-profits of the shippers and in helping to continue the existence of substandard conditions for maritime workers.

An industry spokesman reported on June 29, 1947 (*New York Times*), that of a total merchant fleet of 2,539 vessels, only 778, or 30%, were privately owned and operated, while the remainder were chartered to the financial barons of the shipping industry at the expense of the United States Treasury.

Considerable publicity has been given the billions in profits and plunder reaped by the shipowners during the war. But careful reading of the financial pages reveals that in 1947 the American maritime in-

ustry is reaping the highest profits in its history, far in excess of even its wartime record. Optimistic predictions of continued high profits in the shipping industry are based upon the direct and tangible gains that the industry anticipates as its cut from the operation of the Truman Doctrine.

All of this dramatically confirms the fact of the fusion of the shipping barons with the most predatory section of finance capital in the United States, and its link with the state.

This well goes to show why the shipowners brought about the recent political lockout of the maritime unions as part of the general offensive of monopoly capital to weaken the working class and take a long step toward fascism in this country.

#### THE LOCKOUT

That the shipowners had long planned this lockout to smash the maritime unions, was indicated by the campaign of Red-baiting disruption launched against the maritime workers even before the ink was dry on the contracts signed last year. It was this campaign that succeeded in smashing the unity achieved by the maritime unions in 1946 when they formed the Committee for Maritime Unity.

In April, 1947, Almon E. Roth, then president of the National Federation of American Shipping, master organization of the industry, let the cat out of the bag when he told the Senate Labor Committee that "There is such a thing as pay-

ing too high a price for industrial peace . . . the most stabilizing influence that could be brought to bear on industrial relations would be a few unsuccessful strikes. . . ."

The recent lockout was an attempt to put across this policy of "stabilizing" industrial relations with "a few unsuccessful strikes." The shipowners timed their lockout of the maritime unions with the moment of decision on the Taft-Hartley Bill.

The shipowners' two-fold objective was to smash the maritime unions and to furnish the N.A.M. with the situation Big Business was looking for in order to create an atmosphere of "industrial paralysis" and "labor irresponsibility" to build up pressure for final passage of the bill.

The confidence of the shipowners was based on an intense, year-long drive they had conducted to destroy the unity of the maritime workers, which had reached its highest peak in June, 1946. At that time the concerted strength of the C.M.U. resulted in some of the greatest gains in maritime labor history, without resort to a nationwide strike, despite tremendous provocation by the shipowners and the government.

This committee, formed at San Francisco in May, 1946, presented all of the C.I.O. seafaring and longshore unions, namely, the National Maritime Union, American Communications Association, Marine Cooks and Stewards Association, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, Marine

Engineers Beneficial Association, and the Inland Boatman's Union. In addition, it included the independent Union of Marine Fireman and Oilers.

The C.M.U. was a partial answer to the oft-expressed demand of maritime workers throughout the country for nation-wide industrial unity. It demonstrated in a few short weeks that its united strength was many times that of the individual component unions. The major economic gains scored in 1946 (particularly the wage increases and the reduction of the work-week at sea from 56 to 48 hours) in the face of threatened strike-breaking by the U.S. Navy—and only a few weeks after the government's breaking of the railroad strike—made the C.M.U. a decisive challenge to the supremacy of the shipowners.

The victory of the maritime unions in 1946 was the result of a unified strategy and of *joint action in negotiations*. In 1947, the same unions went into struggle with no C.M.U. and only a loose agreement for mutual support. Each union negotiated individually, while the shipowners negotiated unitedly.

During the period after June 15, 1946, the disruption promoted by the shipowners, particularly within the National Maritime Union, and the inter-union dissension which they fostered, brought about the destruction and dissolution of the C.M.U. This fact alone convinced the employers that the maritime unions were ready for the slaughter when

their contracts terminated on June 15, 1947.

This conviction was rudely shattered by the maritime workers themselves. The strategy and mobilization of the workers in the C.M.U. maritime unions, combined with the rising tide of nationwide opposition to the Taft-Hartley Bill, reversed the immediate perspectives for the shipowners and opened the way for the defeat of the lockout and the winning of new, improved contracts for the maritime workers.

