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*The 30th  
Anniversary  
of the  
Communist  
Party  
U. S. A.*

*A Magazine Devoted to the Theory and Practice of Marxism-Leninism*

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# Our Party's Thirtieth Anniversary

by Alexander Bittelman

ON SEPTEMBER 1ST, this year, our Party will be thirty years old. It was born out of the struggle against imperialist war in the present historical epoch—the epoch of the downfall of capitalism and the birth of Socialism. It grew and matured in all the major progressive struggles of the American people and its working class in three decades of the most crucial period in the world's history. It became established firmly and irrevocably as the American party of Marxism-Leninism, as the revolutionary vanguard party of the working class and its allies, all the exploited and oppressed.

That is why the class enemy, in its drive to destroy the Bill of Rights and to impose upon the American people a fascist regime, has singled out our Party and its leadership for its sharpest and most relentless attacks. That is why, in its drive to war and fascism, the class enemy, monopoly capitalism in the United States, has placed on trial in Foley Square our Party's leadership and the theory and principles of Marxism-Leninism.

Wall Street and its hangers-on know full well that there is no more irreconcilable foe of monopoly capitalism than the Communist Party;

no more consistent and inflexible fighter against its plans for a new world war than the American party of Marxism-Leninism; no greater and more militant enemy of the reactionary and fascist drive of the Wall Street monopolies than the revolutionary vanguard Party of the American working class; no better or more far-sighted defender of the interests of the people—today, tomorrow and all the time—than the Communist Party of the United States of America whom reaction is “trying” now in Foley Square.

Wall Street and its hangers-on also know this: that the working class and its allies are marching everywhere toward their liberation from imperialism and capitalism under the banners of Marxism-Leninism, that the victory of Marxism-Leninism spells the doom of class and national exploitation and oppression, and that the world-liberating ideas and ideals of Marxism-Leninism are making their way, slowly but surely, into the hearts and minds of ever larger numbers of the more advanced sections of the American working class and all working people. And our party—the American Communist Party—is the Party of Marxism-Leninism. It is, therefore,

with great pride and with boundless confidence in the future that we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of our Party.

## TWO COMMANDMENTS

There are two major ideas, among numerous others, that need to be brought forward most prominently and effectively in celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of our Party.

One is: to extend and strengthen our ties with the masses, most particularly with the masses of the industrial proletariat, with the masses of the Negro people, with the masses of the most exploited sections of the American working class.

The masses need Communist leadership. In the face of Wall Street's drive to war and fascism, confronted with the brutal attempts of the monopolies to make the masses of the people carry the terrific burdens of the developing economic crisis, and subject to daily betrayals of their most vital interests by the reactionary trade-union bureaucracy and the Right-wing Socialist leaders, the masses of the working class and all working people find themselves in ever growing need of the leadership of Communists and of the Communist Party. That is why we must extend and strengthen our ties with the masses.

On the other hand, when the enemy concentrates on crippling our Party, seeking by every means to outlaw it, resorting to all methods

of mass intimidation to isolate the Communist Party from the masses, the first imperative duty of every Communist is to strengthen his or her ties with the masses. The first answer to the enemy's attempt to isolate the vanguard from the masses is for the vanguard to seek to *extend* and to *strengthen* its ties with the masses. This is the first commandment in this historical moment.

The other commandment is: to strengthen our ties with the Party, to deepen our understanding of the theory and principles of Marxism-Leninism, to work actively and systematically in our Party organization, to raise ever higher our standards and quality of Communist mass work and of Party discipline, to work tirelessly to win the masses to the line of the Party and thus to raise the prestige and influence of the Party among the masses.

This second commandment, like the first, flows inevitably and with powerful urgency, from the present situation. The enemy, in his drive to cripple one of the most effective fighters against war and fascism, seeks not only to isolate our Party from the masses. This is only one part of the strategy. The other is to weaken the fighting capacity of the Party itself, to weaken the Party as a *system of organizations*, that is, to *weaken or even break the ties of Communists with their Party organizations*. This means to cripple the effectiveness of the mass work

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of individual Communists, because it is impossible for a Communist to continue to do effective mass work for any length of time without the closest contact with, and activity in, a Party organization. This is an axiom of Marxist-Leninist principles of organization.

Furthermore, by seeking to weaken the ties of Communists with their Party organizations, the enemy also seeks to weaken Communist loyalties, to interfere with the understanding of, and intimate participation in, the making of Party policies by Party members, to paralyze the daily functioning of individual Party organizations and of the whole system of Party organizations.

In the face of these obvious aims of the enemy, the Communist answer is equally obvious. It is the second commandment. It is the categorical imperative *to strengthen the ties with the Party organization.*

It is imperative to make of oneself a better Party member, having a deeper understanding of Communist history and principles, surrounded by larger numbers of non-Party masses, raising higher the quality of one's Communist mass work and influence among the masses *as a Communist*, participating actively *in one's Party organization* in the making and execution of Party policy, systematically bringing into the Party the most advanced and mature workers, building the Party among the masses.

## OUR POLICY OF THE UNITED FRONT

What is the key to the fulfillment of these two commandments? It is the correct and skillful application of the Party's policy of *the united front*. The stress here is on applying the united front policy correctly and skillfully, not one-sidedly, not clumsily, not wrongly. This means to apply the united front policy in a way free from Right opportunist and Leftist-sectarian distortions. In the given situation, where Right opportunism is the greatest danger, special efforts must naturally be made to combat Right opportunist distortions in the application of the Party's united front policy. And we must remember at the same time that sectarianism is an ever present danger to which we must always be alert and which we must resist and combat systematically.

From the rich experiences of our Party, and from the lessons of the international working-class movements so brilliantly projected by the late Georgi Dimitrov in his work and leadership for the united working class and people's front, we find that the success of the united front policy depends upon the effective realization of the following main aspects of this policy:

1. To build and promote unity of action of the masses, from below, for the realization of the most elementary, immediate and urgent needs of the masses. It is the task

of building and promoting a united front of mass struggles for the interests of the American people and its working class. This is the beginning of all beginnings. Without united front mass struggles, the policy of the united front is meaningless, an empty phrase, a refuge for opportunism—Right and Leftist. It is only on the basis of united front mass struggles, *on individual, most elementary, and most urgent mass issues* that effective mass struggles will materialize. And it is only on the basis and as a result of such effective mass struggles on individual and elementary mass issues that the united front policy of our Party can become fully unfolded and realize all its potentialities.

2. To influence the development of these united front struggles for the immediate needs of the masses in all fields in the direction of the growing people's coalition against war and fascism—the anti-monopoly people's coalition for peace, democracy, equal rights and economic security, headed by the working class. This is the task of directing the individual united front mass struggles—for economic demands, for peace, for civil rights and liberties, for building the Progressive Party, for political actions and election campaigns, etc.—into the channels, onto the path of the developing people's anti-monopoly coalition. It is the task of finding allies, of winning them, of building various coalition movements on urgent individual is-

sues, and of influencing the development of these movements in the direction of the people's anti-monopoly coalition.

In other words, our task is not only to help set afoot united front mass struggles and coalition movements on individual issues. This is the starting point. Without this nothing much else will materialize. But given the rise and development of such movements, they must be influenced and directed toward the people's anti-monopoly coalition. If this is not done, two unfavorable and negative outcomes become inevitable. These united front and coalition movements will begin to disintegrate and peter out, or else will fall victim to the demagogy and maneuvers of Truman "liberals," reactionary trade-union bureaucrats and Right-wing Socialist leaders. The chances are that without a clear perspective on the part of the more advanced elements of these united front and coalition movements—the perspective of becoming part of the developing people's anti-monopoly coalition—and the need of moving in that direction—the very fight for the individual immediate issues will not assume its maximum mass scope and effectiveness.

3. To expose and combat the Truman "liberals," the reactionary trade-union bureaucracy and the Right-wing Socialist leaders. This is the task of winning the masses away from the influence and domination of the agents of the monopoly

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among the masses. In connection with this point, it is also the task among the masses of the nationality groups to win them away from the influence and domination of bourgeois nationalism and of the bourgeois nationalists who are trying to bind the masses of their respective groups to the ideologies and policies of Wall Street.

Without this ideological and political struggle against Wall Street's agents among the masses the policy of the united front cannot be unfolded. To try to set afoot mass movements, united front struggles, even on most elementary individual issues, without pointing out from the very outset that Wall Street agents among the masses will obstruct and betray these movements and struggles and that the masses must be ready to oppose these obstructions and betrayals, is to try the impossible. To persist in this impossibility is to doom oneself to futility and failure.

Experience, including the experience of the last few years, has amply demonstrated that one of the main obstacles, if not the main one, for the broader unfolding of daily mass struggles against the war and fascist drives of the monopolies is the influence and domination of the Truman "liberals," of the Murrays, Greens, Reuthers, Dubinskys, and of the bourgeois nationalists in the nationality groups. This does not negate the effect of various objective factors. Nor does it negate the effect of various Right opportunist and

Leftist-sectarian distortions of the Party's correct united front policy. These factors are of considerable importance. Certainly, the correction of the distortions in Communist mass work is a basic condition for the broader development of united front mass struggles. But failure to wage an effective fight against the imperialist agents among the masses, in the course of building united front mass struggles, is precisely one of the most damaging distortions of the Party's policy, and it is primarily a Right opportunist distortion, a failure to expose and combat *systematically* the Truman "liberals," the reactionary trade-union bureaucracy, the Right-wing Socialist leaders, and the bourgeois nationalist leaders.

Failure to expose and combat systematically the agents of imperialism among the masses is a serious Right opportunist distortion of our line. It is now the main danger to meet and combat. But Leftist-sectarianism is also an obstacle and danger to our united front policy. The danger consists in this: the Left-sectarian as a rule fights the reformist agents of imperialism, not among the masses themselves, not in the mass struggles and mass movements, but in isolation from the masses, only among Communists and Communist sympathizers. This is essentially opportunism, because it is tantamount to failure to fight the agents of imperialism among the masses. The result is futility and failure because

no progressive mass movements are set afoot and no new sections of the masses are won away from the agents of imperialism.

It is, therefore, clear that the way to carry out the Party policy of the united front is, first, to set afoot mass movements and struggles of a united front nature on the broadest and most urgent individual issues; second, in the process of doing so, to project and popularize the perspective of moving toward the developing people's anti-monopoly coalition under the leadership of the working class; and in the process of carrying on these united front mass activities to expose and combat the agents of imperialism systematically and without let-up, and to win the masses away from them. This will correct the Right opportunist distortion of failing to fight the agents of imperialism in the mass movements and the Leftist-sectarian distortion of trying to fight these agents in isolation from the mass movements and mass struggles. In other words, we expose the agents of imperialism in the very process of building the united front mass struggles and the people's anti-monopoly coalition.

4. To build the Communist Party.

This is the fourth and most important aspect of our struggle for the united front among the masses. For, what is the historical explanation of, and justification for, the Communist policy of the united front? It is to promote the unity of the working class and its leadership in the

nation. This is necessary both for meeting the offensive of the imperialists, for the defense of the daily and immediate interests of the masses, on the one hand, and for preparing the working class to lead the American people to curb the power of the monopolies and from there to the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism, on the other hand. This is the historical process. This is the meaning of the united front policy as it unfolds itself in the mass movements (without them there is no unfolding whatever), from stage to stage in the liberation struggles of the proletariat.

Now, we ask the following questions: Can the American working class attain unity without a mass Communist Party recognized by the class as its vanguard and leading party? Can the struggle for the unity of the American working class attain great political significance and strength without a strong and leading mass Communist Party? Can the American working class advance successfully toward leadership in the progressive movements of the American people, and through this process to leadership in the nation without a growing, influential and vanguard mass Communist Party? The answer to all these questions is: NO. Only with a growing mass Communist Party can the American working class advance successfully toward the fulfillment of its historic role of leader of the people's coalition

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against war and fascism and, from the victory of this coalition, of the leader of the American working masses to Socialism in the United States.

In other words, the building of the Communist Party into the mass leading party of the American working class is the most basic aspect of the Communist united front policy. Therefore, to try to realize the united front policy without building *in the process of mass struggle* the Communist Party itself is to try the impossible. The result will be neither the growth of united front mass movements, nor any significant progress in the struggle for the class unity of the proletariat, nor the winning away of considerable masses from the agents of imperialism, nor a growth of the Communist Party. This means that failure to build the Communist Party in the process of struggle for the unity of action of the masses, in the very process of building united front mass movements and mass struggles, is bound eventually to destroy the effectiveness of our entire united front policy.

Conversely, the systematic building of the Communist Party in the process of struggle for the united front among the masses is the first and surest guarantee for the success of the policy of the united front. We know this from our theory. And we know it from our practice. The celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of our Party is just the kind of

occasion for concentrating our major efforts to build the united front struggles of the masses, to direct these struggles along the path of the developing people's anti-monopoly coalition headed by the American working class, to expose systematically in these mass struggles the agents of imperialism, and to build the Communist Party. This is the occasion for improving manifoldly our struggle against all opportunist distortions of the Party's united front policy—Right and Leftist-sectarian, but especially Right—and to raise to higher levels of quality and effectiveness the fight for the theory and principles of Marxism-Leninism.

#### THE FOSTER TRADITION AND THE TWO COMMANDMENTS

In celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of our Party, we are also celebrating a great and beautiful tradition in the American working-class movement. It is the Foster tradition. It is the fighting working-class and Socialist content and spirit of the work and leadership of the National Chairman of our Party.

The Foster tradition dates back to, and recreates in the new epoch of the world's history, the great achievements of that wonderful leader of the American working class—William H. Sylvis. The Foster tradition embraces and reactivates the spirit of the struggles of Debs and

Haywood. The Foster tradition means also in large measure the Ruthenberg tradition, the struggles and achievements of the founder of our Party.

It is in the Foster tradition that we shall find the full meaning of the two commandments with which we opened this article. For, one of the most outstanding and permanent features of Foster's Communist leadership has been and is precisely this: strengthen your ties with the masses, strengthen your ties with the Party.

Foster gave meaning to these commandments both by teaching and by example. He has shown repeatedly, day in and day out, through practically three decades, in his theoretical as well as practical work, how these two commandments go together. He has shown, and continues to do so, that we strengthen our ties with the masses in order to strengthen the Party, and that we strengthen our ties with the Party in order to extend further and to strengthen our ties with the masses.

The Foster tradition refutes absolutely and categorically the false ideas that there is some sort of contradiction between strengthening one's ties with the masses and strengthening one's ties with the Party. Foster's own life offers the best answer—the most conclusive refutation—of this nonsensical and opportunist proposition. Foster's tradition teaches us to realize these two commandments under *various* conditions and circumstances. The

Foster tradition teaches that it is the sacred duty of Communists, of Marxist-Leninists, to realize these two commandments under *all circumstances*, regardless of how difficult and unfavorable the enemy may temporarily succeed in making them for us.

The Foster tradition also teaches that Communists cannot for long continue extending and strengthening their ties with the masses if they allow their ties with the Party organizations to become weakened, if they do not systematically maintain and strengthen active ties with the Party organizations. The Foster tradition further teaches that a Communist's ties with the Party organization find their fullest and most fruitful expression and justification in the work of extending and strengthening his ties with the masses, the Party's ties with the masses.

\* \* \*

To think of the Foster tradition is to reflect on the creative power of intense proletarian class consciousness and militant class struggle. Hand in hand with this goes in the Foster tradition a profound love for revolutionary theory and unceasing work for the perfection of the mastery of this theory.

That is why it fell to Comrade Foster to become the father of the modern Left and progressive tendencies and currents in the American trade-union movement. The Foster tradition in the American

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labor movement stands for theoretical and organizational leadership in the historic struggle for industrial unionism, for the organization of the unorganized in the basic industries, against the treacherous theories and practices of class collaboration, for clean and honest class-struggle trade unionism. This is the Marxist-Leninist conception of trade unionism which Comrade Foster applied to the conditions of the American class struggle.

The Foster tradition means building the Communist Party as a mass party, basing itself upon the industrial proletariat and continuously extending and strengthening its ties with the masses in the shops and factories.

The creative role of Communists in the American trade-union movement is one of the most outstanding features of the Foster tradition. It was under Foster's theoretical and practical leadership that American Communists have made their historic contributions to the growth of the American trade unions, to the rise of industrial unionism with the organization of the C.I.O. to the strengthening of the fighting power of American labor in defense of its daily interests, to the spread of Marxist-Leninist conceptions of the role of trade unions in the proletarian class struggle.

The Foster tradition in the field of Communist trade-union work has a number of features to which we should pay special attention at the

present time. First and foremost is the idea that Communists in trade unions carry out best and most effectively their duties and responsibilities to the workers and to the organization when they—the Communists—systematically fight for the principles of the class struggle, for democracy and militancy, for truly progressive and working-class leadership in the unions; when they systematically expose the treacheries of the reactionary trade-union bureaucracy, striving to isolate and defeat this bureaucracy; when they fight consistently for trade-union unity and for the unity of the working class, for working-class political independence, for the alliance of the working class with all other progressive forces against reaction and the monopolies; *when they always and unremittingly seek to raise the class consciousness of the workers, deepening their understanding of the class struggle and leading them toward an understanding and acceptance of Marxism-Leninism and toward the acceptance of the leadership of the Communist Party.*

In the Foster tradition, Communists in the trade unions do not become "pure and simple" trade unionists, nor do they work there as Leftist-sectarians. Communists work as the best fighters for the economic demands of the workers, for their trade-union rights, for the general betterment of the conditions of the workers, but they do all this *as Communists*, as class conscious pro-

letarian fighters, leading the masses from their elementary struggles against the exploiters *to the broad highway of the class struggle*, to an understanding of the historic liberating mission of the working class, to the need of struggle against the very foundations of capitalist exploitation, to a Socialist and class consciousness, to the Communist Party.

Secondly is that feature of the Foster tradition which embodies the two commandments that are especially crucial for Communists in trade unions; to extend and strengthen our ties with the masses, and strengthen our ties with the Party organization.

These conceptions of Communist trade-union work are in substance an outgrowth of the Marxist-Leninist principle of the vanguard role of the Communist Party. It is the application of this principle to the major field of trade-union work.

The Foster tradition, stemming from the early days of our Party's history, when Foster and Ruthenberg stood at the head of our Party, is a tradition of *Party Building*, of developing our Party as the *vanguard* party of the American people and its working class, of establishing the Communist Party *as the highest type* of working-class organization, as *the leading force* in the proletarian class struggle.

The Foster tradition of planning mass campaigns in defense of the interests of the people, whether economic, political or ideological, al-

ways leads up to party building. Whatever the issues, whatever the conditions, whether the campaign is carried on under Party auspices or is a united front action, party building in the Foster tradition is always a major part of Communist work, is the crowning effort in every mass campaign.

In the Foster tradition, the Party is everything for a Communist; nothing is of much or permanent value for the working class without its vanguard Party. That is why the building of the Party—ideologically, politically and organizationally—occupies such a fundamental place in the work and leadership of our National Chairman.

The Foster tradition of party building means *mass work*. It means building the Party's strength and influence among the masses, in the course of their daily struggles for a better life. It also means educating and developing party leaders, Marxist-Leninist leaders of the working class. It means deepening and further developing our Marxist-Leninist theory as Stalin has taught us. It means building and perfecting the Party organizations.

In the field of struggle for our theory and ideology, the Foster tradition is exceptionally rich. It has established landmarks in the fight against American imperialist chauvinism, against white chauvinism, against bourgeois nationalism, against Social-Democratism, against anti-Semitism. The Foster tradi-

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tion stands for honest and consistent working-class internationalism.

This ideological fight was the inspiration of the magnificent struggles organized and led by our Party for Negro rights and for the national liberation of the Negro people; against American imperialism in Latin America, China, in Israel and everywhere where people are oppressed or threatened with oppression by Wall Street imperialism; against anti-Semitism, for equal rights of the Jewish masses, for the equal rights of the masses of all national groups in the United States.