#### THE WORKING OUT OF A CORRECT STRATEGY

The Left-progressive and Communist members of the maritime unions played a decisive role in the struggle and its victory.

*They operated on the principle that victory was possible only by the greatest possible united mobilization of the maritime workers with the objective of winning the best possible agreement in the shortest possible time.*

This strategy, aimed at winning and concluding the struggle before the deadline for final Congressional action on the Taft-Hartley Bill, was the key to the defeat of the shipowners' strategy in relation to the Bill. This was the strategy advanced and fought for by the Left-progressives and Communists in the maritime industry.

This strategy was based on a careful evaluation of the advances scored by the shipowners in their campaign

destroy the maritime unions, and both the internal and external conditions confronting the maritime workers in the spring of 1947.

Soon after the victorious settlements of 1946 the maritime unions on all coasts began discussing their perspectives and formulating economic demands for the 1947 negotiations.

In October, 1946, the National Council of the National Maritime Union, for example, drafted a broad economic program, assuming that the national unity which had scored such decisive gains in 1946 would be able to make further progress in 1947. Similar programs were projected by other unions in the industry, which, like the N.M.U., aimed at a shorter work week, longer vacations, health and welfare protection, etc.

It is noteworthy that the forces in the N.M.U. around President Joseph Curran attacked these economic demands as utopian in October, 1946, when they seemed possible of realization. Six months later, on the eve of the lockout, these same forces demanded that the Union insist on attainment of these points as a condition of settlement. Their strategy, camouflaged by "militant" phrases, would only lead to immobilization and confusion of the maritime workers.

There is no question but that the National Council of the N.M.U., which put forward its program in October, 1946, was correct in its evaluation of the situation then exist-

ing within the industry—a condition still characterized by unity of all of the maritime unions under the banner of the C.M.U. But by early June, immediately prior to the termination of the agreements, the situation had changed.

It was then that the Left-progressives and Communists in the maritime unions proved that they were beginning to apply the united front policy more effectively in fighting for a correct program.

As the struggle developed, first to prevent and then to smash the lockout, even those forces who had been advancing an opposite strategy were compelled by the mobilized pressure of the rank and file workers to fall in line with the winning strategy.

*The factor that played the decisive role in breaking the lockout and in successfully winning a quick victory was the unexpected character of the united front that the shipowners saw brought into motion from below against their strategy.*

The shipowners had banked heavily on the disunity and division between the various maritime unions and particularly in the ranks of the leadership and membership of the National Maritime Union, the largest and most decisive union in the maritime industry.

They were forced to change their plans when they saw that the strategy of certain divisive forces, (of stalling action until the membership strike vote was completed on June 22, which would have been one week after the lockout began and

two days past the Taft-Hartley Bill deadline), had been swept aside. This was achieved by a broad front of rank-and-file unity that brought together the great majority of the members in favor of a winning strategy. This current was so powerful that the leaders of the disruptive camp, like Keith, Stone, and others, could not oppose it and merely fell in line.

In order to bring about this condition, where a leadership and membership which had been divided by disruption, *were moved into united action in time to tip the scales in the direction of victory*, the Left-progressive and Communist forces had themselves to overcome a number of dangerous tendencies.

First, there was the tendency to succumb to pessimistic moods because of the setbacks to maritime unity that resulted from the activities of disrupters and capitulators over the past years.

This pessimism resulted from an underestimation of the extent to which real struggle around a correct policy could overcome setbacks and move the workers into action. In turn, it resulted in the tendency on the part of some of the Left-progressive forces to capitulate before the attack of the shipowners.

This tendency expressed itself in a policy of "raise no demands" and "hold what we have." It was aided by the action of the West Coast shipowners who notified the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union, in mid-April, that they were terminating

that union's contract as of June 15.

This marked the first time in years of bargaining on the Pacific Coast that the shipowners had moved to terminate a contract, and it was indicative of the confidence of the shipowners that they would be able to destroy the progressive West Coast unions. A parallel attack was launched by the waterfront employers against the West Coast longshore union, which was seeking renewal of its existing contract.