In the field of struggle for our Marxist-Leninist theory and ideology, the Foster tradition—the work and leadership of our National Chairman—is the fight against all bourgeois and reformist theories of American exceptionalism—the theories that American capitalism and imperialism are “exempt” from the operation of the general laws of capitalism; that they are “better” than other imperialisms, that they are “progressive,” the latter idea being Browder’s “contribution.” The fight against Lovestineism and Browderism, the crassest and most dangerous expressions of American exceptionalism in our Party, is one of the most significant chapters in our Party’s life; and it is a major phase of the Foster tradition in the field of struggle for the theory and principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The fight against Trotskyism, led by our National Chairman, was for

a period an ideological fight of considerable importance to our Party. At the time, this fight and its success became a condition for the continued existence of our Party as a Marxist-Leninist party. This fight was won. Our Party rid itself of Trotskyism and of the Trotskyites, against whom the fight was later waged on a new plane, since the Trotskyites degenerated into gangs of spies, accomplices of fascism and wreckers of progressive and labor movements.

The crowning accomplishment thus far in the Foster tradition of struggle for the principles of Marxism-Leninism and for the Communist Party as the vanguard party of the American working class is to be found in the fight against Browder revisionism and for the reconstitution of the Communist Party. There can be no question but that this struggle—successful struggle—marks the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the American labor movement and of our party. It is the beginning of a chapter in which history will record how the Communist Party became recognized by the American working class as its own mass party.

No wonder the American ruling class, the Wall Street monopolies, and the Truman government which they control, undertook to take revenge for the historic event of 1945, when our Party was reconstituted and Browder revisionism condemned

and rejected by the Emergency Party Convention.

The American imperialists, warmongers and pro-fascists, who now dictate the domestic and foreign policies of the government, would not forgive us for this "crime." The reactionary trade-union bureaucracy and Right-wing Socialist leaders (Murray, Reuther, Green, Dubinsky, Potofsky, etc.) have opened up a most dastardly campaign of incitement against the progressives, the Lefts and the Communists in the trade unions, assisting the warmakers in dividing and weakening the labor movement, and helping the warmakers to outlaw the Communist Party.

But the masses of the American working class are gradually, even though slowly as yet, awakening to the war and fascist conspiracies of Wall Street and its agents in the labor movement. They are awakening to the realization of the fact that the attacks upon and conspiracies against, the legal existence of the Communist Party are part of the war and fascist drive of Wall Street and its government. And when this awakening reaches a more mature stage, as it is bound to, the Communist Party, and its leadership now on trial in Foley Square, will be recognized and accepted by the millions of working people in the United States as *their* party, *their* political leadership, *their vanguard*.

In the Foster tradition today is the fight for the Party's general line

against war and fascism—the line of struggle for a people's anti-monopoly peace and democratic coalition headed by the working class. It is the fight for curbing the power of the monopolies, for preserving, extending and further developing the democratic liberties and gains of the American people, for the establishment of conditions favorable for the peaceful transition to the Socialist revolution in the United States. It is the historic fight for peace, against a new world war, for collaboration between the United States and the Soviet Union for the establishment and maintenance of a just and durable peace. It is the fight to protect the masses from the ravages of the developing economic crisis as well as the ideological struggle against Keynesism—a bourgeois economic theory, adopted by the reformists—promising the abolition of cyclical crises without the abolition of capitalism. The leadership of Comrade Foster in the fight against the false and misleading theories of Keynes has contributed greatly toward equipping our Party for an effective fight in the now developing economic crisis for the needs and interests of the masses. It has strengthened the theoretical Marxist-Leninist position of our Party.

In the Foster tradition now, as well as before, is the Marxist-Leninist inspiration and guidance to the progressive youth, as well as to the Party's work among the working women of America.

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The Foster tradition is now being enriched with the political and ideological struggle for the defense of our Party and for the defense of its leaders on trial in Foley Square. This fight is carried on under the banner of the Foster document, *In Defense of the Communist Party and Its Indicted Leaders* and the Foster book *The Twilight of World Capitalism*.

This Foster tradition is a tremendous power for the progress of the American people and its working class. It is a weapon of great potency for the defense of our Party and its leaders, for the building of the Party into the mass vanguard of the American working class. We must learn how to use it. We must use it in our daily work.

Finally, the Foster tradition in our Party is the tradition of true collective leadership. Headed by Foster

and Dennis, our two outstanding national leaders, the National Committee of our Party leads our work in the Foster tradition. The eleven members of the National Committee now on trial are giving us daily splendid examples of struggle for our principles, for our policies, for our Party.

On this thirtieth anniversary of our Party, we wholeheartedly and proudly greet our National Committee headed by Foster and Dennis. We applaud their leadership. We applaud the brave and skillful struggle of the eleven "defendants" in Foley Square. We reaffirm our devotion and loyalty to our principles, our Party, our leadership. We do so in full confidence that the final victory belongs to the American people, headed by the working class and led by the Communist Party.

# Cannon, Lovestone, and Browder

by William Z. Foster

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of this country, like Communist Parties elsewhere, throughout its whole existence has had to carry on a ceaseless struggle against the pervasive ideology of capitalism. This fight has been, and continues to be, waged against not only the spokesmen of capitalism who are outside of our Party, but also against those tricky elements who, in one devious form or another, have injected capitalist propaganda among the workers from within the framework of our Party. It is to this latter phase of our general ideological work, the fight against the class enemy within the gates, that this article, written on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of our Party, is primarily directed.

One of the chief capitalistic illusions to which American workers are subject, and one which we have long had to combat both within and without our Party, is the spurious idea to the effect that the capitalist system in this country is basically different from, and fundamentally superior to, the capitalist system of other lands. Capitalist spokesmen very carefully cultivate this illusion, which is highly dangerous to the workers. They are tireless in assert-

ing that the American economy is on a never-ending spiral of upward development; that this is a free land of equal opportunity; that there are no social classes or class struggle here; that Marxism-Leninism can sink no roots in the American working class; and that other countries, overwhelmed with a multitude of problems, may turn to Socialism, but that this can never happen to the United States.

American capitalism, it is true, has developed under particularly favorable conditions for its growth. Among these conditions may be noted the wide expanse of this country, possessing a rich variety of natural resources and unhampered by the many political frontiers and the hangovers from feudalism that have been such a handicap to European capitalism. Another big advantage of American capitalism has been that, lying strategically between the two great oceans and without powerful warlike neighbors on its borders, it has been largely free of wars upon its own territory and historically it has not needed to maintain a huge military organization. Indeed, in recent times the United States, because of its favorable location, has actu-

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ally been able to grow rich on the two world wars that have done so much to ruin the rest of world capitalism. But these advantages of American capitalism can have only a temporary effect; they can by no means exempt capitalism in this country from the general crisis which is progressively engulfing the world capitalist system.

American capitalism is afflicted with all the fundamental inner and outer contradictions characteristic of capitalism generally.

Capitalist society here is based upon the private ownership of the means of production and upon the exploitation of the working class by the capitalists; between these two antagonistic classes there rages, with varying degrees of intensity, a constant class struggle. The contradiction between the limited consuming power of the exploited masses, as well as the narrowing world markets, on the one hand, and the constantly enhanced producing power of society on the other, exists in this country in colossal proportions, resulting in periodic economic crises which tend constantly to become more devastating. American capitalism, although possessing few outright colonies, has through its aggressive economic and political penetration become the chief exploiter and oppressor of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, whose rising liberation movements it is desperately trying to stem. As Wall Street imperialism strives to subju-

gate even the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe, it comes into ever-sharper conflicts with its imperialist rivals. Sharing the hatred of Socialism common to the imperialists everywhere, American monopoly capital heads the intrigues and war maneuvers of the world imperialist camp against the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. U.S. monopoly capitalism exhibits a most powerful impulse toward aggressive expansionism, fascism and war. In short, American capitalism, notwithstanding its relative strengthening as an outcome of the war, is fundamentally the same as capitalism throughout the world, with all its basic and irreconcilable contradictions.

American "exceptionalism," the erroneous idea that for some mysterious reason capitalism in this country is immune to the laws of growth and decay that apply to capitalism everywhere, has long confused American political thinking. For at least 100 years this illusion of the exceptional, or unique, character of our system of capitalism has persisted, all sections of the American people, including the workers, being deeply afflicted with it. It is the characteristic form that opportunism takes in the United States in the labor and Socialist movement. Many Marxian writers, from the days of Marx and Engels, have warned against this dangerous American misconception of the nature of the capitalist system in this country.

Even the Communist Party has not always been free from this poisonous network of "exceptionalist" illusions, which is so widespread among the American people. In practically all the major inner-Party theoretical controversies of the past, the question of American "exceptionalism," manifesting itself in tendencies to overestimate the strength of American capitalism, has played an important role. Whether the deviation in question from a correct, Leninist line took the form of "Left" sectarianism or Right opportunism, deep in the controversy, in either open or hidden form, was to be found an overestimation of the power of American capitalism, arising from the conception that, completely or partially, capitalism in the United States is superior to the laws governing world capitalism as a whole. The Party's ideological fights through the years against Cannon, Lovestone, and Browder all serve to illustrate the general point and to emphasize the danger of this particular illusion.

The founding of our Party in 1919 was accompanied, naturally enough, by deep-going, prolonged, and heated discussion of the principles of Marxism-Leninism. By the latter part of 1922, when our Party had begun to apply its principles in the class struggle and was playing an active part in the big battles of the workers against the employers' offensive in that period, in the struggles of the Negro masses against the

K.K.K. and all other fights against aggressive reaction, the inner Party discussion, then dealing chiefly with questions of strategy and tactics, had crystallized itself into a two-sided national factional struggle. This factional struggle continued with varying degrees of intensity for several years, until late in 1929 when Party unity was finally achieved by cleansing the Party of alien, anti-Marxist-Leninist elements and by bringing about an amalgamation of the healthy Communist elements of the two main groups.

It is not my purpose here to undertake to evaluate this factional fight or to analyze the various policies and groupings involved in it, as that would take us too far afield. Suffice it for our present purpose to indicate that both the major factional groups in the Party (each of which had sub-groupings) were afflicted to a greater or lesser extent with tendencies to exaggerate the strength of American imperialism. This fact was pointed out strongly at the time in statements on the American question by the Communist International, to which our Party was affiliated.

#### CANNON'S "LEFT EXCEPTIONALISM"

The sequel showed that the bulk of the members of both factional groups finally accepted the criticism made against them and sought to cleanse themselves of their opportunism. But J. P. Cannon and his

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grouplet proved themselves unwilling and unable to do so. Cannon, who for several years had been a member of our Party's Central Committee, expressed his American exceptionalism, his fear of the "overwhelming power of American capitalism," by an acceptance of Trotskyism, with all its radical phrases, its pseudo-revolutionary programs, and its treachery to Socialism and the working class. Consequently, Cannon and his handful were expelled from the Party in October, 1928, as enemies of the workers and all that our Party stands for.

The essence of opportunism, whether of the "Left," sectarian brand or of the Right, openly opportunist variety, is always an over-estimation of the strength of the capitalist class and a lack of faith in the revolutionary power of the working class and its allies, the Negro people, farmers, professionals, etc. In all of its manifestations, both Right and "Left," opportunism works out in practice as a surrender to the capitalist class and to the transformation of the given opportunist group into an instrument for the weakening of the fight of the workers and for the maintenance of the power of the capitalists. The difference between Right and "Left" opportunists, therefore, is simply that, while the Rights more clearly expose their treason to the working class, the Negro people, and other democratic forces, by open proposals to collaborate with (surrender to)

the capitalists, the "Lefts," especially the Trotskyites, cunningly attempt to cover up their treachery by the most vehement use of radical phrasemongering. Thus, capitalism, with its Right and "Left" opportunist tools, works both sides of the street for its own benefit.

Cannon's retreat into phrasemongering in the face of American capitalism, that is, his "Leftist" expressions of American "exceptionalism," harmonizes with the similar course of Trotskyism in general. This is to be seen from a reference to the theories and activities of Trotsky himself, Cannon's mentor and guide. Thus, Trotsky, characteristically, was guilty of the most serious underestimation of the revolutionary power of the Russian people and of over-estimation of the strength of the capitalist enemy. As one of many instances of this, in 1917 Trotsky said the following, which he repeated in 1924 in his futile attempt to prove then that Socialism could not be built in one country, the U.S.S.R.:

It would be hopeless to think . . . for example, that a revolutionary Russia could hold its own in the face of a conservative Europe.

This was a gross exaggeration of the power of capitalism as against that of revolutionary Russia. Trotsky's counter-revolutionary pessimism, his exaggeration of the power of the capitalist system, has been knocked into a cocked hat by the ir-

resistible power with which the U.S.S.R. has gone ahead building Socialism during the intervening years. And especially was Trotsky's lugubrious prophecies of Socialist defeat in the U.S.S.R. repudiated by the brilliant manner in which the U.S.S.R. during World War II, not only "held its own in the face of a conservative Europe," but practically single-handedly shattered the great war-machine of German imperialism, the most powerful ever built in the history of world capitalism; moreover, the U.S.S.R. emerged from the titanic struggle stronger than ever.

Trotsky's magnifying of the power of world capitalism naturally resulted in a glorification of American imperialism. For while tipping his hat to Marxism by stating that American capitalism is a part of world capitalism and will eventually be submerged by its general crisis, Trotsky outdid himself, nevertheless, in expanding upon the power of American capitalism. Thus, in his book *Whither England?* published in 1925, he says of Anglo-American relations: "Relinquishing their world role, the diplomats and magnates of England are recommending their former clients to deal with the new master of the world."

At this time it was a matter of common knowledge that Great Britain was being ousted from capitalist leadership by the United States; but Trotsky drew the most extravagant conclusions from this well-

known fact. Thus, in the statement just quoted, he conceded offhand to American imperialism its dearest ambition, one that it has not been able to fulfill yet, 24 years later, and never will—namely, the mastery of the world. This exaggeration of the power of American capitalism was one side of Trotsky's political medal, on the other side of which was his gross underestimation of the power of revolutionary Russia in the face of world capitalism. It was in these false conceptions of Trotsky that the American "exceptionalism" of Cannon took root.

By the stern logic of political events, Trotskyites, including the Cannon elements in this country, have become the unprincipled tools of American imperialism, of which they have so long stood in awe. They are everywhere carrying on the most violent propaganda against the Soviet Union, against the new People's Democracies, against the Chinese Revolution; they are working hand-in-glove with the Social-Democrats trying to split the World Federation of Trade Unions; their activities, no less than those of the fascists, make them militant enemies of the Communists and of all resistance against capitalism. And all this reactionary work, which the Trotskyites are performing under super-revolutionary guise, is water on the dam of aggressive American imperialism in its ruthless but futile campaign for the mastery of the world.

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LOVESTONE'S RIGHT-WING  
"EXCEPTIONALISM"

The Communist Party came to grips with the openly Right-wing expression of American "exceptionalism" only a few months after it had cleansed its ranks of the Trotskyite, pseudo-Left brand of this peculiarly American type of opportunism. This decisive clash resulted, in June, 1929, in the expulsion of Jay Lovestone, who had been General Secretary of the Party, together with his pal, Benjamin Gitlow, and a smattering of others who, like these two, refused to accept the Party's decision and set out upon a factional line to defeat it. This elimination of the anti-Party Cannonites and Lovestoneites from our ranks finally brought the long factional struggle to an end and established a Party unity which has, except during the Browder revisionist period, endured until the present time.

Lovestone being an open opportunist, his "exceptionalism" was more clearly expressed and more obvious than that of the radical-phrasemongering Cannon. Lovestone boldly boasted of the super-strength, as he found it, of capitalism in this country. Like many other spokesmen of capitalism, he was intoxicated by the postwar industrial boom of the 1920's when American industry was prospering largely by repairing the war damages and filling the commodity shortages caused by World War I. Lovestone's voice glorifying the

strength of American imperialism was but one in the grand chorus of Social-Democrats, reactionary labor leaders, and enthusiastic capitalists in this and many other countries. Their propaganda then boasted that in mass production and "high wages" American capitalism had found the magic formula for an endless progressive development. According to these "exceptionalists," in the United States a "new capitalism" had been evolved, cyclical economic crises were henceforth impossible, the workers were becoming capitalists, and Ford, not Marx, was the leader to whom the peoples should turn for guidance in their search for well-being.

Lovestone tried to prostitute Marxism-Leninism to the glorification of booming American capitalism. He even had the gall to distort Lenin's law of the uneven development of capitalism into a monstrosity when he claimed that Lenin had inferred that it was quite possible for one section of world capitalism (that in the United States) to be healthy while the rest of world capitalism was basically sick. Lovestone scoffed at warnings against American "exceptionalism," as being only the "bogey" with which to frighten the timid. The inevitable trend of his policy was to confuse the Party's political analysis, to weaken its fighting spirit, and to expose it to the gross class collaborationism which, during these years of intense capitalist illusions, did such grave injury to

the trade-union movement.

In its "Open Letter" to our Party in December, 1928, the Comintern had the following to say in this matter:

The ideological level of Right errors in the American Communist Party was the so-called theory of "exceptionalism," which found its clearest exponents in the persons of Comrades Pepper and Lovestone, whose conception was as follows: a crisis of capitalism, but not of American capitalism; a swing of the masses to the Left, but not in America; the necessity of accentuating the struggle against reformism, but not in the United States; the necessity for struggling against the Right danger, but not in the United States.

Four months after Lovestone was expelled, that is, in October, 1929, there began the great world economic crisis. This started in the supposedly impregnable American economic system and spread throughout the world, bringing about an economic paralysis and mass unemployment on a gigantic scale hitherto unknown in capitalist history. The advocates of American "exceptionalism," the worshippers of the "new capitalism" in the United States, which was to end the class struggle and to do away with all possibilities of Socialism, were utterly confounded by this economic catastrophe. The outbreak of the world-capitalist economic crisis, which the Communists internationally had been predicting and which the worshippers of American

capitalism had said was impossible, marked a brilliant justification of Marxian analysis.

Lovestone, repudiated by the basic reality of the crisis, soon passed over openly to the service of the capitalism of which he had striven to make the Communist Party an adjunct. In due time he became the confidential agent of such sinister Red-baiters and Soviet-haters as Matthew Woll and David Dubinsky. He now concocts many of the slanders which these anti-labor elements hurl at everything progressive in this and other countries. And as for Lovestone's chief supporter in his "exceptionalism," Gitlow, he has long since become an open advocate of "free enterprise" and blatant American imperialism, a professional anti-Soviet "gangster of the pen," and a stool pigeon for every anti-labor, anti-Communist outfit willing to hire him.

#### BROWDER, APOSTLE OF "EXCEPTIONALISM"

The next major inner-Party struggle around the general question of American "exceptionalism" occurred in connection with the notorious opportunist thesis developed by Earl Browder, following the wartime Big Three Conference in Teheran, which took place in the latter part of 1943. In this Browder line, the deep-seated illusion that American capitalism is cut from a different and better cloth than the rest of world capitalism

came to its fullest and crudest expression.

Browder, who was General Secretary of our Party during the New Deal years, had become bedazzled with the liberal program of President Roosevelt. Failing to see that the reforms of this period were fundamentally the result of the heavy mass pressure of the workers, farmers, the Negro people, and other democratic strata, Browder began to develop the notion, in line with the traditional illusion of "exceptionalism," that American monopoly capital itself had become progressive. This anti-Marxist conception of his burst into full flower after the Teheran conference. It was at this conference that Great Britain and the United States finally agreed to open the long overdue second military front in Western Europe. In this, they were motivated by the fear that if they did not promptly send their troops across the English Channel, the Soviet armies, which were smashing ahead and driving Hitler's armies back rapidly on the Eastern Front, would inevitably defeat Nazi Germany practically single-handedly and liberate all of occupied Europe. So, after nearly two years of deliberate delay, which cost the Soviet Union millions of needless casualties, the Western powers at last agreed to invade Western Europe against the few, second-line German divisions that were still left there.

Browder opportunistically seized upon the Teheran Conference as a

glowing demonstration of his developing "exceptionalist" notion that American Big Business had become "progressive." And so, he launched forth, in January, 1944, with his fully developed revisionist program. In it he foresaw a postwar period of international amity among the great powers, in which American imperialism would cooperate freely and amicably with the U.S.S.R. for promoting the peace, economic advance, and democratization of the world. The peoples of China and Latin America would henceforth have no grounds for fighting the "beneficent" policies of Wall Street.