By early April it had become evident to all of the maritime unions that the disruption of the C.M.U. was adversely affecting the bargaining strength of the individual unions. A clear need existed for at least an informal apparatus for the exchange of ideas and the formulation of common strategy. Accordingly, an existing apparatus, the C.I.O. Maritime Committee, which had served for nine years as the legislative agency for the unions, was utilized.

While the struggle by the Left-progressive forces for united action of all unions in the face of the shipowner attacks did not succeed in establishing the unity that had existed in 1946, it did result in the utilization of the Maritime Committee as the channel through which the unions worked out a minimum program of mutual support to secure contracts on June 15.

This program of mutual support while inadequate, was a serious defeat for the forces of disruption. It did a great deal to overcome pes-

istic moods among the workers and bring about that unity and mobilization from below which defeated the plans of the shipowners. Thus, the pessimistic, capitulation-tendencies resulting from the disruptive activities of the Curran forces, while not completely overcome, were prevented from spreading and from exerting any decisive influence in the over-all strategy to defeat the shipowners.

The second and main danger the Left-progressive forces were confronted with and succeeded in defeating was the tendency generated by the capitulators, suddenly disguised as "super-militants." This was a tendency to ignore the danger of possible enactment into law of the Taft-Hartley Bill, and to call for a long, all-out struggle for "maximum demands."

These "super-militants" demagogically insisted on attainment of the full demands (which they had backed six months before), and sought to prevent a unified struggle based upon a correct and realizable program. At the same time they attempted to lull the workers into passivity by minimizing the dangerous character of the anti-labor offensive of the trusts.

It was the successful struggle of the Left-progressive and Communist forces against both the tendency toward capitulation and the hypocritically "militant" talk of "maximum demands" that turned the tide and frustrated the objectives of the shipowners.

Instead of the prolonged lockout that the shipowners had counted on, this twofold struggle, tied to the nationwide fight against the Taft-Hartley Bill, opened the way to a compromise victory that represented a smashing defeat for the shipowners.

The final settlement for the seafaring unions of the C.I.O., (which has since been offered to the A. F. of L. unions in the industry) yielded a 5% increase on monthly wages, which, together with an increase won in a January wage review, brought the total increase won in 1947 to 11%. This exceeds, on a percentage basis, the 12 cent hourly increase in base pay won in most manufacturing industries. The maritime workers also won paid holidays at sea and a wage review on December 15, 1947.

In view of the nationwide anti-labor offensive, coinciding as it did with the nearness of the date of adoption of the Taft-Hartley Act—an offensive that had been spearheaded by the shipowners—the victory of the maritime workers, although not as remunerative economically, was nevertheless very significant.

The maritime workers were able to turn an unfavorable situation into a basis for victory only because of an effective struggle for a correct policy.

Faced with the emergence of unity of the maritime workers behind a strategy aimed at the quickest possible victory, seeing the defeat of Curran's stalling tactics, and alarmed by the rising national opposition to

the slave-labor bill, the shipowners suddenly began to be afraid to risk the gamble of stalling until the possible final passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill.

The shipowners figured it was best not to gamble but to settle *before labor became further united* by a possible veto and defeat of the Bill.

On the other hand the maritime unions could even less afford to gamble than the shipowners.

This was the point where the Left forces were put to their greatest test. They met this test by keeping to the forefront the idea that the maritime workers could not afford an adventurist gamble on the possible defeat of the Taft-Hartley Bill. Their strategy was based on the principle that the workers were not in a position to risk prolonging the struggle *but should strive to settle before the shipowners were stiffened by the possible final passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill.*

The enactment of the Taft-Hartley Bill dramatically confirmed the correctness of this strategy pursued by the Left-progressives and Communists in the maritime unions, which resulted in victory for the workers.

It is true that had the maritime workers completely overcome the tendencies towards capitulation early in the struggle they would have been able to wrest greater economic concessions from the shipowners. However, they must ask themselves: *What would be the perspective today if the so-called "super-militants"*

*had succeeded in imposing their strategy on the Unions?*

The "super-militants" wanted to hold out for maximum demands. If they had succeeded, the maritime workers would have been without signed contracts when the Taft-Hartley Bill became law and the shipowners would have been in a position much more effectively to apply the Act in the ever sharper attacks they will now conduct against the maritime workers.