In the United States there would also reign a new era of genial class collaboration. Strikes would not be necessary (the wartime no-strike pledge should be continued); for the employers, in their own class interest, in order to dispose of their immense production of the industries, would voluntarily double and re-double the real wages of the workers. All talk, too, of a mass third party was "out"—we would get along nicely with the two-party system. The Negro people also would no longer need to fight for national liberation, but would depend upon the good will of the "intelligent capitalists" to concede them social equality. This was a program of a permanently growing and progressive capitalism. Consequently, Browder, logically enough, sought to liquidate the Communist Party, to cast aside the classics of Marx, Engels, Lenin,

and Stalin, and to abandon the whole perspective of Socialism—all of which were only encumbrances to his plans.

Browder, as a true apostle of American "exceptionalism," could not conceive of any other system of imperialism employing such a progressive program as he foresaw for American imperialism. According to him, British, German, Japanese, French, Italian, and other imperialisms, of course, were reactionary and could be nothing else. But with American imperialism it was quite a different story. The class interests of American capitalists, he argued, were compelling them to adopt a progressive, friendly, cooperative attitude toward their workers at home and toward the U.S.S.R. and other peoples abroad. This "exceptionalist" nonsense, Browder, like Cannon and Lovestone before him, sought to defend by making a gross distortion of the writings of Marx and Lenin. Of course, the class that stood to gain from all this revisionism, this crippling of the understanding and struggle of the working class and its allies, would only be the capitalists. Browder, like other "exceptionalists," was speaking in the interests of American imperialism.

The Party finally, in the middle of 1945, came to full grips with this Browder sickness, partly with the assistance of the well-known Duclos article, but mainly because the course of political events in the postwar situation was rapidly exposing the aggressive role of American imperial-

ism and was awakening the Party to the deadly fallacies of Browder's exceptionalism. But Browder, as Cannon and Lovestone had done earlier, refused to be corrected and set out to make an open fight. So, in February 1946, he was expelled from the Communist Party, as the expulsion resolution said: "for betraying the principles of Marxism-Leninism and deserting to the side of the class enemy—American monopoly capital."

Since his expulsion, Browder has fallen even more clearly into position as another of the many stooges of American imperialism, among those elements who are helping to delude the people and to disarm them in the face of the drive of American Big Business toward fascism and war. Although he has been forced by the actual course of political development to modify some of the absurd proposals that he made in his first statement of his "Teheran thesis," nevertheless Browder's basic line remains the same. He is a professional attacker of the Communist Party, a glorifier of American imperialism, a peddler of the dangerous illusion of American "exceptionalism," and he belongs where he is, in the camp of the Cannons, Lovestones, and other renegades from Communism.

#### THE PRESENT DANGER OF "EXCEPTIONALISM"

The danger of American "excep-

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tionalism," the "theory" that capitalism in this country is intrinsically superior to the capitalism of other countries, remains a live and persistent one. Indeed, it is now probably more virulent and menacing than ever before. This is mainly because of the fact that the capitalist system of the United States, protected by its geographical location from the devastation of two world wars, has grown rich and fat on these wars, while capitalism everywhere else has been weakened and undermined by them. In this situation, there luxuriously sprouts the noxious weed of American "exceptionalism," carefully sown and cultivated by the capitalists and their hangers-on.

Among the major manifestations of the current brand of American "exceptionalism" may be listed such illusions as the following—the misconception that the United States, by means of a Keynesian policy of government-cultivated capital investment, especially for armaments, can avert the cyclical economic crisis, even though all other capitalist countries should be paralyzed by it; the erroneous notion that the United States, by subsidies and other shots-in-the-arm, can rescue world capitalism from its general crisis and make it a going concern again; the false idea that this country can reverse the inexorable laws of historical development manifested in the present world trend and stamp out international Socialism; and the absurd belief that the United States, because

of its supposedly invincible strength, is destined to become the master of the world.

These "exceptionalist" theories are the basic conceptions of the dominant circles of American finance capital, and the Truman Government is shaping its policies upon them. The trade-union leadership of the A. F. of L., C.I.O. and Independent Unions, save for the "Left" unions, are saturated with these employer ideas and policies, undoubtedly to an even greater extent than when they were victims of the boss-propaganda of the "new capitalism" during the lush 1920's. This makes them eager cooperators with capitalist reaction in its present program of fascism and war. And we would be blind if we did not perceive that large sections of the working class, enmeshed in the huge propaganda machine of reaction, are also deeply infected with this virus of exceptionalism. Never before have the circles of capitalist corruption spread wider among the workers than at the present time.

In these days of such corroding employer propaganda among the workers and the broad masses of the people, however, we would do well to remember what happened to the widespread American "exceptionalist" illusions of the 1920's. Then, it will be recalled, as a result of the October, 1929, collapse and the ensuing prolonged and gigantic mass unemployment, the workers were able to cast off many of the capital-

ist illusions that had previously been crippling their actions, and the labor movement, recovering from the deep slump in the "prosperity period," went into the period of the greatest organizational and ideological development in its history. The Negro masses also undertook their greatest and most successful political struggles since the days of the Civil War. Our country is in for a repetition of this general democratic experience, but on a much larger scale and under new conditions. The present rank expansion of American capitalist illusions will explode even more resoundingly than did the "new capitalism" fantasies of a couple of decades ago.

But, of course, our Party cannot and does not take a fatalistic attitude, passively waiting for a time when the workers, the Negroes, and the democratic forces generally, under the force of cumulative economic and political pressures, will supposedly be able spontaneously to smash the lickspittle class-collaboration policies of the conservative and reactionary leaders and will embark upon a broad program of militancy and progress. Our job is to fight aggressively each and every one of the current capitalist illusions, both by propaganda means and by providing the workers and their allies with effective programs of action. And as we do so, particularly in this thirtieth year of our Party's life, let us, learning from our past experi-

ence with the Cannons, the Lovestones, and the Browders, never forget that we must be constantly on guard to preserve our own Party from the infiltration of paralyzing illusions of American "exceptionalism." Our Party does not live in a political vacuum; it is subject to all the corroding influences of capitalist ideology. Hence, we must not only fight against the present brutal attempts to outlaw our Party, but also struggle to protect the Party's political integrity against all enemy ideological influences.

Our Party's fight against "exceptionalist" opportunism is a struggle on two fronts, against both its Right and "Left" varieties, which, at bottom, are essentially the same. We must fortify ourselves against the insidious and widespread tendencies to exaggerate the power of American capitalism—that is, the notions of American "exceptionalism," with which our Party is always surrounded. This means that we must study and re-study the classical works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and learn better than ever how to apply them, not mechanically, but in the light of specific American conditions. With the dominant leadership of the labor movement on all levels so deeply confused with poisonous illusions of American "exceptionalism," never has there been a greater need than now for our Party to master the science of Marxism-Leninism.

# From the Court Testimony of the Communist Leaders

EUGENE DENNIS\* . . .

*I and my co-defendants are leaders of the Communist Party. The defense will show that our Party is the political party of the most forward-looking American workers — and that it does not bear the remotest resemblance to the fantastic "conspiracy" painted by the prosecution. . . .*

The defense will show from this indictment itself that we Communist leaders are accused only of exercising our right of political association, of teaching and advocating certain political doctrines—and hence, that we are on trial for our political beliefs. . . .

The foreboding sounding words, "overthrow and destruction of the government of the United States by force and violence," appear five times in the 10 paragraphs of the indictment.

*But not one of these 10 paragraphs charges that we Communist leaders at any time committed a single overt act of force and violence against the government of the United States. Or*

\* The following selections are from the opening address to the jury by Comrade Dennis acting as his own counsel. —Ed.

*that we ever, directly or indirectly, advocated or attempted its forcible overthrow. . . .*

We will prove that the Communist Party was in fact organized almost 30 years ago, and that it has changed its name or form of organization more than once—while adhering to the scientific socialist aims and principles of the working class. . . .

We will prove that the decisions to rectify the Communist Political Association's incorrect estimate of the outlook for the postwar world, and its status as a non-partisan political organization, were made with the intent to serve more effectively the interests of the American workers and common people. . . .

We will prove that on or about April 1, 1945, it was not the defendants who menaced the United States—but the criminal war conspiracy of the Axis powers which advertised itself as a crusade to "stop Communism." . . .

We defendants will put in evidence the honorable war record of the fifteen thousand Communists

who, in accord with what we taught and advocated, served with the armed forces in the military defense of the United States.

Certain of my co-defendants will put in evidence their service records, including their citations for valor under fire. . . .

\* \* \*

We Communist leaders will show that, in June and July 1945, we taught that labor and the people could not rely on the Truman Administration to curb the greedy monopolies. We taught that, on the contrary, the people would have to resist the efforts of the Administration and the bi-partisans in Congress to scuttle F.D.R.'s progressive policies. . . .

We Communists will establish that all our teaching and advocacy in regard to questions of foreign policy had as its purpose the defense of the national interests of the American people and the cause of world peace. . . .

The defense will establish that we Communist leaders taught that American national security and world peace are endangered, not strengthened, by the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan.

We will show that we teach that the North Atlantic Pact now being rushed to signature is molded in the pattern of Hitler's anti-Communist Axis, and is an aggressive and dangerous war alliance to establish Wall Street *uber alles*. . . .

*Speeches and articles of the de-*

*fendants, and other Communist Party documents, will establish that we Communist leaders teach that the danger of a new world war does not come from the democratic peoples in this or other countries—and that it does not come from any foreign power whose government is headed by workers and their Communist leaders.*

We defendants will show that we have taught that it is possible for the capitalist United States and the socialist Soviet Union to co-exist in peace and friendship.

*We will show that we have taught that it is necessary for these two great powers to cooperate within the United Nations—and that unless they do so there can be no stable peace. . . .*

We will show that we have taught that Americans must choose between a Pact of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union, or an aggressive war alliance against our most powerful World War II ally.

*We Communist leaders will prove that in this we have acted with wilful intent to save our country from the devastation of bombing and invasion, and our people from the horrors of another world war. . . .*

*The defense contends, and will prove, that the indictment's charges of force and violence do not apply to us Communists—and should have been brought against the advocates of a "preventive" atomic war. . . .*

\* \* \*

We Communists will show that

our advocacy of substantial wage increases, and other economic measures, was motivated by our desire to strengthen the American workers' standard of living, and avoid the chaos of economic collapse.

Competent witnesses who will testify for the defense will show that at this very time an economic depression has begun in our country, and threatens to give rise quickly to a full-blown economic storm. . . .

*We Communist leaders will show that we have not only warned of this coming catastrophe, but have advocated an immediate and constructive program to lessen the suffering which depression and economic crisis inflict on the American people. . . .*

\* \* \*

*[The following paragraphs were among those Comrade Dennis was compelled by the court to omit from his address:]*

We defendants will show that we teach that fascism is the violent dictatorship of Big Business, the terror rule of the most reactionary and war-minded monopolists.

We Communist leaders will prove that — particularly since April 1945—we have been teaching that the danger of fascism coming to power in the United States is growing. We will show that we have also taught that this process, although far advanced, can still be checked and defeated. . . .

*The defense will establish that we Communists defend the Bill of Rights and the trade unions and peo-*

*ple's organizations with the wilful intent to prevent the rise of fascism, and to prepare the way for democratic advance.*

In this connection, we Communist leaders will tell the jury frankly that we teach that democratic rights in the United States are far too limited, and that working-class, socialist democracy is the highest form of democracy.

*You will learn from many defense witnesses and documents that the defendants advocate the ultimate achievement of working-class democracy, through the establishment of socialism in the United States.*

Nonetheless, I will establish that we Communist leaders have taught that in this year 1949 the American people are not called on to choose between capitalist democracy and socialist democracy.

We defendants will show that we teach that the choice facing the American people now, and in the coming period, is between the Bill of Rights and fascist tyranny, between peace and war. . . .

We 11 defendants will show that we have taught that fascism everywhere seeks to advance under the cover of anti-Communism—and that in the United States it subverts the institutions of capitalist democracy while pretending to defend them from an invented "Communist threat." . . .

We defendants will prove that we did not advocate the violent overthrow of the United States Government as a solution to the present

critical problems. We will prove that, on the contrary, we Communists advocated that in the crucial 1948 Presidential elections labor and the people build a new movement of independent political action.

In respect to the immediate future—which has been brought into this case by the prosecution—the defense will show that we Communist leaders advocate the further development of this movement, and the strengthening of the united independent action of labor, the Negro people, and all progressives. . . .

The jury will see evidence that I and my co-defendants have taught that such a united front party—embracing millions of Americans, non-Communists as well as Communists—and buttressed by a broad popular movement—can bring into being an anti-war, anti-monopoly people's government of the United States in the not too distant future.

*[This ends the deleted section.]*

\* \* \*

The defense will establish that a century ago Marx and Engels put forward the proposition that man can find the scientific explanation for wars, poverty, economic depressions, race prejudices, and organized force and violence.

*We will establish that Marx and Engels also declared that when men and women understand fully what makes human society tick, they will make a better life for themselves.*

We will show that the founders of scientific socialism said this historic

mission would be carried out by the working class—the class destined to become the ruling class in all countries, and the creator of socialism in all lands. . . .

We will show that Lenin, the greatest Marxist of his time, enriched and continued Marxism by his explanation of the new social conditions brought into being by the rise of imperialism and the advent of Socialism.

We will show that the writings of Marx and Lenin, and their followers, fill many books—enough to line the walls of this court room from floor to ceiling. We will show that these books—known as the classics of Marxism-Leninism—have been studied and discussed by millions of people.

The Devil can quote scripture—and the prosecution will quote Marx and Lenin in this court.

*But the defense will prove that these immortal classics are not blueprints or directives—you cannot find out what to do in 1949 by reading what Lenin said the Russian workers should do under quite different circumstances in 1917.*

The defense will prove that the founders of Marxism-Leninism, and their followers, have taught that certain propositions, as well as strategy and tactics, are modified to conform with developments of history and new social situations. . . .

*We defendants will prove that for 30 years the American Communist Party has taught that the American workers and farmers, and their fami-*

*lies—Negro and white—could do a better job of running this country and its great productive capacity than has been done by the 60 families of Wall Street and the 250 ruling corporations.*

We taught that the American workers, in alliance with a majority of the Negro people, the working farmers and progressives of all classes should, and some day will, bring about this fundamental change in existing social conditions.

The jury knows, and we Communists will establish, that throughout human history such far-reaching social change has often been accompanied by force and violence.

But we will bring evidence to show that Marx and Lenin did *not* advocate force and violence—but taught that it results when reactionary, minority groups, representing powerful vested interests, try to stop the march of social progress.

We Communists will show, for instance, that this happened in our country, in 1776 and 1861. . . .

Our defendants will prove that we have always taught that capitalism in America cannot be abolished by plots, conspiracies, adventures or parlor “revolutions.”

*We will put in evidence our teaching that this fundamental change can be brought about only when both of two conditions have been fulfilled: when capitalism has fully outlived its social usefulness; and when a majority of the American people, led by labor and the Communists,*

*resolve to get rid of a system of social production that has become destructive of their right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”*

*We Communists will likewise prove that we have advocated that labor and the people endeavor to create conditions that will make possible the peaceful establishment of socialism.*

We will establish, from authentic documents adopted at our 1945 National Convention, that we Communist leaders and our Party pledged ourselves to do all in our power to save our people and our country from the consequences of an American Reichstag Fire Trial and an American version of the Japanese system of punishing those who were alleged to hold “dangerous thoughts.”

\* \* \*

The prosecution asks this jury for what amounts to a “preventive” conviction, in order that we Communist leaders may be put under what the Nazis called “protective custody.”

I ask the jury to weigh the prosecution’s case against the proof we defendants will offer to establish that we have taught and advocated the duty and necessity to prevent the force and violence of fascism and imperialist war.

I ask you to weigh carefully our sincere offer of proof which demonstrates that we are devoted to our people and country and advocate a program of peace, democracy, economic security, and social progress.

## JOHN GATES . . .

By "immediate interests" I mean all those interests which come within the scope of the conditions that are brought about—that are caused by the capitalist system; that is, everything dealing with the effects of the capitalist system upon the standard of living of the people, their democratic rights and their peace. . . .

The purpose of the Communist Party in championing those interests or those demands, if you want to put it that way, is to win those demands. The purpose of the Communist Party in championing those interests is to prevent the working class and other sections of the population who are oppressed by the banks, monopolies, from sinking into the state of virtual slavery. . . .

The fundamental interests of those sections of the population have to do with the fundamental cause of the evils which they experience in their daily lives and that fundamental cause is the nature of capitalism itself. The fundamental interests of the working class therefore have to do with the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

Q. Do you know whether the Communist Party teaches that there is a relationship between immediate interests and fundamental interests?

A. Yes, it does. It teaches that there is an inseparable relationship between the two, that the establishment of socialism is impossible without the greatest movement for the improvement of the living standards of the population, for the preservation and extension of their democratic rights and for the preservation of peace. . . .

\* \* \*

I said [before the Court took its recess] that the Communist Party of the United States first began to change its policies but it fully changed its policies after the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. The change consisted in the following: Prior to 1935 the Communists saw in the United States the main issue to be as between capitalism vs. socialism. . . . But with the victory of Hitler in one of the most powerful countries of the world, Germany, and with the terrible crimes that Hitler began to execute against his own people and other peoples we realized that Hitler fascism represented a danger to all people of the world, to all their democratic liberties . . . fascism could very well conquer the entire world, including the United States. And so we put the first thing in all of our activity the question of pre-

venting fascism and destroying fascism, and that since the fact that fascism had aroused the entire world in opposition to it we put forward the idea of the election of people's front governments which would have as its aim the prevention of fascism and the defeat of fascism; but as I stated before, governments which would not have as part of their program the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

THE COURT: Now do you mean to tell us that before 1935 force and violence was in and after 1935 force and violence was out?

THE WITNESS: Not at all. Even before 1935 when we envisaged the main issue as between capitalism and socialism we did not advocate the forcible overthrow of the United States Government in order to establish Socialism.

Q. What did you advocate?

A. We advocated the winning of a majority of the American people for the establishment of Socialism. We sought a peaceful means of doing that and the only way that force and violence would come into the picture would be if the big corporations and financial interests of the United States would attempt to prevent the American people from instituting Socialism when they so desired.

\* \* \*

Q. Now will you tell us how, if at all, that slogan was taught, advocated or applied by the Communist Party during the period commencing with your return to the

United States from Europe in January, 1946, and July 20, 1948?

A. This section of this paragraph on page 167 [of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*] refers to an historical fact that the Russian Bolsheviks, the Russian Communists at the time of the First World War put forward the slogan of turning the imperialist war into civil war. We believe that that slogan and that war was an historically correct slogan. It was the slogan that finally brought an end to a war which was reactionary, which was imperialist, which was a war which was carried on for plunder and for conquest, a war which President Wilson called a war of industrial and commercial rivalry. As a matter of historical fact the war of 1914-1918 was finally brought to an end as a result of the Russian Revolution of 1917, November 1917, and as a result of the German Revolution against the Kaiser in November of 1918. But this does not mean to the Communist that the slogan "turn the imperialist war into civil war" must necessarily be put forward in all imperialist wars. . . .

Now, what we Communists of the United States learned from the way that the Russian Communists used this slogan in 1914-1918 and what we learned from reading and studying the Marxist-Leninist principles as embodied here in the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* is the following, and that is, that there must be uncompromising opposition on the part of

the peoples of the world to imperialist war, but the exact slogans that must be used, which will express this opposition, the exact forms that this opposition will take will depend upon the different circumstances and times which will be in effect.

What we learned and how we applied the teachings of Marxism-Leninism on the question of imperialist war and on just and unjust wars is that the war that is now being prepared by the Wall Street financial interests in the United States is a war that has no other purpose than that of plunder and world domination in the interests of those banks and corporations, and that the people, neither of the United States nor anywhere else in the world, have anything to gain from such a war.

And the way we apply the teachings of Marxism-Leninism is, at the present time, that we will do everything possible to prevent the outbreak of such a war.

Furthermore, if, however, such a war should break out despite all the efforts of the Communists and the peoples of the world to prevent it, then our policy is to seek to bring that war to an end as quickly as possible on the basis of a just and democratic peace. And the way that we envisage that that will be done is to build up a coalition in the United States, an anti-war and peace coalition consisting of all those sections of the working class, the Negro people, of the farm population, of the middle classes of the country, a

coalition of these class forces and a grouping together of all organizations and political parties that will want to bring such a war to an end, and the formation of a people's peace government, a government which will have as its aim the establishment of peace and not the establishment of Socialism. That is what we have envisaged at the present time as the solution to the problem of war, and we don't put forward at the present time the slogan of "turn the imperialist war into a civil war" because we do not feel that the circumstances in the United States warrant the putting forward of that slogan. . . .

\* \* \*

I believe that the main issue that confronted the American people in the present historical stage of development is the danger of war and fascism and the necessity to preserve and to extend democracy and peace to insure lasting peace. We do not believe—I do not believe that the question of socialism is an immediate issue because of the fact that the majority of the American people are not yet convinced of the necessity for socialism as the solution to the problems of war and fascism. We advocate therefore that the prime necessity that faces the American people in preventing war and fascism is to build a coalition. . . .

We advocate or we advocated in the years of the indictment, the period covered by the indictment, the building of a coalition which would

consist of a united front of the working class, of the Negro people, of the middle classes, and of those sections of the capitalist class which were convinced of the necessity to prevent war and fascism. In order to carry out the aims of such a coalition, we advocated in the years of the indictment the legal and peaceful election of an anti-fascist, anti-war government, a government which would represent the coalition that I have mentioned, which would have as its aim to place restrictions upon the monopolies which are the main cause of war and fascism, but a government which would not be a socialist government, that is, a government which would not be for the abolition of the capitalist system, and we envisaged that with the formation of such a government in the United States that we would point out to such government that in order to prevent the overthrow of that government by the reactionary interests, that is, the Wall Street monopolies and possibly overthrow that government by force and violence by those interests, that this government would have to take drastic measures to curb these monopoly interests, to prevent them from sabotaging the work of this government and eventually to completely destroy the power of these monopoly capitalist interests, so that what we envisage in this way [is that] the development of socialism

would be assured in our country and what we seek and advocate is a peaceful development in this country of socialism. We cannot predict and we did not predict the exact conditions and circumstances under which socialism would come into power in the United States of America. We anticipate that on the basis of the past history that undoubtedly the Wall Street financial interests and the big corporations in this country would use every possible measure, including force and violence, to prevent such a government from coming to power or to overthrow such a government once it came to power.

\* \* \*

Q. What did the Communist Party teach and advocate during the same period concerning the avertability or inevitability of another world war?

A. We believe that the relationship of forces in the world has so changed in favor of peace that the peace forces of the world have become so strong in the world in relationship to the forces that are working for war that for the first time I would say in world history it has become possible for the peoples of the world, if they unite their forces and conduct an energetic struggle against the war makers—that it has become possible for the first time in history to prevent, to actually prevent the outbreak of another imperialist world war....

## GILBERT GREEN . . .

I learned the key to the understanding of history which I had not had before. I learned that history is not a crazy-quilt of unrelated historical accidents or the mere recording of the deeds of great men, but a pattern of development, a process of development governed by definite social laws which, if understood by man, would enable him to become a conscious force working for social improvement and social betterment for a better world as against being a blind victim of events.

I learned that history is constantly undergoing changes, that the world we live in today is nothing like the world of 50 years ago or a hundred years ago, that social systems come and go like everything else in life, that the capitalist social system is not eternal, was not always with us nor will it always be with us. . . .

I learned that in modern society under capitalism that the revolutionary class of today, that class whose interests are in harmony with a new change in the social system, is the working class and that the working class has replaced the capitalist class as the revolutionary class in society. The capitalist class was the revolutionary class in the struggle against feudalism at the time of the English Revolution in 1648 and at the time of the American Revolution in 1776, at the time of the French Revolution of 1889—of 1789, of the German Revolution of 1848, but that with the development of capitalism now the

modern working class is the revolutionary class in society.

And it is revolutionary not in the sense that it is conscious of the fact that its historic mission is to bring about a new social system, but because of the objective—its objective place in society, the fact that it, whether it knows it or not, must conduct the struggle to defend its own rights, to earn a decent living, to keep from being completely exploited and oppressed, must conduct this struggle against the economic royalists of today and must, therefore, logically lead in the direction of bringing about a social transformation of society.

I learned that when society is ripe for such social transformation, we have reached a point where the mass of the people can no longer live under the old conditions and must break through the shell of the old in order to build anew, and that if this break-through does not occur, if society does not move forward to a higher rung of social existence, then what happens is that society is pushed backward, begins to decay, begins to disintegrate, begins to rot from within. . . .

However, I also learned that, despite temporary recessions, temporary throw-backs, temporary hindrances and obstacles, that life must assert itself and that sooner or later man does break through and does move from one to another stage of human development, always in the

line of progress, always in the line of human betterment.

And I also learned that, as far as capitalist society is concerned, that this is the first time in the history of human civilization that we now have a state of affairs in which man, through his conquest of nature, through the invention of machinery and tools which can produce an abundance such as we have never known before, can now create a social system without class divisions, a social system in which everyone can truly have what he needs and can create the kind of world in which there need not be any longer class struggles and wars and can usher in a day in which, actually, man begins to be man for the first time instead of being merely a higher form of beast.

I also learned from all this that Marxism-Leninism was a science that explained the world for the first time so that I could understand it, so I could find my place in it. It not only to me meant a scientific grasp of what the world is like and society is like, but it also represented to me a cause, a vision, a dream, something that one could fight for and work for, and I decided to dedicate myself to that, to dedicate myself to the fight for bringing about a better world, a world without exploitation, oppression, without wars, without discrimination, without the ills that we face in modern society today. . . .

\* \* \*

From this\* we went into the

whole question of force and violence and the role that it plays in society, and I pointed out that Marxism does study from an historical and theoretical point of view the role of force and violence in human relations and in social change; that Marxism-Leninism, from the theoretical point of view, has drawn a conclusion that when a fundamental social change takes place from one social system to another, it is usually accompanied by violence, but that the violence occurs because the class which is on its way out places violent obstacles in the path of democratic progress and tries to block the further advance of mankind to a higher social system.

And I gave examples in terms of history, that, for example, in the American Revolution that, even after the Continental Congress was established, that the forefathers of this country, this nation of ours, wanted to find a means by which to come to terms with King George of England. In fact, even after the Continental Congress took place, a petition was written by Thomas Jefferson and signed by some of the outstanding men of that day, pledging their fealty and loyalty to King George, and stating that all they wanted was redress of grievances, all they wanted was the tariff and tax burdens to be removed from the

\* The reference is to a class taught by Comrade Green at a Party training school in the State of Illinois during the spring or summer of 1947. The study text used was an *Outline of Marxist-Leninist Fundamentals* issued by the State Educational Commission of the Illinois District of the Party.—Ed.

thirteen colonies so that the thirteen colonies could begin to extend and develop their own industry and their own commerce, but King George rejected it and the colonies had no other recourse but to declare their independence, and they were met by the armed force of King George, by the importation of Hessian troops to the United States, which opened up a period of civil war, and it lasted some seven years, but this was not of the asking of the American colonies; they were even ready to remain as part of the British Empire so long as their basic economic grievances were met, but it was only the refusal of the British ruling class to grant these and then the use of force against them that produced a violent conflict. . . .

For example, in respect to Germany and Italy, where fascism came to power, there the fascists took power in those countries in order to block the masses from bringing about progressive social change and moving in the direction of socialism. And what happened was that the fascists seized power there by violence and maintained that power by violence against the people, while, on the other hand, as far as recent examples go, in Spain, where the people were able to elect a democratic republic in February 1936, in July 1936 they faced an uprising on the part of the fascists, led by Franco and aided by Hitler and Mussolini, which subdued and defeated the Spanish Republic, but the assumption of power there, the change in

governmental power, was peaceful, but the violence came afterwards.

But, in all cases, the violence stems from the forces of reaction, from the vested interests, from the old ruling classes who want to block the path toward further democracy, toward further progress on the part of the people.

\* \* \*

. . . The state under slavery, even in Rome and Athens and ancient history where our history books tell about the democracy that began to flourish there, was nonetheless a state which protected the slave-owners against the slaves, and the democracy of Rome and Athens was built upon slavery, because for hundreds of miles in each direction outside of these centers there was slavery, and the mass of the slaves had no rights. It was the slaveowner that had the right, and that system of ownership was conceived of as sacred and holy and just and noble and right, and the laws were based upon that; that under Feudalism we had the state likewise protecting the private property relations of the feudal nobility and the large landowners, and there, too, the state played a role of ostensibly being an impartial umpire but in actuality of being a representative of the dominant, economic class of that time; that in capitalist society the same is true, that the state plays that role, that property rights come before human rights, and that while it is possible under capitalism for gains to be made, for progressive laws to be established, the fact remains that

all this is within the framework of accepting what is the basic structure of society, namely, the private ownership of the means of production by a handful, the ownership of the mines and the mills and the factories, and in that sense I said every state is a form of dictatorship and that in Marxist-Leninist terms the word "dictatorship" is used scientifically, that because this state is based upon the maintenance of certain class relations in society and the dominance of one class as against another, it is by that token a form of dictatorship because the powers of the state are used to uphold and to maintain those economic relations; that of course there are different forms of the state and there are different forms of the capitalist state, and that was the next point that we went into. . . .

\* \* \*

. . . The working class state, in our opinion, is a state which is far more democratic than the capitalist state but, from the scientific point of view—from the Marxist scientific point of view, I pointed out that we consider every state a form of dictatorship and that, therefore, the working class state, under Socialism, is likewise a form of dictatorship in this sense, that while the state under capitalism is based upon the protection of capitalist private property, that the state under Socialism is based upon the protection of public ownership of the means of production, and that there is no contradiction between the two things; that every state has

elements of dictatorship—that is why it arose and came into being—and this is true of the working class state as of previous states. The only difference—the difference between the working class state and previous states is the following:

That the working class state, when it arises, represents for the first time the real majority of the people against a handful of the old exploiting elements, while all previous states represented the interest of a minority as against the interests of the great majority, and that the repressive features of the working class state are these: that they aim to curb the powers of the old capitalist class in its attempts to bring about a restoration and to return itself once again to the seat of power.

Now, in dealing with this, I likewise gave an example of what is stated here a little later on, "The dictatorship of the proletariat is a new type of democracy. It is 'a state that is democratic in a new way—for the proletarians and the propertyless in general—and dictatorial in a new way—against the bourgeoisie'", and I explained how it is possible for a state to be dictatorial in a new way against a minority group and by that fact be more democratic for the great majority of the people. . . .

\* \* \*

To study the conditions of the American people, their problems, in this study to apply the science of Marxism-Leninism which is based upon the study of the experience of

all past mankind, from this application and study to draw conclusions as to what has to be done to fight for the welfare of the people today, to devise a program in the course of that struggle, to help organize meetings, help bring the truth to the people in terms of what has to be done, to lead struggles in behalf of the people. All this is part of the

### BENJAMIN J. DAVIS . . .

To say it as briefly as I can, I dealt\* with first the question of the position of the Negro people and I said that the Negro people are the bottom of the political and economic and social ladder on a world scale, that this existed not alone in our country in America but this existed also in Africa, that this existed also in the West Indies, that this existed also in other countries where there were large Negro populations, as for example in Latin America.

And I pointed out that this was a direct consequence of what could be called Anglo-Saxon imperialism and that the imperialists of our own country—meaning by “imperialists” the dominant financial forces and class of our country—that their oppression of the Negro people in this country was a part of the reactionary foreign policy which they were pursuing with respect to colonial peo-

\* The reference is to a Report rendered by Comrade Davis to the National Committee of the Communist Party on December 4 or 5, 1946, dealing with discussions held by the Party Commission on Negro Work.—Ed.

methods of advocating Marxism-Leninism and all these things related to teaching the people on the basis of their experience in defense of their everyday interests why, even though they can win partial concessions under capitalism, the logic of this struggle must lead in the direction of a transformation of society and the establishment of socialism...

ples of all races, colors and creeds abroad, and I said that this oppression is simply not based upon the fact that the Negro people in a great majority happen to look different from white people in terms of their skin, their features, but that this oppression had as its basis the extraction of super-profits out of the Negro people and that this was especially true in the Black Belt area which constitutes the main cotton economy area of the Deep South, and that the treatment of the Negro people in this country, that is, the treatment of national oppression existed because of the sack of poison which flowed from the original oppression of the Negro people in the Black Belt.

I said that a second reason why this oppression existed was because it was a very convenient way for the big business and the big employers to divide the working class and people of our country, that is to say, to play Negroes against white, and in that way weaken the power of the

working class and of the democratic forces of our country to put up an effective and successful struggle for their liberation, for the end of exploitation, for the end of the oppression of the Negro people.

Then the third reason I gave was that this system of the oppression of the Negro people is buttressed by a whole ideological idea of "white supremacy" and that this idea expresses itself in all aspects of American life, and that this is used to create the impression that the whites are superior to the Negroes and that the Negroes are inferior to the whites; and I said that this idea was completely unscientific, that it was a form of Nazi ideology because it was more akin to barbarism inasmuch as the idea of the inferiority of races had already been destroyed.

I then said that a fourth reason why this oppression takes place is because in the deep South there is a constant effort on the part of the Negro people out of the deep South to come out of the deep South and look for jobs and employment in other parts of the country, and also to escape the rigors of the lynch terror in the deep South, and that having such low living standards it was possible for the employers to play them against the white workers in other parts of the country, and that therefore the oppression of the Negroes in the Black Belt constituted a threat to the living standards of the white workers all over the country, and consequently these were the four reasons which I gave in the

report for the oppression of the Negro people.

\* \* \*

Now I pointed out also that this system of the oppression of the Negro people in the Black Belt was the most rigorous type of oppression, that we had in America what is called bourgeois democracy or capitalist democracy, and that there are certain limited but very precious rights which the American people hold and which we want to defend today against all manifestations of fascism to destroy the limited rights which the American people have; but I pointed out down in the deep South, particularly in the Black Belt area, that these bourgeois democratic rights had never really been fully recognized by the Negro people and that the nearest thing that they had had toward this recognition was during the reconstruction period when the Negroes were able to elect Congressmen and State legislators and even two State Senators from the State of Mississippi; and I pointed out also that this Black Belt area was characterized by the following disabilities imposed upon the Negro people: 1, that it was common knowledge that they could not vote except under extreme terror; that they could not elect public officials except—well, there are practically no exceptions to that—I don't recall mentioning them; that they could not elect judges, that they could not elect governors and state senators and could not hold public office. I

also pointed out that they were pretty much confined to the lowest type of share-cropping, which is a system whereby the Negro poor farmers and sharecroppers are practically attached to the land and live under a system of peonage on the land which they have tilled for more than 300 years since they have been in this country, brought here as slaves.

Then I said also that because of the very deep and great oppression of the Negro people that the white population in this area is oppressed also because the white workers and poor farmers in this area are also victims of the system of landlords, of mill owners and of others, and that one of the main reasons why this—the oppression of the Negroes—had existed in this way and one of the main reasons why the oppression of the whites had existed in this way is because of the system of lynch terror, particularly in the Black Belt where one is played against the other, and it had not been possible as yet to get them together, and that it was the purpose of Big Business and the plantation owners to keep them forever divided.

Then I pointed out that what I meant when I spoke of the lynch system, now, I said that most people just consider lynching as the physical act of hanging a person up by a rope and, of course, that is the most extreme and savage and cannibalistic form of the lynch treatment of the Negroes, but the lynch system was more than that. The lynch system meant that the Negro people

in this area lived in constant threat of their lives any time they sought to exercise their rights, and that the lynching is not alone the murder of a citizen but that it is a badge of the inferior status of the Negro people.

I pointed out that in the Black Belt that this was characterized against the Negro people—or, rather, enforced against the Negro people, although in the Black Belt areas, according to our information, what we had been able to learn, it is precisely in the Black Belt areas where the Negro people are in a majority over the white people.

Now I pointed out also that the Negro people were in this way a victim of a system of force and violence.

\* \* \*

I pointed out also that the Negro people were victims of a conspiracy that had been carried on against them ever since Andrew Johnson betrayed the cause of the Civil War by coming to an agreement with the defeated slave owners to keep the Negroes in one or another form of feudal slavery.

And I said that this conspiracy consisted of the fact that the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments were constantly violated in the Black Belt area more especially than they were in the North, although it is only a question of degree.

I pointed out too that, for example, the 14th Amendment of the Constitution requires that the representation from States should be reduced

in accordance with the qualified voters but that this provision of the Constitution had never been enforced.

And I said further, this conspiracy existed in the fact that there were so many officials of the South, Senators and Representatives, who had not only been a part of the system of oppression of the Negro people and of the poor white population but that they themselves had constantly incited lynch terror and Ku Klux terror against the Negro people, and that this had been done with the connivance of the Attorney General of the United States, of the President of the United States, and of the whole administration of justice. And I pointed out that one of the worst examples of the inferior status of the Negro people was that in all of the 5,000 lynchings that have taken place in America since 1886 that there has never been one prosecution which resulted in a conviction of a lyncher either by a federal court, a federal attorney general, a federal judge or by a State court, or by a State attorney general, or what have you. . . .

Then I pointed out that notwithstanding this system of oppression under which the Negro people lived, that certain progress had been made by the Negro people over the course of years. And I said that that progress was due in the first place to the great militancy of the Negro people themselves, their unwillingness to accept this inferior status without a fight, and that that was true even before the Communist Party was

ever organized in our country, and that the Negro people showed that because, during the Civil War and during the slave period, there were many revolts of Negro slaves against the system of force and violence of slavery, and that since that period the Negro people had fought in the Civil War and had allied themselves with the emerging industrial class which could only exist by the defeat of these feudal owners—the feudal slave owners—and the slave class in the South, and that the Negro people were, therefore, the first reason why there had been some progress.

And then, the second reason was—that I gave—was that in modern day America that the principal progress that had been made in the struggle for Negro rights had been made by virtue of the alliance between the Negro people and the labor movement, and plus the democratic forces of the nation.

Then I said that the Negro people had in recent years made many gains but that the basic framework of the Jim-Crow system still exists in our country.

I then went ahead and discussed the question of whether or not the Communists were using the Negroes, and I said—the question had been raised among them. . . .

I then said, on this question, that the biggest use that had been made of the Negro people had been made by confining them within a system of Jim Crow whereby they were never able to make free choices, they were limited by an iron curtain of

Jim Crow either in the South or in the North, and that, for example, America had become a very great and wealthy country primarily because of the cotton economy in the South from the very beginning of American capitalism, the heyday of American capitalism, and the basis of this cotton economy was the Negroes who were never even permitted to vote—first, slaves, and then not even permitted to vote, to be first class citizens of this country, and that the Communists, in the first place, were Negro and white, and that the Communists fought beside the Negro people and with them to achieve their full and democratic choice of a free and equal life in America, and they could only do that by fighting against the system which kept the Negro people enslaved in the deep South and, to a less extent, all over the country.

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Then I went into the question of self-determination, and I said on this question that the principle of self-determination is a principle which was not at all originally a Marxist-Leninist discovery; that the principle of self-determination for nations had existed for many, many years, and that President Wilson had used it as one of his 14 points in World War I, and that it is nothing more than the right of a nation to determine its own independence and destiny. And I said that in the deep South, in the Black Belt area, where the Negro people constituted a majority, that our Party raised the

slogan of the right of the Negro people in the Black Belt area to determine their own destiny or the right of self-determination, and that our Party raised that slogan because the Negro people, having lived in that area for 300 years, first under feudalism and also now under capitalism, that they had all the attributes of nationhood, and that the question of regarding the Negro people as a nation was co-extensive with realizing the full dignity of the Negro people as a people, and that they had so regarded themselves and spoke of themselves in many historic documents which I mentioned to the National Committee meeting. And I said that the Negro people in this area, who wanted freedom, who wanted to own the land in that area, who wanted equality and democratic rights and their full citizenship under our Constitution, that the Negro people had for 300 years had an experience that no one would guarantee them having those rights, and that the highest guarantee of the Negro people in that area having those rights was that they should be able to determine their own destiny and enforce them themselves.

Now I also pointed out however that this could not be achieved unless the Negro people had allies. First, that they themselves should consciously believe in this position and also that the Negro people would have allies, and their first allies would be the labor movement in the country, their allies among the poor white farmers in the South

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who to a more or less degree suffer oppression also by the landlords.

So that this could not be achieved except upon the basis of the Negro people and their allies understanding this particular point and working together against a common class—upper class foe.