The "super-militants" were ready to play with the lives and interests of the maritime workers to further their own partisan and disruptive programs. They played at being "super militant" while not lifting a finger to mobilize the maritime workers for struggle. They are the same people whose disruptive activities destroyed the unity of 1946 and who are responsible for the fact that the maritime workers were put in a defensive, rather than an offensive position in the recent struggle.

Mobilization of the rank and file workers behind a correct and realizable program defeated the strategy of these forces and compelled them to go along with the correct strategy.

Thus the Left-progressive and Communist forces contributed to victory that not only saved the unions from the immediate aims of the shipowners, but which has within it the basis for organizing the defense of the maritime unions to meet the new attacks of the shipowners arising out of the passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill.

The seamen were never under any illusions that the signatures which the shipowners were compelled to put on the agreements a few days before the Taft-Hartley Bill became law, settled all their problems.

They knew that the shipowners would treat the agreements as nothing more than an *armed truce* which they would begin to violate with the passage of the slave-labor bill, if they had the strength and opportunity.

In this fight the shipowners, along with the rest of the employers will not necessarily immediately launch a frontal assault. They will attempt to prepare for the all-out assault by *first breaking the armed truce by the most provocative violations of the agreements and victimization of the workers.*

The struggle against shipowner violations of the contracts and victimization of the workers is the keystone of the struggle to bring the maritime workers into an effective nationwide struggle to smash the Taft-Hartley Act.

The workers must be on guard against those who will attempt to cover up the main issue, which is to resist the attempts of the shipowners to apply the Taft-Hartley Act against the maritime workers.

There are indications already that some people, in order to cover up their attempts to "accommodate" themselves to the Taft-Hartley Act, may attempt to divert the struggle against it into an internal union

struggle over the "tactics" to be utilized.

Instead of working for a unified program of mass struggle against the slave-labor law, they are trying to create internal strife over this or that particular method of struggle, and there is being raised the false issue of "for or against job action by individual ship's crews."

These forces must be prevented from using this device in the same manner in which they used the false slogan of "for or against C.M.U." last winter, when the real issue was "for or against strengthening of the united struggle against the shipowners."

Not "for or against job action," but a *united program of struggle*, inclusive of job action, democratically worked out by the Unions to resist and smash the Taft-Hartley Act and the attempts of the shipowners to apply it—this is the issue on which to mobilize the workers and to expose those who want to capitulate and accommodate themselves to the slave law.

The manner in which the progressive forces react to this issue will determine whether or not they will be able fully to regain and hold the initiative in the crucial period of struggles now shaping up.

#### THE NEED FOR INDUSTRIAL UNITY

The attacks on the maritime unions, from within and without, make the question of industrial unity a

life-and-death matter for maritime labor. In this new and most crucial period the fight for industrial solidarity and organization merges with the fight for union survival in the maritime industry.

William Z. Foster warned the maritime workers some time ago that they would not again be able to defeat the shipowner attacks unless they wiped out the present divisions within the industry.

The maritime industry is today divided on every conceivable basis. Among seafaring personnel there are today five unlicensed unions, two unions of radio operators, two national unions of licensed personnel, as well as a splintering of company unions, outposts of John L. Lewis' District 50, and a sizable bloc of unorganized workers.

In affiliation, the unions are C.I.O., A. F. of L. and independent. Organizationally, they are craft unions, such as the Marine Cooks and Stewards, or semi-industrial such, as the N.M.U. In geographic coverage, some are national, while others are confined to the various coasts.

In short, the maritime workers are not organizationally equipped to meet the consistent national policy of the shipping trust.

Over the years the aim of rank-and-file workers and of the Left-progressives and Communists has been a national organization of maritime workers. Abortive attempts in the early years were unsuccessful. The major victories scored by the C.M.U. within a few months

of its formation in 1946 proved to the workers that industrially united action brings great gains.

The campaign of disruption that President Curran unfortunately allowed himself to lead at the instigation of the Keiths and Stones, succeeded in preventing an even greater degree of united action in 1947 and diverted the drive for organic unity of the maritime unions. New impetus to this drive has been given, however, by the last minute, united rank and file mobilization that took place during the recent struggle to smash the ship owners' lockout.