Now this I said was what essentially I meant. I said that the position what we had, what I was advancing then was a position that was different from the position that had been established some time ago in our Party; that first we did not advance the slogan of self-determination as a slogan of immediate realization and that at other periods in the Party's discussion there got to abroad ideas that we did and those ideas were incorrect.

Secondly, that we were not advancing the theory that there should be a separate black republic of the Negro people in the Deep South, that this also was alien to what we were advocating and to what I was recommending.

I said on the contrary that no one could exercise the right of self-determination except the Negro people themselves and that that is all we advocated and that it was up to the Negro people themselves in conjunction with their allies and supporters to decide just what their relation would be to the state government or to the federal government or in whatever way they wished to establish their destiny or fulfill their destiny. . . .

That the Negro people were

Americans, that they are proud of their American citizenship, that they wish not only its responsibilities but they wish also its privileges, and that what they would do certainly to decide their destiny would be determined by their views at the time that the moment arrived when they would have the opportunity to exercise the right of self-determination. . . .

Then I pointed out that the whole question of self-determination was one which was not an immediate slogan of our Party; that our immediate fight for the rights of the Negro people was for their free and equal citizenship, that is, free and equal in the sense that they would have equality without segregation, without discrimination, without Jim Crow, to their free and equal exercise of their constitutional rights from the same plane and in the same way as other citizens, and that that was our immediate—immediate objective.

Then I said that we were therefore avoiding errors that had been previously made and that these errors I thought should be pointed out there; that our National Committee should adopt a resolution based upon the discussion and my report, and I said that I considered this report which I gave as the substance of a Marxist-Leninist view on the Negro question as a national question in this country.

I remarked to them that Marx had said, I believe in *Capital*—I don't know what volume—that labor

in a white skin can never be free while labor in a black skin is branded, and that therefore this question of fighting for the equality

of the Negro people was a matter of very deep self-interest to the white workers and to our whole country.

## ROBERT THOMPSON . . .

I said\* that this special convention July 1945, reconstituting our Party, marked the culmination of a prolonged and a sharp struggle in the ranks of the Communists here in the United States over major questions of policy.

I said that this struggle had begun almost with the involvement of the United States in the war and had run right through up to this 1945 special convention of our Party in July, which had the task of resolving decisively that struggle.

I said that this struggle in Communist ranks in the United States had developed around the central issue of an estimate of the policies and objectives of Big Business in this country during the war, and of the role it would play after the war.

I said that during the whole of this period William Z. Foster had stood for a Marxist-Leninist position and had led the fight for that position in our Party and later in the C.P.A., and that Browder during this period had led the fight for a revisionist and opportunist position on this question. On the basis of

these two sharply divergent positions on this central question had flowed two conflicting lines of policy on every major question confronting the Communists and the working class in the United States.

I said that Foster had from the outset of the United States' involvement in the war worked to unfold our Party's policies in the direction of promoting the initiative and the leading role of organized labor in the war effort; that he had throughout this period repeatedly and consistently warned that American Big Business, with the start of its involvement in the war, had not by any means abandoned its imperialist objectives, and was not primarily interested in the destruction of fascism in the world but was primarily interested in the weakening of its imperialist rivals.

I pointed out that Foster had correctly projected a major postwar offensive on the part of Big Business in this country to try to extend its control and domination far and wide throughout the world. . . . [Court interjections]

Foster projected the viewpoint that Big Business in this country could not be trusted with a free hand in any phase of the war policies of the

\* Comrade Thompson here replies to the question of Defense Attorney Richard Gladstein concerning the substance of his report to the Emergency National Convention of the Communist Political Association held on July 26-28, 1945.—*Ed.*

country, and that organized labor had to take the lead in fighting for correct war policies on such issues as the opening of the Second Front, the overcoming of resistance and sabotage, of the full unfoldment of war production by Big Business elements; the strengthening of the general win-the-war program of the Roosevelt Administration, and of combating the anti-Roosevelt and the pro-negotiated peace forces in the country who were very strong in this period in the ranks of Big Business.

Browder, during this same period, began to develop a line, a political line in sharp opposition to this Marxist-Leninist position.

In presenting at the Convention the role of Browder in this internal struggle within the Communist ranks in this country, I said that Browder began during this period to present a line of policy in sharp contrast to the policies for which Foster stood. He began pressing for a line of policy which tended in the direction of virtual unconditional support of the policies of Big Business on the political, economic and other fields.

I said that whereas Foster projected policies aimed at promoting the initiative and leading role of organized labor, Browder projected policies which tended to eliminate the initiative and the leading role of organized labor; that whereas Foster undertook to equip our Party and the working class with an understanding of the real policies and

objectives of monopoly capital and to rouse an awareness of the reactionary character of these policies and objectives, Browder undertook to build up illusions in our Party and in the ranks of the labor movement regarding the objectives and policies of Big Business in this country.

I said that, whereas Foster's policies called for the building of our Party, the Communist Party, and the all-around strengthening of the position of the labor movement and its allies, Browder's position called for, and tended in the direction of, minimizing the role and the necessity of the Communist Party, and in general tended to undermine completely the positions and fighting capacity of the working class of this country and its allies.

\* \* \*

I said that this sharpening struggle in Communist ranks over policy questions in this country had reached a climactic point on two occasions during this period. I cited as the first of these occasions the period just following the Teheran Conference in the fall of 1943, and said that on the basis of this Conference, which created widespread illusions among a variety of political forces in the country, that Browder had undertaken to carry through a decisive initiative in the ranks of our Party at that time against the Marxist-Leninist policies for which Foster stood, and that as a part of this initiative he had undertaken to dis-

solve the Communist Party and to form the Communist Political Association, and had been successful in this period with a majority support among the membership of our Party and its leadership to carry through this dissolution.

I said that Foster throughout this period had continued his vigorous and consistent fight in the ranks of our Party against this initiative of Browder, including the dissolution of the Communist Party and the formation of the Communist Political Association.

I told the Convention that these policies of Browder had done a great deal of harm to the Communist movement in this country, and the Left wing of the labor movement generally, but that they had not had their full disastrous consequences because of two major factors that were operating during this period.

The first of these factors that I cited was the existence throughout this whole period of a great deal of resistance among the membership of our organization and its leadership to the full unfolding of the policies of Browder, and I cited as examples of this the fact that even when Browder's policies were becoming most dominant in the Communist ranks, that is, in the early part of 1944, that his initiative to dissolve the Communist Party and form the C.P.A. had not at all met with a unanimous approval in the leadership of our Party, that, on the contrary in March of 1944, when the question came up in the Board of

the Communist Party to recommend the dissolution of the Communist Party and formation of the C.P.A., that in addition to the opposition of Foster, there had been a number of others of the leaders of the Party at that time that opposed this move, including Dennis, who had voted against it, including Gil Green, who had voted against it, and I think one other member of the Board of the Party at that time. Throughout this period there was continuous skepticism and resistance to the full unfolding of these policies right through to the period of the beginning of 1945, when Browder's policies began to be challenged in a serious and fundamental manner in the then Communist Political Association.

I said that the second factor that was involved here was the shortness of the time period involved, the fact that Browder's policies were fully dominant in the leadership of the Party and of the C.P.A. for a period considerably less than a year, running from March or thereabouts in 1944 through to the beginning—January, February, March—of 1945, and that because of these two factors, despite the policies of Browder and the influence of Browder, that we must estimate that the Communist Political Association had played throughout the whole of its existence a generally progressive role in relation to the war effort and the labor movement.

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I said that the second climactic

point in this internal struggle in Communist ranks in this country had begun to come to a head in the early part of, very beginning of 1945; that this was the period when the war was already beginning to draw to a close, when the reactionary objectives of Big Business in this country were becoming more fully apparent, and where it was becoming obvious that the decisive sections of American Big Business in this country were orienting very definitely on a policy of scrapping Roosevelt's policy of Soviet-American collaboration and Big Three unity; were preparing to launch out in a drive to extend American financial control, American imperialist control far and wide throughout the world, and that as a part of this, they were also orienting on the developing of a postwar offensive to destroy the gains made by labor and the Negro people, working people generally, under the Roosevelt Administration during and before the war.

I said that during this period this sharpening political situation in the country, this changing political situation in the country that began to take clear shape in this period, began to expose the bankruptcy of Browder's policies.

I said that at a time when already big sections of the organized labor movement were beginning to orient on and prepare for the big wage and strike struggles that took place in 1946, Browder was continuing to talk about the continuation

of a no-strike pledge into the postwar period, that while he was talking about the inevitability of complete harmony in international relations, already at this time the moves that Big Business was beginning to orient on, in relation to the United Nations conference in San Francisco, of bringing Argentina in and playing around with the idea of bringing Franco into the United Nations, were becoming obvious, and that this was in sharp discrepancy with his whole fundamental outlook.

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And I said that during this period the opposition to Browder in the National Board of the C.P.A. began to be very frequent and very formidable on specific issue after specific issue, and that some of the older heads in the leadership of the C.P.A. during this period, that is, on the National Board of the C.P.A., that is, in addition to Foster, Dennis, Davis and Green, began to raise, not just the question of correcting this or that aspect of the policies of Browder, but the need for a basic re-evaluation of the Communist policy in this country and a reshaping basically of that policy, and that these proposals were raised during the period of January through March 1945.

Then I said that this struggle that was taking place in Communist ranks in this country, and particularly the policies that Browder has projected, which hinged on his estimates of the role of American Big

Business during the war and in the postwar period, were not at all a matter of importance only to the Communists and working class in this country. Because they dealt with one of the major questions in the whole international picture; that is, the role that America—American Big Business would play, they were of concern to the whole international Communist movement and to the working class of all other countries. And that Browder's policies had succeeded in disorienting the parties of a number of countries, particularly in Latin America, and had influenced the outlook and thinking of Communists in numerous other countries.

And I cited here the fact that in the French Party, and in the French Party press, there had been articles published pro and con on Browder's policies, and that the French Party leadership in the spring of 1945 undertook to decisively resolve the existing confusion in the ranks of the French Communist Party with regard to the nature of Browder's policies. In this connection the outstanding leader of the French Party, Jacques Duclos, had written a basic theoretical article criticizing and analyzing the nature of Browder's policies, and citing favorably Foster's criticism of Browder's policies, and that we had taken that article and published it in our press. I said the publishing of it in

the American Party press had played an important part in helping to win support in the ranks of our Party for the policies that Foster had been fighting for during the whole of this period, starting shortly after the United States was involved in the war.

And I said that as a result of all of these factors, and among all of these factors, the change in the political objective conditions in the United States, with a drawing to the close of the war, was the decisive factor; that the combination of these political factors had enabled our Party under the leadership of Foster to decisively resolve this question of a Marxist-Leninist estimate of the parties and the role of Big Business in this country, and an estimate of the role following the close of the war; but that the resolving of this decisive question had placed our Party in a position to reconstitute itself on the basis of a correct understanding and interpretation of the principles of Marxism-Leninism, as contrasted to the revised interpretation of these principles that prevailed during the period of Browder's dominance in the leadership of the Party, and the formation of the C.P.A.

I said that this was the significance of this Convention which was reconstituting our Party, and this was the meaning of the events preceding it. . . .

# Resolution on the Question of Negro Rights and Self-Determination

Communist Party, U.S.A.

*[Browder-revisionism had so drastically undermined the Party's Marxist-Leninist position on the Negro question that the general discussion preceding the reconstitution of the Party did not fully come to grips with this question. This failing made necessary an extended Party discussion on the character of the Negro question after the 1945 Emergency Convention. Hence, the Resolution on the Question of Negro Rights and Self-Determination, adopted by the Special Plenum of the National Committee in December 1946, which re-affirmed the national character of the Negro people's struggle, assumes great importance in the observance of the Party's Thirtieth Anniversary.]*

*[The re-publication of this Resolution assumes a special importance at this time when the imperialist attacks upon the Negro people grow in ferocity and when the Party is intensifying its offensive upon all manifestations of white chauvinism, one of the sharpest weapons of the monopoly forces driving to fascism and war.]*

*[As part of the current celebration of our Party's Thirtieth Anniversary, an article serving to give a basic estimation of the Party's 30-year record of struggle for Negro rights and self-determination is in preparation. —Editor.]*

THE PRESENT DRIVE of reaction against the Negro people is an attack upon the living standards and democratic rights of all the American people. It is an effort to halt the vital upsurge now taking place among the Negro people, to stop the growth of Negro and white labor and progressive unity, and to split asunder all pro-

gressive alliances and groupings.

Defense of Negro rights has become an imperative and inescapable task of the American labor-progressive coalition in the struggle against reaction and the threat of fascism. Such a coalition must be based solidly upon alliance with the Negro people.

North and South, the Negro people are attaining a new high level of fighting unity in defense of their rights and of gains won during the recent period. Their organizations, which are being strengthened and extended, are fighting for those democratic rights here at home which were proclaimed as our nation's war objectives abroad.

In sharp contrast with the situation following the First World War, masses of Negro workers are now actively participating in the trade unions. In the major wage struggles and strike movements since the end of the war, the employers have not been able to divide the workers on the "race issue." A growing confidence in the labor movement exists among the Negro workers, while the white workers realize better than previously the role of race and national prejudices in dividing their ranks.

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A new wave of the struggle for democracy is arising in the South. In their courageous resistance to lynch terror, the Negro people are playing a leading role in the fight for democracy. For the first time since Reconstruction (1865-1877) and since the Populist movement of the 1890's, important sections of the white masses of the South are beginning to ally themselves on a significant scale with the Negro people in their common struggle against the trusts, and against the Bilbos, Rankins, and Talmadges.

Irrespective of its immediate objectives, this struggle is directed at the semi-feudal sharecropping-plantation system of the South, the source of the most brutal forms of Negro oppression. The sharecropping system, descended from slavery, perpetuates conditions which are essentially semi-feudal. This system is a cesspool of reaction which poisons American political and economic life. The Nazi-like doctrines and practices of lily-white superiority, the main stock-in-trade of the Southern Bourbons, constantly inspire fascist groups and tendencies all over the country. The relation of Southern semi-feudalism with the northern big trusts promotes the drive of the monopolies toward full-scale reaction, toward fascism.

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Just as the Truman Administration receded from and finally betrayed the Roosevelt program in practically every field, it failed to resist the reactionary drive upon the Negro people. Federal F.E.P.C., anti-lynching and anti-poll tax legislation, action against anti-Negro terrorism, uprooting of the K.K.K. and similar fascist organizations and other pressing tasks went by the board entirely. In the recent elections the Republicans capitalized on these failures, and are now seeking the Negro vote for 1948.

Dependence upon the N.A.M. and pro-fascist Republicans, no less than

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upon the reactionary leadership of the Democratic Party, can only prove disastrous to the Negro people. Only the most determined resistance by a coalition of labor, the poor farmers, the Negro people, and all other progressives can prevent the 80th Congress from passing further oppressive legislation.

Only such a democratic coalition can wrest concessions from a Congress composed almost entirely of reactionary Republicans and Bourbon Democrats. It can do this by rallying labor and the people to a program of equal rights legislation, abolition of Jim Crow in the Army, adherence to the Supreme Court decision outlawing the white primary, establishing housing on a non-discriminatory basis, and securing Federal action against the inciters of race hatred.

Such a democratic coalition can rally all the progressive and independent political forces in the country to defeat reaction in 1948.

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A principal task of all labor and progressive forces throughout the country is the struggle against reaction in the South. This is a key to breaking the power of the Bourbon Democrats, now allied with the reactionary Republicans.

The main obstacle to the progressive modernization of the South is the sharecropping-plantation system which keeps millions of Negroes in semi-serfdom and which also affects

millions of poor white farmers. Basic land reform in the South is thus essential to the defeat of reaction in the country as a whole, to overcoming the backward and distressed conditions of the South, and to the nationwide struggle for Negro rights. Hand in hand with the struggle for the vote and the right of Negroes to hold office, the struggle against Southern landlordism will rally the Negro and white sharecroppers and poor farmers to a broad labor-progressive coalition of all anti-fascist Americans.

Just as the coming economic crisis threatens to depopulate the factories, especially of Negro workers, it will also render hundreds of thousands of Negro farm families homeless and jobless. To anticipate this catastrophe and prepare against it, Negro and white sharecroppers and agricultural workers should be organized into unions alongside the industrial unions now spreading in the South.

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As always, the Communist Party stands firmly in the forefront of the struggle for full economic, social and political equality for the Negro people.

In fighting for their equal rights, the Negro people are becoming more unified as a people. Their fight for liberation from oppression in the Black Belt—the area of Negro majority population—is a struggle for full nationhood, for their rightful position of full equality as a nation. In recognizing the struggle for

equal rights in the South as a movement toward full nationhood, the Communist Party supplies new power to the Negro liberation movement and also advances the perspective of full freedom for the Negro people. This understanding, growing out of a constant fight for Negro rights, strengthens white and Negro solidarity, based firmly on working-class unity, and provides the program of permanent alliance between the Negro and white masses.

Today, the struggle for Negro liberation is concerned with gaining equal rights throughout the country, which includes in the South the struggle for attaining representative government and land reform. As our own history shows (Reconstruction) the development toward full and equal Negro participation in State and Federal government also moves in the direction of various forms of self-government by the Negro people, together with their white allies, in the Black Belt areas where they are in the majority.

This movement provides the basis for the full realization of Negro nationhood, whether it be achieved under capitalism or socialism. The Communist Party supports the right of self-determination for the Negro people, that is, their right to realize self-government in the Negro majority area in the South. Only on this basis will the relation of the Negro people to the State and Federal governments be determined on the basis of freedom.

The Communist Party does not attempt to impose any specific solution in advance of the form in which the right of self-determination will be exercised; nor does it prematurely raise self-determination as an immediate slogan of action. The future solution of this question must arise from the living movement itself, out of the current and future struggles for democracy and equal rights. Its form will be determined by the relationship of social forces in the country as a whole and by the relation of the Negro people to the progressive coalition.

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A firm alliance of labor and the progressive forces generally with the Negro people is required by the present struggle against reaction. This alliance demands, in the first place, a constant fight to eradicate the doctrines and practices of white chauvinism in all their forms, among all sections of the population and especially whenever they manifest themselves in the labor and progressive movement.

In the trade unions, even in some of the most progressive, discrimination against Negro workers still persists. As in the past, the Communists insist upon the fullest participation of Negro workers in the unions on an equal footing, including in positions of top leadership. The unions cannot successfully combat the divisive tactics of the employers without fully recognizing and fight-

ing against the present unequal position of the Negro workers in industry. This requires that the militant trade unionists raise the special demands of the Negro workers, such as seniority readjustments as well as other provisions, to permit equal opportunity for advancement and to protect the Negro from being the last to be hired and the first to be fired.

Especially as it influences the labor and progressive movement, white chauvinism feeds separatist tendencies and distrust of white workers among the Negro people. Therefore, the encouragement of every movement among the Negro people toward greater integration with their white allies, requires a simultaneous struggle against white chauvinism, especially whenever it shows itself within the labor and progressive movement.

By its own actions, the Communist Party must set an example before the whole labor movement. Every influence of white chauvinism within its ranks, whether it manifests itself

openly or in concealed form, must be systematically combated and expunged. It is the over-riding responsibility of white Communists to fight white chauvinism relentlessly.

Negro Communists should systematically combat separatist tendencies and distrust of white workers among the Negro people, while building working-class unity and alliance with other minorities and nationality groups also suffering from discrimination, such as the foreign born, the Jewish people and Catholics.

Toward this end, the Communist Party will develop constant educational work within its own ranks, as well as on a broader scale. As part of its constant fight for Negro rights, it will strive to uproot false theories and ban race prejudice from the labor and progressive movement. This is imperative for welding firmly the alliance of the labor and progressive movement with the Negro people in the common struggle against reaction and the threat of fascism.

## Thirty Years of Struggle for a Steelworkers' Union and a Working-Class Ideology

*[We are proud to present this contribution by Comrade Gus Hall, Chairman of the Communist Party in the State of Ohio and a member of the National Committee of the Party. One of the eleven Communist leaders on trial in the Federal Court at Foley Square, Comrade Hall, along with Comrades Henry Winston and Gil Green, was vindictively jailed for an indeterminate period by Judge Medina for protesting his high-handed gag rules.]*

*[Himself a former worker in the iron industry in Minnesota, and a former Ohio steelworker and sub-regional director of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee in Warren, Ohio, Comrade Gus Hall wrote this article under the severe conditions imposed by his harsh imprisonment from first-hand experience with the lot and struggles of the steelworkers of the United States. —Editor.]*

by Gus Hall

PRISONS AND JAILS are so much a part of the history of the class struggle in the United States that my surroundings here at the Federal Detention Prison are truly appropriate for the writing of this article on the struggles of the steelworkers.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of two major landmarks in American labor history. It is 30 years since the founding of the Communist Party, U.S.A., and 30 years since the first successful organizing campaign of the steelworkers and the Great Steel Strike of 1919.

It is not an accident that these two anniversaries coincide. For it was the same working class, which had attained a new maturity thirty years ago, that gave birth to the Communist Party and to the epic struggles of the steel workers. Many of the same individuals took part in both of these historic events. Our beloved Comrade Foster was the initiator, leader, and organizer of the campaign to organize the steel workers and of the history-making strike that followed. Shortly following the strike and the founding meetings of

our Party, Comrade Foster, in 1921, led a group of militantly progressive trade-union leaders and members into this newly-founded Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class: Jack Johnstone, Charles Krumbein, Scotty Williams, and many others. It was the blending of the experiences of the American working class, embodied in these outstanding trade-union leaders, with the science of Marxism-Leninism that laid a firm foundation for the Communist Party of the United States of America.

The organization of a political party was not something new for the American people. But the Communist Party was and is not just another party. The Communist Party is the Party of the working class, and its theory and practice are rooted in the revolutionary science of Marxism-Leninism. The founding of our Party therefore added a new quality to the class struggle in America, and marked the beginning of the end for the era of drifting, spontaneous movements and utopian schemes. Now the working class had a revolutionary Party that was armed with scientific understanding of capitalist development and with the accumulated, generalized experience in struggle of the workers of the United States and of the whole world. Now the working class had a rudder, a guide on the difficult road to liberation—to Socialism.

The newly-founded Party had to study and master the Marxist-Leninist science and become skilled

in applying it to the problems of the class struggle in our country. And it had to undertake the bitter, uncompromising struggle against the reformist, Social-Democratic ideology of class collaboration, of opportunism, which had paralyzed the working class for decades.

For the steelworkers, as for the working class as a whole, the founding of our Party marked a qualitatively new stage in the struggle for industrial, militantly progressive unionism.

#### EARLY EFFORTS AT ORGANIZATION

Large-scale mass production, monopoly-controlled industry, began to dot America during the last half of the 19th century. There took place simultaneously the two-fold process of rapidly expanding production and the narrowing down of industrial ownership and control. This continuing process has placed domination of the economic and political life of the country in the hands of eight major finance-capitalist groups.

The emergence of the trusts, as Lenin brilliantly showed in his classic study, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, is marked by "reaction all along the line," by greatly intensified exploitation and oppression, by growing and deepening class struggles. In the United States, the offensive of capitalist reaction included a bitter, violent assault on the small and weak trade-union movement, which had evolved

on the basis of small-scale production.

The working class was not prepared for this attack politically, ideologically, or organizationally. The small unions of skilled workers, organized by crafts and dominated by the Gompers ideology of "pure-and-simple unionism," were no match for the emerging industrial giants.

The magnates of the steel industry were in the leadership of the union-smashing drive.

As Comrade Foster states in his book, *The Great Steel Strike*, written after the Great Steel Strike of 1919, conditions in the steel industry approximated outright peonage. The workers slaved in the mills for twelve and more hours a day, many of them for seven days a week. Wages were at the starvation level. Working conditions were murderous. Accidents, constantly growing speed-up, brow-beating by foremen, and a virtual reign of boss terror fed the anger of the thousands of immigrant workers who had fled Europe in the hope of achieving a better life in this country. The communities were dominated by the open hirelings and lackeys of the steel trust.

Unionism quickly took hold among the steel workers, "and by the later '80's, grace to the activities of many unions, notable among which were the old Sons of Vulcan, the Knights of Labor and the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, considerable organization existed among the men em-

ployed in the iron and steel mills throughout the country."\*

The Amalgamated Association, the largest of these unions, achieved a high point of 24,000 members in 1891. Organized mainly in the Carnegie mills in and near Homestead, Pennsylvania, the A.A. consisted almost entirely of highly skilled men, ignoring the masses of unskilled workers. Nonetheless, the union had won a contract with Carnegie, and in 1899, after a short strike, successfully resisted Carnegie's attempt to slash wages.

The historic 1892 strike of the workers in the Carnegie Steel plant in Homestead, which lasted five months and was joined by workers in many large mills in the Pittsburgh district, was the reply of the workers to Carnegie's continued union-busting and wage-cutting drive. Five hundred Pinkerton gunmen, hired by Carnegie and his newly-acquired slave driver, Henry C. Frick, used river barges to unleash their murderous assault on the strikers. The story of this famous struggle is still related today by steelworkers to their grandchildren.

The A. A. was virtually driven out of the mills after the 1901 strike against the newly-formed U.S. Steel Corporation. Thoroughly "tamed" by this time, especially under its new president, M. F. Tighe, the A.A. made its last-ditch stand in 1909, when the steel barons served notice

\* William Z. Foster, *The Great Steel Strike and Its Lessons*, B. W. Huebsch, New York, 1920, p. 10.

that nothing short of the open shop would be acceptable to them by instituting a wage cut. The bitter fourteen-month strike which resulted was doomed from the outset. Thereafter, the A.A. was purely a paper organization whose main "contribution" was in acting as a vehicle for transmitting the ideology of the capitalist class into the ranks of the steelworkers. Of its international president, the tyrant Tom Girdler lovingly wrote in 1942: "Mike Tighe and a fine old gentleman he was too."

Slowly but surely, the paralyzing, defeatist idea that "it is impossible to organize the workers in the basic, mass-production industries" penetrated into the ranks of the trade unions and the working class. Long before Hitler, American Big Business used the line of "invincibility." This capitalist propagandist, spread by the class-collaborationist labor leaders, was the first obstacle in the path of all attempts at large-scale union organization. Before anything could be done about organizing the steelworkers, the "theory" of invincibility had to be destroyed in the ranks of the A. F. of L.

#### THE 1919 ORGANIZING DRIVE

At the 1918 A. F. of L. convention, rank-and-file pressure resulted in the unanimous adoption of a resolution to organize the steelworkers submitted by William Z. Foster, then Secretary-Treasurer of the committee

organizing the meat-packing workers in Chicago. The stake was set for an attempt at the "impossible," although many of the A.F.of L. leaders privately predicted failure for the campaign even before it got on its way.

As Comrade Foster shows in *The Great Steel Strike*, the First World War provided a golden opportunity for speedy organization of the steelworkers on a national scale. Uninterrupted steel production was imperatively required for the imperialist war production; steel company profits were at a new high level and the companies strove to avoid a stoppage; the steelworkers were literally begging for organization.

On the basis of the successful organization of the packinghouse workers, under Foster's direction, "it was evident that in the proposed campaign radical departures would have to be made from the ordinary organizing tactics."\*

The first blow against the drive was struck by the reactionary A. F. of L. leaders. As Comrade Foster wrote many years later in *Unionizing Steel*:

. . . the reactionary A. F. of L. leaders, however, with no real interest in the work, neglected this plan [for a national campaign], holding to the theory that the work must be begun in only one locality, gave the organizers but a few hundred dollars and a half dozen organizers to take up the work. This was a deadly blow.

\* *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Foster, who was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the organizing committee, was in fact the key figure from the first day of the drive. The National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers, which was set up at an A. F. of L. Conference in 1918, embraced some two dozen cooperating A. F. of L. unions with a total membership of about 2 million.

The organizing campaign was viewed by all of labor as a great test of the "invincibility" dogma. The committee, under Foster's leadership, planned the campaign carefully and, with the limited funds and organizers provided, executed it masterfully.

As a result, despite the abruptly expanded labor market with the sudden end of the world war and despite the continued sabotage by the A. F. of L. leaders, the campaign broke through in a brief matter of months. In the first 18 months, 250,000 steelworkers joined the union in the face of brute terror and murder, spying, and mass firings. Thousands of shop-keepers and professional and other middle-class people, as well as the whole corrupt hierarchy of lackeys of the steel barons and outright underworld elements—inflamed by the inciting stories in the venal press, by church ministers, and by "law enforcement" authorities—were pressed into service as deputy sheriffs, armed, and given "open season" on strikers and their families. In Comrade Foster's

words, "it was an alignment of the steel companies, the state, the courts, the local churches and the press against the steel workers."\*

But the "impossible" was accomplished. The fairy tale that workers in mass-production industries "cannot organize a union" was destroyed. And William Z. Foster, despite the nationwide campaign of slander directed against him, emerged as the central figure in the labor movement.

#### THE STRIKE AND ITS LESSONS

On September 22, 1919, 365,000 steelworkers went out on strike after fruitless efforts by the organizing committee to get the employers (who were led by the notorious union-buster, E. H. Gary, chairman of the U.S. Steel Corporation) to sit down and negotiate. The demands of the workers were for: the right of collective bargaining; reinstatement of all men discharged for union activities; the eight-hour day and the six-day week; abolition of the 24-hour shift; an increase in wages; standard scales of wages in all trades and classifications of workers; double pay for overtime and Sunday work; the check-off; seniority rights in hiring and firing; abolition of company unions, and abolition of physical examination of applicants for jobs.

The steel trust used every trick in the bag against the steelworkers, who conducted a strike twice as big

\* *Ibid.*, p. 2.

as any preceding one in the history of the country—a strike that was directed, moreover, against the most powerful monopolists in the land. The steel towns were turned into armed camps as the Federal, state, and city government, went all-out against the strikers. The bosses used machine guns on the workers, and the mounted State Police played a particularly murderous role throughout the strike.

The reign of terror began to break the back of the strike, first in Gary (where Federal troops under General Leonard Wood were used and martial law was declared), then in Indiana Harbor, South Chicago and the Chicago district generally, the Youngstown district, Cleveland, etc. By December 10, the number of strikers was down to about 110,000, almost all of whom held out for another month. But the situation was hopeless. Finally, on January 8, the National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers, by a vote of ten to five, decided to call off the strike by authorizing the 100,000 men still out to return to work. At the same time, the organizing committee declared: "A vigorous campaign of education and re-organization will be immediately begun and will not cease until industrial justice has been achieved in the steel industry."

The steel barons celebrated and rejoiced, announcing that unionism had received its "death blow" and would "never" rise again. Many of

the class-collaborationist labor leaders echoed these defeatist ideas.

In the welter of confusion that followed, there again came one clear voice. Immediately following the strike, Foster sat down and wrote his book, *The Great Steel Strike*, in which he drew the lessons of the struggle for the whole working class and outlined the next steps in the steel campaign.

*The Great Steel Strike* was an eye-opener for tens of thousands of workers about capitalism and the class struggle. It became a handbook for progressive trade unionism for a long time afterwards.

What were some of the chief lessons of the Great Steel Strike?

Comrade Foster declared that although the vicious terrorism set loose by the steel barons and by the police and troops succeeded in crushing the strike, the organizing campaign and the direction of the steel strike marked a great advance in trade-union tactics and output of effort. But this was not enough, for

... it represented only a fraction of the power the unions should and could have thrown into the fight. The organization of the steel industry should have been a special order of business for the whole labor movement. But unfortunately it was not. The big men of Labor could not be sufficiently awakened to its supreme importance to induce them to sit determinedly into the National Committee meetings and to give the movement the abundant moral and financial backing so essential to its suc-

cess. Official pessimism, bred of thirty years of trade-union failure in the steel industry, hung like a mill-stone about the neck of the movement in all its stages.\*

The failure to follow through the original organizing plan envisioned by William Z. Foster was a "monumental blunder" on the part of the participating unions. The number of organizers and the amount of funds provided could not possibly do the job required. This fact soon became apparent to all, and helped spread pessimism in the ranks.

As Foster strongly states: "Had it [organized labor] but stirred a little the steelworkers would have won their battle, despite all the Steel Trust could do to prevent it."\*\*\*

The whole organizing drive and the strike itself were conducted with virtually no aid whatever from the unions participating in the National Committee. They were sustained almost completely by the steelworkers themselves and by the organized labor movement at large. Moreover, the control of the organizing forces by the respective International unions comprising the National Committee, rather than by the National Committee itself, "tended to create a loose, disjointed, undisciplined, inefficient organizing force."\*\*\*\*

Foster showed, further, that the moral and material cooperation of the unions of coalminers and rail-

road workers was indispensable for a successful strike, but was not forthcoming.

Foster analyzed at some length the national origin and composition of the steelworkers, and exposed the vicious attempts of the bosses to pit native-born against foreign-born, and one group of foreign-born against another. These pernicious efforts were largely unsuccessful.

But what did achieve a considerable degree of success for the steel barons was the importation of Negroes, from the South and elsewhere, on false pretenses and under constant guard, for use as strikebreakers. A number of the Negro workers, who discovered the facts, however, heroically escaped the clutches of the scab-herders.

Where did the blame belong for the herding of Negroes as scabs in the Great Steel Strike? Foster showed that part of the guilt lay with the petty-bourgeois leaders of the Negro people's movement of that period, who permitted themselves to be used by Big Business for continuing Negro-white disunity.

But the main responsibility for the success of the tactic of the steel barons in pitting Negro against white workers, Foster showed, lay on the shoulders of the labor movement itself. In drawing this major lesson of the Great Steel Strike of 1919, Foster showed himself to be one of the pioneering fighters for full equality of the Negro people and the indissoluble unity of Negro and white workers. He wrote:

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 234-235.

\*\* *Ibid.*, 234.

\*\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 237.

For the tense situation existing the unions are themselves in no small part to blame. Many of them sharply draw the color line, thus feeding the flames of race hatred. This discriminatory practice is in direct conflict with the fundamental which demands that all the workers be organized, without regard to sex, race, creed, politics or nationality. It injures Labor's cause greatly. Company agents harp upon it continually, to prevent Negroes from joining even the organizations willing to take them in. This was the case in the steel campaign. . . . Such a condition cannot be allowed to persist. But to relieve it the unions will have to meet the issue honestly and broad-mindedly. They must open their ranks to Negroes, make an earnest effort to organize them, and then give them a square deal when they do join. Nothing short of this will accomplish the desired result.\*

The essence of Foster's study of the Great Steel Strike is that only industrial unionism, based on nation-wide, simultaneous organization in all plants, companies, and areas, and on the organization of unskilled and semi-skilled, as well as skilled, workers, Negro and white, can do the necessary job of organizing the steelworkers in the United States and leading them in militant struggles for their needs and interests.

In conclusion, Foster showed that the steel strike was not a "lost" struggle. Writing even before the ultimate concessions granted by the steel corporations a few months

later as a result of the strike, he showed the whole working class the significance of struggles like the Great Steel Strike:

No strike is ever wholly lost. . . . An unresisting working class would soon find itself on a rice diet. But the steel strike has done more than serve merely as a warning that the limit of exploitation has been reached; it has given the steel workers a confidence in their ability to organize and to fight effectively, which will eventually inspire them on to victory. This precious result alone is well worth all the hardships the strike cost them.\*

History has fully confirmed these far-sighted words of Comrade Foster. The "theory" of the "invincibility" of the monopolies against unionism was destroyed forever. The lessons of the steel strike have remained with the working class to this day, influencing all the subsequent struggles of the steelworkers. The working class was now more confident of its own united power, more conscious of itself as an exploited class struggling for a better life. It gained a deeper understanding of the class struggle.

The Great Steel Strike, moreover, was not without material success. One of the direct results of the strike was the abolition of the 12-hour day for the steelworkers. The winning of the shorter working day was, however, accompanied by an increase in speed-up and the mechanization of the industry. The un-

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

\* *Ibid.*, p. 233.

organized steelworkers were not able to put up an effective fight against these developments. The years that followed were years of inhuman speed-up, of a rising rate of exploitation, and of growing intimidation of the steelworkers by the open-shop employers.

### COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP IN THE CRISIS YEARS

In 1929, the economic crisis struck its devastating blow. The unorganized workers in the mass-production industries were helpless victims of the great economic crisis of the 'thirties. The giant monopolies maintained their high profits at the expense of the workers, who suffered indescribable misery. The majority of the steelworkers were laid off for long periods of time. Already by 1929 the wages of steelworkers were down 50 percent from 1927. In 1933, the U.S. Steel Corporation announced that it had no full-time steelworkers on its payroll.

The steelworkers were deserted by the misleaders of labor—but not by the Communist Party. In the absence of a steelworkers' union, the clubs and individual members of the Communist Party organized and led many limited struggles. The C.P. shop papers in many cases exposed and stimulated struggles on various grievances, with many local victories. Considering the continued reign of terror, this pioneering was the work of heroes.

In 1929, the newly-founded Com-

munist-led Trade Union Unity League organized the Steel and Metal Workers' Industrial League. Comrade Foster was on the job as ever. It was not the original purpose of the League to go into competition with the A.A., but the League did take a forthright stand against the class-collaboration policies of the A.A. It carried on an educational campaign for militantly progressive class-struggle unionism. The steelworkers responded very readily, but the A.A. officials, as was to be expected, did not. The A.A. leadership reacted violently against the whole idea of fighting for the interests of the steelworkers.

As a result, in 1932 the League reorganized itself into the Steel and Metal Workers' Industrial Union. From the day of its birth, this militant union was engaged in one struggle after another. The S.M.W.I.U. quickly made a name for itself, especially in departmental struggles. The long list of militant strikes it conducted includes Republic Steel in Warren and Youngstown, Ohio; Empire Steel in Mansfield, Ohio; many actions were organized in Western Pennsylvania and in the region of Gary, Indiana. During its short life-span of two years, this small union left its mark in all the important steel centers, its education of the workers in policies of class struggle reaching numbers many times its membership.

The arrest of Comrade Foster and the other Communist leaders during the March 6, 1930 demonstration

of the unemployed in New York had an electrifying effect on the unorganized and starving steelworkers. Unemployed Councils mushroomed in the steel communities, and soon grew into the largest organization of steelworkers in the country. They organized the largest body of steelworkers in active struggle since the 1919 strike. The Communist-led Unemployed Councils were militantly progressive, class-struggle organizations. Through varied forms of struggle which received great mass support—hunger marches, demonstrations, delegations, etc.—the councils were instrumental in winning W.P.A., C.W.A., and other Federal, state and local relief. These struggles prepared the steelworkers politically and organizationally for the bigger struggles to come.

When the economic crisis began to recede somewhat, the workers who went back to work showed a strong determination to organize new unions. A new wave of militancy was sweeping the working class. The great strike struggles of the early and middle 'thirties propelled masses of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, Negro and white, most of whom had never before been union members, toward the organized labor movement. The membership of the trade unions began to grow.

In order further to unite the ranks of the workers and build the unions, the Communist- and Left-led T.U.U.L. industrial unions decided to send their members into the other existing unions, most of which are

still headed by reformists and reactionary Social-Democrats. The original formation of the T.U.U.L. in 1929, and of its affiliated industrial unions, had been made necessary by the outright betrayal of the trade unions and the interests of the workers in the 'twenties by the reactionary, bureaucratic leaders; the refusal of these leaders to organize the millions of unorganized; and the terrorist and mass-expulsion practices of these labor misleaders against the Communist and Left-progressive forces. By 1935, these policies had become bankrupt. The rank and file was in a mood for unity and struggle, and was eager to merge with the militantly-led T.U.U.L. unions, which had amply proved their mettle in struggle.

The S.M.W.I.U. decided to disband and join forces with the members of the A.A. This was like an injection of vitamins for the membership of the A.A. In spite of the actual resistance of its leadership, the union began to grow.

#### THE PARTY'S ROLE IN THE NEW ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN

By 1935 the working class had not only shown its determination to organize trade unions, but also expressed, in no uncertain terms, its desire to organize *industrial* unions. The lesson had finally hit home. Ever since 1901, William Z. Foster and other militant trade-unionists had been hammering away for industrial unionism. And ever since its birth,

our Party had been teaching the workers the need for industrial unionism.