Within the short period since June 15, the urgency of industrial unity has become even greater. *United action of all of the maritime unions—seafaring and shoreside, C.I.O., A. F. of L. and independent, on a national and port level—against the Taft-Hartley Law, has become imperative.*

Simultaneously, the progressive forces must undertake a vigorous and aggressive campaign for early achievement of either organic unity or an all-inclusive permanent federation of the maritime unions. *The issue is not one that can be postponed or avoided.* The experiences of recent months and the impact of the new attacks on labor prove conclusively that only such action can enable the maritime unions to survive the coming struggles.

Immediate establishment of some form of industrial unity is also the only possible step which will enable the maritime workers to fight their

far from completed battles for adequate wages, conditions and security.

### THE ROLE OF COMMUNIST MARITIME WORKERS

The Communist maritime workers were able to make an important contribution to the recent victory of the maritime workers because they have learned and more correctly applied the policy of the united front.

This united front policy has been based on the following 3 points:

1. Correct analysis and tactics have been developed in relation to the middle forces, tactics which reject the suicidal and mechanical concept that the middle forces constitute a homogeneous group. We have recognized that, under the pressure of the shipowners and the offensive of monopoly in general, the middle forces are undergoing a sharp process of differentiation. Some are moving in the direction of capitulation and surrender, while others are moving or *can be moved* in the direction of unity behind a program of struggle against the shipowners and the trusts.

2. We have recognized the need to struggle against being sucked into tailing after those middle forces who were *departing* from a program of unity against the shipowners. At the same time, we have recognized the need for an uncompromising struggle against all "Leftist" tendencies and "go it alone" moods that would result in isolating the progressive forces and their Communist core from the forces that were or could

be moved into a position of united struggle against the shipowners.

3. We have operated on the principle that the effective application of the united front policy could only succeed if we worked to strengthen the Left-progressive forces and their Communist core, that any retreat on this score would be incompatible with the fight for maritime unity. *The recent struggle in the maritime industry indicates that the Communists are learning how to apply this approach more maturely, by avoiding the false impression that to work to strengthen the progressive forces is a fight for partisan position or influence.*

In the course of the struggles of the past year, we failed, until recently, adequately to raise the ideological and organizational mobilization of our Party membership up to the level of correct policies.

Since the Communists have been and are today an important part of the progressive forces of the workers in the maritime industry, any weaknesses in the thinking of the Communists inevitably have their repercussions among the workers. In the recent period this was reflected in the progressive forces temporarily losing the initiative on program in the interests of the workers.

Within the Party, there was a distinct weakness in conducting a real ideological struggle to clarify the members on what was the correct strategy and tactics and to involve them in day-to-day mobilization of the rank and file workers in struggle

against the shipowners and to defeat all currents of disruption of tendencies toward wrong policies, whether from the Right or "Left."

The few in our ranks who attempted to stampede the Party along the path of capitulation would have been more effectively exposed had we brought home to our entire membership the understanding *that the application of the united front policy does not merely consist in what we do in relation to this or that individual, but rather in the mobilization of the rank and file of the maritime workers to fight unitedly against the shipowners.*

The core of the correct application of the united front policy is the understanding that *only by relying on the mobilization of the rank and file to take a stand will this or that individual be influenced either to stand with the membership against the shipowners or be exposed by the rank and file themselves.*

No back-door conniving or "agreements" can ever be a substitute for

the influence and the role of the membership of the maritime union.

This lesson was not learned quickly enough. Had the Communists succeeded in fully understanding this lesson, the progressive forces would have been able to defeat the disrupters and prevented the internal disruption of the N.M.U., as well as the destruction of C.M.U.

It is time for any lingering capitulators in the ranks of the Party to learn that their pleas for "sacrifice for the sake of "unity" amounted to nothing less than pleas to sacrifice the only kind of unity that would have put maritime labor in an offensive, instead of a defensive, position in the recent struggle.

*The progressive forces would have begun to regain the initiative in the recent period had it not been for the fact that the struggle to smash the influence of the capitulators in the party has resulted in greater clarity, greater unity, and increased fighting strength for the Party.*

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