The growing rank-and-file sentiment for industrial unionism that had now become a demand resulted in the organization of the Committee for Industrial Organization by the A. F. of L. The Committee did not break with the notorious class-collaborationist policies of the A. F. of L. officialdom, but it did see the need for the industrial form of organization. Step by step, growing rank-and-file pressure forced the Committee to move from mere education for industrial unionism within the A. F. of L. to outright industrial organization. The expulsion of the unions embraced by the Committee brought the issue to a head.

While the C.I.O. officials were still hesitating, a rank-and-file movement of steelworkers grew under the leadership of Communists and other progressives. Rank-and-file Committees sprang up in most of the large steel centers, organizing and leading many struggles and carrying on an educational campaign for progressive unionism. This rank-and-file movement also published a weekly newspaper in Youngstown, Ohio, edited by Charles McCarthy and Joe Dallet. The rank-and-file movement of the steelworkers sent dozens of delegations to press the C.I.O. leaders to initiate an organizing campaign in the steel industry. Thousands of steelworkers signed pledge cards and petitions to the same end, promising full support for

such a campaign. It was only after this campaign of the rank and file that the C.I.O. leaders in 1936 set up the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee (S.W.O.C.).

It is a matter of record that the only working-class organizations which had continued to provide genuine leadership to the steelworkers since 1920 were the Communist Party, the Communist-led Unemployed Councils, rank-and-file committees, and the S.M.W.I.U. The work of these organizations had also been supplemented in the early 'thirties by the Communist- and Left-progressive-led organizations of the nationality groups and the National Negro Congress. Our Party was already engaged in mobilizing capable forces for the campaign long before the S.W.O.C. had established its offices or staff. It was inevitable, therefore, that the various district directors of the S.W.O.C. established close working relations with the local leaders of the Communist Party. Many leading Communists went on the staff of the S.W.O.C. Almost without exception, the first union contact in the steel mills, the organizing core, proved to be a club of the Communist Party or individual Party members, an ex-member of the S.M.W.I.U., a reader of the *Daily Worker*, a member of the National Negro Congress or a member or supporter of one of the Left-progressive-led nationality organizations. Many of these activities had also been the spark for the union in 1919 and 1930.

But the Communist contribution to the campaign did not end here. Before the drive started, Comrade Foster wrote two pamphlets addressed to the steelworkers: *Unionizing Steel* and *Organizing Methods in the Steel Industry*. These pamphlets reflected the rich, accumulated experiences of the working class in general and of the steelworkers in particular. They immediately became the guide for the work of all Communists in the steel industry, and especially for those of us who were on the organizing staff. Through us, the ideas and policies put forward by Comrade Foster were passed on to the whole staff.

Comrade Foster also gave personal leadership to the drive. He spent many days and nights in meetings with those directly involved in the campaign. He met with Communists and non-Communists in the staff and leadership of the S.W.O.C. In addition, the names of Jack Stachel, Jack Johnstone, Pat Cush, John Williamson, Joe Dallet, Al Balint, John Steuben, George Powers, Ben Carreuthers, Dave Doran, Bob Burke, John Gates, Abe Lewis and many other leading Communists are known to steelworkers for their effective leadership during this period. The Young Communist League, as part of its work in helping to organize the steelworkers in 1936, published a popular pamphlet called, *Get Wise — Organize*. The *Daily Worker* and Communist and nationality-group newspapers were outstanding mobilizers and educators

throughout the organizing drive.

The steel organizing drive broke all records. The campaign broke through a veritable "iron curtain" of corporation spy systems, intimidation, and terror. In a few months, 2,000 new members were joining the union daily. Whole departments of plants and groups of workers joined simultaneously.

The campaign very closely followed the proposals made by Foster in his pamphlets. The very heart of these proposals is guaranteeing full rank-and-file participation. On the basis of his experience, Comrade Foster recommended use of the "chain system," in which each union member signs up another member; the "list system," by which unionists provide lists of potential recruits to the staff for home visiting; the system of "key men" in each department; and the system of voluntary and part-time organizers. By using these techniques, the full-time staff became the center of a whole network of rank-and-file organization and activity.

The U.S. Steel Corporation recognized the new mood of militancy which swept the masses of steelworkers. U.S. Steel did not give up the struggle against the steelworkers when it signed a union contract in March of 1937; it decided merely to change its tactics. The House of Morgan, the real boss of U.S. Steel, decided to try to make of the new steel union another A.A.

Led by Republic Steel, the "little steel" corporations (Jones and

Laughlin, Youngstown Sheet and Tube, and Inland Steel) decided to continue the old head-on struggle against the union. Tom Girdler, the ex-police thug turned corporation president, sounded the battle cry: "I would rather go to the farm and pick apples than sign a union contract." Negotiations broke down over the issue of securing a contract.

On May 26, 1937, the S.W.O.C. was forced to strike the plants of "little steel" over this issue. The response of the steelworkers was 100 percent pro-union. Morale was high. All the plants were closed down. The steel corporations declared war.

After the strike, the LaFollette Committee calculated that the open-shoppers in steel had spent \$178,138.65 for all types of guns and ammunition. Republic Steel admitted buying 552 revolvers, 64 rifles, 245 shotguns, 2,707 gas grenades. Youngstown Sheet and Tube admitted buying 453 revolvers, 369 rifles, 190 shotguns, 8 machine guns. This does not include the arsenals of the state, county and city police. In addition Republic Steel used two airplanes to fly strikebreakers into the Warren, Ohio, plant.

The strike started on May 26. On Memorial Day, the Chicago police attacked a peaceful union parade with rifles, revolvers, tear gas, etc., killing 7 and wounding 90 strikers. Before the first month was over, six more strikers were killed by city and corporation police. The governor of Ohio called the National Guard out to break the strike.

After four months of sharp struggle, the union was forced to retreat. The strike was called off, but this time the steelworkers were not demoralized or disorganized. With very little help from most of the leadership, the workers in the mills showed remarkable ability to reorganize their ranks. The Communists and other militant and progressive unionists skillfully led the workers of "little steel" through these difficult days of temporary retreat. After a long period of court fights and N.L.R.B. elections, the corporations signed the contracts.

Four months before the strike, Comrade Foster had written his pamphlet, *What Means a Strike in Steel*. It was clearly evident to all that here again was the voice of experience. I well recall the staff meeting I attended at which the strike call was announced. Not one word had to be said on how the strike was to be organized or led; the clear, masterful presentation in Comrade Foster's pamphlet made a deep impression on the steelworkers and the staff.

The entire Communist Party gave its very best in support of this struggle. Our Party can rightly be proud of its enormous contribution.

#### THE MURRAY LEADERSHIP

The S.W.O.C. had finished its work. This organizing committee was transformed at a founding convention into the United Steelwork-

ers of America. Now the steelworkers had a union.

This was a tremendous victory. The corporations signed yearly contracts. Workers could not be fired for union activities. A system of seniority was established. Wages were increased with each new annual contract. The union set up a grievance apparatus, and the steelworkers were in a position for the first time to do something about their extremely hazardous working conditions; they could now resist the inhuman speed-up. Above all, the steelworkers were now united.

These were real advances for the steelworkers. But all was not well. At first unnoticed, later in the open, the poisonous ideology of class collaboration was infecting the U.S.W. The steelworkers wanted a militantly progressive, class-struggle union. They had shown this time and time again on the picket line and at their meetings. But the leadership was taking the road of class collaboration. All unions whose leaders follow policies of class collaboration inevitably become bureaucratic, undemocratic organizations. It is the only way such leaders can force reactionary policies down the throats of the membership.

So, starting with its first convention in 1937, under the leadership of Philip Murray, the union was saddled with a bureaucratic constitution. With each succeeding convention, the constitution has been made more undemocratic. The union slowed down its struggle for

the settlement of grievances. It slowed down its fight for equal rights for the Negro steelworkers. The grievances piled up by the thousands each year. As the leadership more and more openly adopted the policy of class collaboration, the union became less effective as a fighter for the interests of its members.

The Communists and progressives who had built the union were gradually removed from posts of leadership. The undemocratic practice of lifting local charters has become a regular practice in this union. The steelworkers have been literally frozen from all participation in conducting the affairs of their own union. The leadership has abandoned all pretense of struggle and preaches reliance on government boards as a smokescreen for its class collaboration. The leadership has taken the lead in Red-baiting, union splitting; and raiding in the C.I.O. and in the labor movement as a whole. The Murray - A.C.T.U. leadership now trumpets the rotten line of Wall Street imperialism. They hail Clinton Golden's defense of the outright executions of trade-union leaders by the Greek royalists and fascists. These same leaders have led the unsuccessful movement to split the World Federation of Trade Unions. Elmer Cope, the Trotskyite in the steel union leadership, heads this campaign of union-splitting in Europe.

The United Steelworkers of America today is led by a Right-wing, bureaucratic, pro-imperialist ring of union misleaders. As a result, the ga-

that separates the leadership from the membership has become wider and wider. The membership is not so readily following in the footsteps of the leadership. During the 1948 elections for International officers, the membership showed its feeling by a spontaneous boycott of the elections. In a whole series of the large mills the results were as follows:

<i>The Local</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Votes Cast</i>
Homestead .....	9,000	186
J. & L. Southside ..	4,800	114
Youngstown, 1307 ..	3,800	34
Youngstown, 1330 ..	5,000	17
Youngstown, 1381 ..	5,800	52
Youngstown, 1418 ..	4,800	65
Warren, Republic ..	4,500	55
Lorain .....	5,000	80
Steubenville .....	4,500	75
South Chicago, 65 ..	10,000	15
South Chicago, Republic .....	2,700	31
Gary, 1010 .....	10,000	68
Sparrows Point, 2 locals .....	18,000	105
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>87,900</b>	<b>897</b>

In place of democratic control of the union by the membership, the Murray-McDonald leadership has instituted a regime of strong-arm, gangster-like control. The last convention of the union, held in Boston, was an example of this degeneration.

## ERRORS AND WEAKNESSES IN OUR PAST WORK

Have there been some weaknesses in the work of us Communists that have helped contribute to the present state of affairs in the steelworkers' union? Yes, it is clear that there have been.

Because of the policies of Browder-revisionism, we dropped our guard against the constant penetration of the ideology of class collaboration into this union. We did not expose. we did not sharply enough criticize and attack these policies when they appeared.

Our weakness was not that we collaborated with the present union leadership, but that while doing so we did not expose and criticize the treacherous, class-collaborationist policies of that leadership. Our main effort should have been directed toward organizing and mobilizing a militant rank-and-file movement, activating and uniting the membership around a progressive program of action. Unfortunately, this was not at all times the case.

The clearest sign of this weakness has been the lack of sufficient understanding of the role of our Communist Party, the vanguard Party of the working class. As a result, the struggle to educate the workers to acceptance of the working-class ideology was bound to be unsuccessful.

There were many tendencies to merge and "lose" the Communist Party in the general trade-union

movement. The seeds of this were already noticeable in 1937, when, in the midst of the organizing drive, we permitted Party sections and clubs to be stripped of leadership by giving these forces to the general union drive.

We further showed this basic weakness when we did away with all effective Party organizations in steel: shop clubs, shop papers, etc.

We did not fight vigorously enough against the policy of removing Communists and progressives from posts of leadership. Communists who were appointed to the staff and did not work to be elected by the membership were easy pickings for the bureaucrats.

We did not expose and fight the policies of underhanded "promotion" and favoritism toward the A.C.T.U. adopted by the Murray leadership.

We did not fight sharply enough against Right opportunist tendencies and practices by our own leaders and members.

Above all, this weakness showed up in our spotty and weak efforts to bring into the Communist Party the thousands of steelworkers who had learned to respect and accept its leadership. Where the efforts were made, the results were excellent.

### THE TASKS TODAY

Since the 1945 Emergency Convention of our Party, when Browder-revisionism was repudiated and a correct, Marxist-Leninist line was

adopted, many of these weaknesses have been corrected. But the fight to destroy all remnants of opportunist practices and weakness in the Party's work must be constant.

The Communist Party must become the initiator, the spearhead, the leader in struggles against all practices flowing from the ideology of class collaboration. As head of the C.I.O., Philip Murray in the period of 1935-1946, was forced to compromise and go along with many progressive actions and the progressive movement. He worked in a coalition with the Left-progressive unions. As head of the U.S.W., Murray was always the Right-wing, class-collaborationist Murray. Now he has joined all-out in Wall Street's drive to conquer the world and enslave the people at home.

Because of his former policy, as head of the C.I.O., of cooperating with the Communists and the Left-progressive forces, it was sometimes very difficult to organize opposition to his increasingly reactionary policies in the U.S.W. Now, however, there can be no confusion. The lines are clear; the policies are sharply drawn.

The steelworkers have one of the biggest unions in the country. Now they have the task of getting their union off the path of Mike Tighe, off the present path of Philip Murray, off the path of class collaboration; they have the task of setting it on the path of militantly progressive, class-struggle trade unionism. This means a fight against the leaders who insist on following

the present path. This fight must begin by building centers of progressive unionism in the mills, departments and locals. These fighting centers must arise from an organization for struggle on the many and growing grievances of the steelworkers. The forms of these centers are not the important question at this moment, because they will vary from place to place. These centers must give leadership in the struggles on grievances and simultaneously carry on a mass educational campaign exposing the class-collaborationist policies of Murray and Company and explaining the need to adopt class-struggle policies. The steelworkers do not need a new union. They need to give their union a working-class ideology. They need to cut themselves loose from the mental apron strings of the steel corporations.

The steelworkers as well as all the workers and common people of America and the capitalist world are already beginning to feel the effects of the developing economic crisis. The number of unemployed steelworkers is increasing as production is cut and speed-up is intensified.

This time the steelworkers do not have to, nor will they submit to starvation on \$1.75 per week per family. They must lose no time in forming their lines for action. The union must be made the center of struggle for wage increases, an end to speed-up, a shorter work-day without reduction in weekly wages, and against all policies of discrimination against Negro workers. The union

must also become the center for the fight for adequate relief of those already unemployed.

\* \* \*

The last 30 years have been a period of heroic struggles in the face of terror, killings, jailings, firings and blacklistings. This has been a period marked by many victories and advances for the working class and its allies.

The steelworkers have come a long way since 1919. Our Party has a magnificent tradition and record of achievement in these developments. The work of our Party is still marked by many weaknesses, but we can be very proud of the 30 years of dogged, persistent, skillful, heroic work and leadership exhibited by our Party.

The task of our Party is clear. Learning the necessary lessons from our experiences and analyzing them in the light of our science of Marxism-Leninism, we must come forward boldly and courageously with the guidance and leadership which the masses are increasingly seeking. We can do this effectively if, in the process, we give greater attention to building our Party and our press.

On the occasion of this double anniversary of the Great Steel Strike and the founding of the Communist Party, let us confidently go forward to the fulfillment of this task. Let us be inspired by the leadership of Comrade William Z. Foster, Chairman of our Party, trail-blazer for militant, democratic industrial unionism, pioneer organizer and fighting leader of America's steelworkers.

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# An Important Chapter in the Party's History of Industrial Concentration

by William Weinstone

THESE NOTES on Party history center on one important event—the Extraordinary Party Conference of 350 delegates held in the summer of 1933 and the Open Letter which it issued to the membership. It is well to recall this conference on our 30th Anniversary because it was a meeting which exercised a strong and guiding influence over many years of the Party's life. Moreover, this conference definitely began the turn to the shops and industries, gave the Party a firmer proletarian footing and enabled it to play an extremely important part in the great upsurge of the years 1934 to 1938 which brought a new and powerful labor movement into existence.

The 1933 Emergency Party Conference was held for two reasons. The first of these was the extraordinary fact that despite its participation and in many cases direct leadership of great mass movements, the Party remained small, was growing very slowly, and was still to a large degree isolated from the basic masses of the American working class. The circulation of the *Daily Worker*, which for a time increased considerably, was stagnating.

## IN THE VAN OF MASS STRUGGLES

In the period from 1929 to 1933, the years of the deepest economic crisis, the Party succeeded in part in overcoming the sectarian detachment from the masses of workers and became the organizer and leader of millions of unemployed whom it formed into unemployed councils. The councils conducted two stirring historic nationwide hunger marches, in the teeth of the fiercest opposition from local, state and national governments, organized many unemployed conventions and held numberless city and state unemployed meetings, marches, demonstrations, anti-eviction fights, and other struggles of Negroes and whites for relief and unemployment insurance.

At the same time the Party brought the fight for unemployment insurance into the unions, widened the campaign for the organization of the unorganized, helped set up independent industrial unions under the leadership of the Trade Union Unity League which was formed in 1929 as a development of the Trade Union Educational League. The independent unions arose because of

the utter refusal of the A. F. of L. leadership to organize the unorganized and its downright sabotage of the strikes and union building movements. The T.U.U.L. in that period organized and led many strikes and other struggles in mining, needle, metal, shoe, auto, marine and other industries. Foster, the moving spirit and forceful leader of the T.U.U.L., capably assisted in this period by Jack Stachel, wrote that "the T.U.U.L. exercised a considerable and constructive influence upon the labor movement in its time."\* and that "it is an incontestable fact that during the crisis, up to the New Deal period, the only serious resistance made by the workers and other toilers against the monstrous mass pauperization was that organized and led by the Communist Party and the T.U.U.L."\*\*

The Party was also active in the great Veterans' Bonus "March on Washington" in 1932 and took up the fight of the impoverished farmers. Stimulated by the adoption of a program which, for the first time, clearly placed the Negro question as that of an oppressed nation, the Party made its historic turn toward the Negro people by its bold and vigorous leadership of the Scottsboro and Herndon cases which aroused the entire country. It began to organize Negro and white workers in

the South, built the militant Sharecroppers Union in the Black Belt of Alabama, and led the heroic battles at Camp Hill and Tallapoosa County, and took up a resolute struggle against the poisonous influences of white chauvinism (the Yokinen trial). Obviously, such mass activities were bound to increase the influence of the Party, and its membership rose from 7,500 dues-paying members in 1930 to 14,000 in 1932, and 18,000 in 1933. Yet, considering the profound and shattering nature of the crisis and the vastness of the mass movements, the total membership was extremely small. Although wielding considerable influence, the membership of the T.U.U.L. unions was also relatively small, some 125,000 at its highest point, exclusive of the 150,000 members of the affiliated National Unemployed Councils. What was wrong? Surely the Party was on the right track in policy, it was learning to come close to the fundamental needs of the workers, to carry through a class struggle policy and to build united fronts and mass organizations of the working people. The Extraordinary Conference met to answer this question.

#### THE NEW STRIKE WAVE

A second and extremely important reason for the Extraordinary Conference was the mounting mood for struggle among the shop workers, which was giving rise to a new strike wave which by the year's end (1933) involved upwards of 1,300,000 work-

\* "Twenty Years of Communist Trade Union Policy," *The Communist*, September, 1939, p. 811.

\*\* W. Z. Foster, *American Trade Unionism*, International Publishers, 1947, p. 189.

ers. This was the biggest strike movement since 1919 and what was most important was beginning to affect the basic, trustified industries as signalized by a number of strikes in the Michigan automobile shops. The workers took advantage of the passage of Section 7A of the National Industrial Recovery Act which Roosevelt granted under pressure of labor, and which declared for "the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing." They began to organize into bona-fide unions. The workers struck back at the starvation offensive of the employers, demanded increased wages and also came out against the low wage rates set by the government N.I.R.A. Boards. In general, the strikes expressed the growing protest against the worsened conditions and were stimulated by the defeat of the ultra-reactionary Hoover government and the victory of Roosevelt, who won the 1932 elections by promising a New Deal, including shorter hours and higher wages for labor. The workers, by these strikes, showed that they were determined to get the promised New Deal, and first of all in the industries of trustified capital, and were mustering and using their economic strength toward that end.

However, the significant thing that was noted about these new strikes in the early part of 1933 in contrast to the preceding period, was that the Party and the T.U.U.L., in a majority of cases, were not at their head. The impact toward or-

ganization noted above began to swell the ranks of the A. F. of L. The mood for struggle set in among the rank and file. The leadership of the A. F. of L., unable to hold back the workers, acted in traditional style, and headed the strikes in order to behead them. During that period, the dangerous "Left" demagogues of the Muste group had succeeded in winning influence over a section of the Illinois miners which the year before had fought under the banner of the militant National Miners Union. Among the unemployed, too, the Socialists and Musteites, encouraged and aided by the capitalists, were winning considerable strength. Obviously, this was a dangerous development.

Additional and new non-proletarian strata were streaming into the fight for relief from the crisis—farmers, professional people, small home-owners, and others. A new high tide of struggle was setting in. Such were the conditions that made the Extraordinary Conference necessary.

#### OPPORTUNIST TENDENCIES CRITICIZED

The Conference subjected the Party's work and weaknesses to a serious self-criticism. It stressed the fact that it was not enough to have correct policies, but that these policies must be correctly executed.

It brought to light that in addition to strong remnants of sectarianism, expressed in an inertness to or a narrow and merely agitational approach

to the mass struggles, there was also the growth of Right opportunist tendencies (often combined with sectarianism). These opportunist tendencies were shown in hesitation before the spontaneous mass outbursts and the advancing mass movements, unprecedented in the Party's experience.

Without changing at this stage its central policy of building the T.U.U.L. unions (this was done later in 1934-5) the Conference stressed the need to increase work in the reformist-led unions—a matter which was becoming vitally important in view of the influx of large numbers into the A. F. of L. and the rise of unions which were independent of both A.F. of L. and T.U.U.L. It underscored as a weakness the lack of an energetic and effective fight to expose the labor bureaucrats and Social-Democratic reformists, whose isolation was and is the main strategic condition for the winning of the masses.

#### KEY WEAKNESS

But the *chief thing*, the *key weakness* of the Party, which explained why it was not developing into a mass Party, despite its many-sided activities, was the fact that the Party was working without a clear plan, was scattering its forces, and was being driven too much by spontaneous events. It was not concentrating on the chief task—without which all other successes were precarious — namely building a solid foundation for the Party in the most decisive

industrial centers and among the industrial workers of the big shops, particularly the native-born workers, Negro and white.

The Conference made clear that it was absolutely necessary for the Party, as the vanguard of the working class, which strives to achieve the alliance of all oppressed under the hegemony of the proletariat, to undertake and join in movements in behalf of the Negro people, farmers, veterans, students, as well as those of the shop workers and unemployed. What the Party did not see sharply enough, declared the Conference, was that in following this course, in striving to lead all mass actions, the Party must firmly carry on, among this complex network of mass actions, *the plan of building up a proletarian basis in the factories and must always see this as its chief aim.*

The Party had not yet learned Lenin's great principle that there is a *main link* in all phases of work which when seized upon with all its full strength, pulls the whole chain of events forward—that main link was and is today to overcome its weaknesses in the factories "to become rooted in the industrial centers, in the important big factories" (*Open Letter*).

Said the *Open Letter* further:

"A Communist Party whose entire policy, whose entire agitation and propaganda, whose entire daily work is not concentrated on winning over and mobilizing the workers of the factories, a Communist

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Party which through its revolutionary trade union work, does not build highways to the broadest masses of workers cannot lay claim to a policy capable of making itself the leader of the working class within the shortest possible time."

#### WHY NO CONCENTRATION POLICY

Now it must be said that the Party since its very formation had at each of its conventions spoken of, and passed resolutions on, the importance and necessity of shop work. However, while it energetically supported the mass campaign of the T.U.E.L. in the unions since 1921, it was only in 1925 that the Party began to form shop branches. These shop branches, side by side with the work of the T.U.E.L. brought substantial results, notably in the organization and hard-fought strike of the Passaic textile workers in 1926, the New Bedford textile struggles in 1928, the famous Gastonia textile strike in 1929, the big important mining struggles of the latter 'twenties and early 'thirties, and in the help given to the many union battles during 1931-33 in the industries referred to above. Party shop work in some instances initiated the struggles and in all cases strengthened their solidarity and militancy and helped to consolidate the organizational gains.

Despite these successes, shop work was still conducted on a narrow scale, and aside from mining, was confined chiefly to light industry.

In the main a real turn to the shops in the basic industries—in auto, steel, rubber, marine, oil, electrical, railroad, mining, etc.—had not taken place. Realizing the need for stepping up shop work, the 14th enlarged meeting of the National Committee in 1932 decided on an industrial concentration policy. But it was not effectively followed through and little new ground was won. Thus, while in 1930 there were only 100 shop branches, embracing but four percent of the membership, located mostly in small shops, at the time of the Extraordinary Conference the number was but little more.

Of course, severe objective difficulties stood in the way of organizing shop branches, such as the unorganized condition of the big corporation shops, the notorious blacklist, the stoolpigeon system, private police, etc., etc. But it was nonetheless possible, as experience proved, to organize branches in the shops, provided there were planned, persevering efforts by the best forces and the whole Party.

But precisely such a type of full-scale concentration work was absent because, as the *Open Letter* stated, "there was a deep-going lack of *political understanding* of the necessity for strengthening the base among decisive sections of the American workers."

What was lacking in the understanding of the Party?

The Party did not fully grasp the fact that as a Party of a new type, a vanguard Party of the working

class, it must be "inseparably bound up with the working class with every fibre of its being" (Stalin), because the working class is the only consistent, democratic and revolutionary class, the most determined enemy of reaction and fascism, the class most capable of imbibing socialist ideas. It did not understand sufficiently that only if we tenaciously concentrate our work among the industrial workers can we fight effectively for democracy and peace and build a Party and militant union movement capable of withstanding the blows and persecutions of the monopolists. Other classes or groups such as poor and middle farmers, small businessmen, and professional groups, represent important social elements that must be won as allies of the working class; but these classes and strata are by the nature of their position in society vacillating and unstable, and therefore unable to play an independent role.

The Party did not clearly see that in basing itself on the industrial workers and big shops it is in the best position to affect the thinking and activity, not only of this numerous and decisive body of working people, but of others as well. Possessing great economic strength and union organization these industrial workers exercise influence upon the ranks of the white collar workers and workers in small shops, agricultural workers, and upon wide sections of the non-proletarian strata of our population. As Lenin wrote, the "main struggle of our movement

lies in the workers' organizations, in the factories, because in the large factories are concentrated that section of the working class which is not only predominant in numbers, but still more predominant in influence, development and fighting capacities."

A striking illustration of this point was the effect of the actions of the workers in the mass production industries during the C.I.O. drive upon the working people as a whole. When the automobile workers defeated the General Motors Corporation in 1937, the flood gates of union organization opened wide. Workers and clerks, across the nation, in small shops, department stores, hotels, restaurants, offices and in government service, who previously thought they never would or could be organized, heartened and encouraged by this victory, streamed into unions in masses, undertook struggles and immensely changed their conditions.

This insistence that the main weight of Party work must be shifted to the factories did not at all mean a slackening of our work among the unemployed. On the contrary, the Conference called for an increase of such work. But, as the *Open Letter* pointed out, the Party cannot carry out this work with full success if at the same time it fails to work in the factories in order to bring the support of the employed workers to their unemployed brothers.

Neither did this industrial concentration policy mean lessening

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work among the non-proletarian strata, but, added the *Open Letter* significantly, the very extension of the movement of the non-proletarian masses makes it incumbent on the Party not to allow itself to be sidetracked from its main task of factory and union work. Otherwise, having weak contacts with the decisive section of the American workers, the Party will be driven away from its proletarian base, will be unable to lead the non-proletarian masses, will be unable to carry out the policy of the hegemony of the proletariat. The danger existed, said the *Open Letter*, that "instead of leading the petty bourgeoisie, it will itself succumb to the influence of petty bourgeois sentiments, illusions and petty bourgeois methods of work" (emphasis mine, W.W.). Finally, the Conference did not fail to emphasize the necessity for the Party to pay special attention to the needs and rights of the Negro people, to struggle sharply against white chauvinism and to promote Negro proletarians to leading work in all Party organizations.

So much then for the matter of the political and organizational direction of the Conference. It also dealt with the necessity for changing the inner methods of work in order to ensure that the Party would carry out the turn to the shops and industries. It proposed that "The center of gravity of Party work be shifted to the development of the *lower organizations*," and that the cadres of the Party be rejuvenated with work-

ing-class forces that had shown capacity of leadership in the struggle, and placed this as an imperative condition for the growth of our Party into a mass Party.

The Conference called for the full application of the principles of democratic centralism in order to develop the initiative of the membership in shops, communities, and mass organizations. To this end, it resolved that methods be adopted for "really developing collective leadership from top to bottom." The *Open Letter* stressed as a vital necessity that self-criticism, "positive criticism, and practical proposals and comradesly exchange of political opinions," become a normal feature of Party life. It spoke out sharply against "bureaucratic tendencies to interfere with such criticism and proposals" and "all bureaucratic intolerance of criticism . . . against the suppression of inner-Party democracy." It stressed the need "for the development of the political life of the lower organizations, particularly the shop branches" and "for the development of thoroughgoing self-criticism."

#### "FACE TO THE FACTORIES!"

The Extraordinary Conference hit the mark. It issued the slogan: "Face to the Factories!" The *Open Letter* was widely discussed by the membership and the party swung immediately into action to carry it out. Every district, section and branch worked out plans of concentration and set certain minimum practical

tasks to be fulfilled within a given time. These plans centered upon the most pressing economic and political needs of the workers in the shops—such as wage increases, speed-up, unemployment insurance, right of union organization, Negro rights, the war danger, etc., stressing one or two main issues around which united front action was worked for. The plans aimed at the organization of the unorganized into unions; at carrying through economic struggles for bettering the workers' conditions, at exposing and isolating the reactionary labor leaders. They called for the building of the Party and its press and for the education of the workers in Socialism.

The Party assigned the most experienced and developed comrades to this work, many going directly into shops. The Young Communist League gave valuable concentrators. National Committee members and leading functionaries were sent into the industrial areas for concentration work. National and State Committee members took assignments to meet and work with important shop clubs. The *Daily Worker* which established a page of shop correspondence and carried considerable news and discussion of the industrial and shop work was distributed in and around the shops. Agitation, education, and propaganda turned to the shops and undertook the training of cadres from among shop workers. Shop papers were issued, and agitation by means of leaflets and meetings was carried on around the shops, breaking

through the arbitrary restrictions of the corporations. The Party established the practice of regular check-up and control in the fulfillment of tasks, and an improved spirit of democracy and self-criticism developed without which check-up becomes a mere bureaucratic practice. The clubs and Party leaders became "shop conscious," and discussions in clubs, in local, state and national leadership increasingly revolved around *specific shops*. Trade union work ceased to be a departmental activity or the specialty of an important corps of active trade union members and became the work of the whole Party.

#### WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

Aided by the growth of employment and union organization and the rising spirit of struggle, industrial concentration work enabled the Communists to be an important and even leading factor in a number of major and gigantic strikes in 1934 which gave a tremendous impulse to the union organization drive. These struggles sharpened the division and crisis in the A. F. of L. leadership, stimulated the formation of the C.I.O., and speeded the great upsurge of labor.

The shop branches were active in many directions. They combated the false and misleading propaganda of the corporations against unionism, exposed the fraudulence of company unionism, revealed the huge profits of the individual companies and contrasted them to the low wages and

poverty of the workers, hammered away at the need for unity of Negro and white workers and all employees regardless of creed, color, and political beliefs. They fought for industrial unionism and trade-union democracy, combated the sabotaging work of the reactionary labor leaders and linked this agitation with practical steps of organization and struggle for the chief needs of the workers. When the C.I.O. began its drive to organize the mass production industries, there were already inside many shops initial union groups and rank-and-file organizers who knew how to unite the workers and get them to act as one against the powerful open shop corporations. That is why the Communists were among the most effective organizers. Top C.I.O. leaders, who today bait the Communists readily turned to them at that time for firm support and relied upon the Party for guidance and devoted forces.

The unions in the mass production industries—in fact the new powerful movement of American labor which came into existence in 1935-38 was in considerable part due to the self-sacrificing work of the Communists and the militant Left wingers over a long period of years, and to the Communist Party, organized into shop clubs.

The industrial concentration work resulted also in the rise of the number of shop branches to 338 by the following year, still however largely in the small factories. By 1935 the

number rose to 500 with 4,000 members, one-third of all employed Party members who were in shops embracing a million workers. The native-born membership rose to 40 per cent of the total membership, of which the Negro membership grew from 100 in 1930 to 2,500 in 1935. By 1936 the shop membership grew to 5,000 and the shop groups to 600. The Party membership rose to 26,000 in 1934 and to 30,000 by 1935. These results were not achieved without a constant fight against opportunism in practice nor without timely check-up and criticism of the Party's and the *Daily Worker's* weaknesses in fulfilling the *Open Letter*. They were not achieved all at once nor without setbacks and mistakes.

So much then for these important pages of Party history.

The extended proletarian footing acquired in the unions and shops as a result of the *Open Letter* enabled the Party to play a big role in the united front and democratic coalition struggle against fascism and war in the years from 1935 to 1939. But, as is known, in the days of the Roosevelt period opportunistic tendencies developed which flourished into Browder revisionism during the war. Shop branches and shop papers were abolished, in line with the general weakening of the proletarian character of the Party which finally led to its liquidation. No doubt the decline of factory membership favored the development of revisionism. Thus, the significant progress which was under way following the Party's

adoption of the *Open Letter* was undermined.

#### FOR A RE-INVIGORATED CONCENTRATION POLICY

With the decisive rejection of revisionism in 1945, the Party was definitely reconstituted on a Marxist-Leninist basis. Inevitably the Emergency Convention of 1945 stressed the need for restoring the working-class base and taking up industrial concentration work again. This central policy received special emphasis at the 1948 convention in the leading reports of Comrades Foster, Dennis and Winston. Comrade Winston stated categorically that "the central task before the Party is the fight for shifting the main base of our Party to the working class. This cannot be done unless we turn the face of the entire Party to the workers in the factories."

This strong emphasis on turning the face of the Party to the shops and factories in the nation's basic industries, and on building the Party among the industrial workers, is an integral part of the reconstituted Communist Party's program and policies. Its immediate program is directed to solidifying the forces of labor for winning a greater measure of economic betterment, of strengthening and unifying the trade-union organizations, for promoting labor's independent political action and building the Progressive Party, and for labor's assumption of its leading role in an all people's coalition against war and fascism. This pro-

gram cannot be realized without the effective vanguard role of the Party, for which industrial concentration is indispensable.

In the fulfillment of the concentration work in which important progress is already recorded, much can be learned from the Extraordinary Conference and the years that immediately followed. It is, of course, a fact that big changes have taken place in the labor movement since that time. The open shop is crushed and the workers are organized in unions which for the most part have an experienced and reactionary demagogic leadership, making the struggle in the unions and shops more difficult. Also the offensive of reaction is more violent, with the state apparatus playing a far more direct and greater part in the repression of militant union forces. Details, forms, and methods of work in a number of respects must therefore be different, but the principal features of concentration work remain while its importance is immensely heightened. As Lenin taught, the better the organization of the working class in capitalist countries, the more thorough must be the work of the Party to win the majority of the working class. For our country, this means concentration work in the shops, enabling the Party "to go lower and deeper into the real masses" (Lenin). Above all, it means the necessity of waging a pitiless, irreconcilable struggle against labor reformism and Social-Democracy, based on the policy of the united front below. It must

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be added that labor reformism and Social-Democracy cannot be beaten without a hard-hitting ideological and political struggle against "Left" and particularly "Right" opportunism in our own ranks.

#### PARTY HISTORY REFUTES SLANDERS

Reaction has raised a big noise about our industrial concentration work, especially at the Foley Square trial, where our Party leadership is courageously defending the life and work of the Party and the people's cause.

Reaction in this trial, represented by Judge Medina and Prosecutor McGohey, tries to give a sinister twist to our concentration policy as if it was conceived only at the 1945 convention and from "conspiratorial" motives. The entire history of the Party exposes this shameful slander. What can be conspiratorial in trying to influence and win the tens of millions of the working class—the most numerous, most democratic, and most progressive class in our society, without which the defense of American democracy, peace, and social progress is impossible?

Reaction tries also to create the false impression that in shop work Communists are not concerned with the immediate issues of the workers

which it claims are put forward only as a come-on, as a false front in order to "ensnare" the workers into Socialism. This, too, is a foul slander upon the Party and a ridiculing of the workers.

As the Party of Socialism, we, of course, strive to win the workers to the ideas of Socialism which they will and must embrace in order to free themselves from crises, unemployment, repression, and war. But the victory of Socialism cannot be attained without a broad, genuine, militant mass fight for the people's immediate needs. The thirty-year history of our Party shows that Communists, as the banner bearers for full emancipation, have at the same time been the most earnest and best fighters for the immediate and practical demands of the workers. The Communists have suffered great privations in the cause of the daily struggles, often losing their jobs, their liberty, and their lives to achieve wage increases and improved living standards, to bring about unemployment insurance, to build up the unity and solidarity of the working people, Negro and white, to organize the unorganized and build up the American labor movement and to defend democratic rights and world peace. It is a record of great achievement for the workers, for the people and the nation.

# The Communist Party—Leader of the Struggle of the Unemployed

by David Carpenter

THE APOLOGISTS FOR capitalism—from the reactionary Social-Democrats and trade-union bureaucrats to the paid propagandists of the National Association of Manufacturers—are now busy renewing the cry that the Communists create and feed on chaos. This monstrous lie concocted by the men of the trusts is now being most blatantly expressed in the fascist-like frame-up of the Communist Party leaders taking place in the Foley Square courtroom. Thus do they hope to hide the crimes of the real breeders of chaos, the capitalists—who are once again plunging our country and the entire capitalist world into an economic crisis. Thus do they hope to divide and paralyze the working class so that the capitalist class may place the main burden of the crisis on the workers, farmers and the Negro people, in the form of mass unemployment, hunger, misery and war.

But the proud record of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. in the struggle against unemployment gives the direct lie to these calumniators. It proves conclusively that it was and is the Communists who are the leading fighters against the chaos engendered by capitalism, particularly

in its monopoly stage. Therefore, as our Party prepares to celebrate thirty years of struggle in the interests of the American working class and the common people and as we approach the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the great economic crisis of the 'thirties, it is *à propos* that this record be reviewed—not boastfully, but critically—to provide the lessons for the growing and impending struggles of the toiling masses.

Whatever means—such as unemployment insurance—the millions of workers now unemployed have to mitigate somewhat the effects of the present economic situation were won as the result of great popular struggles initiated and led by Communists.

In 1927 and again in 1928 and 1929, Joseph Stalin warned of the imminence of an economic crisis in the capitalist world. In making these predictions, Stalin proved the profoundly scientific character of Marxist-Leninist theory. It is this same Marxism-Leninism for the teaching and advocacy of which 12 national leaders of the Communist Party are now being tried in a monstrous frame-up.

Stalin's warning was scoffed at by the American capitalists, then rolling in the lush profits from intensified speed-up and rationalization of the workers at home and the super-profits achieved at the expense of the workers in the new markets conquered from both their allies and enemies during and after the imperialist First World War. It was derided by the Social-Democrats, many liberals, and the bureaucratic top leaders of the American Federation of Labor—bribed by the leavings on the overflowing tables of the Wall Street magnates.

Even the American Communist Party, in 1928 and the early part of 1929, was not in a position fully to translate into action the warnings about a coming economic crisis in the capitalist world. At its February 1928 meeting, the Central Committee of the Communist Party registered the fact that certain cracks were beginning to appear in several spots of the American economy. In the 1928 election campaign, the Communist Party, whose Presidential candidate was William Z. Foster, raised, for the first time in our country's political history, the necessity of unemployment insurance.

But, for the Lovestone leadership of the Communist Party at that time, all this was merely paying lip-service to the Marxist predictions of the oncoming crisis. Ideologically corrupted by capitalism, Lovestone and his gang developed a theory of "American exceptionalism." They denied that the United States would

be affected by this crisis.

Lovestone predicted full employment and high wages for American workers as the result of the "Hooverian era" prosperity. His leading "theoretician," Bertram D. Wolfe, wrote "A Program for Prosperity," which was supposed to show how the Communist Party should adjust itself to the Hooverian "prosperity."

It became necessary for the Party to wage a relentless struggle against this anti-working class ideology and to expel Lovestone and his gang in 1929 before the Communist Party could truly assume its position as the vanguard of the American working class.

#### THE PARTY ALERTS AND LEADS THE MASSES

Among the first fruits of this struggle was the formation of the Trade Union Unity League on the initiative and under the leadership of Comrade William Z. Foster. At its founding convention in August 1929 the T.U.U.L. declared that "unemployment, one of the great scourges of capitalism . . . is a growing and menacing evil; it will increase with the deepening crisis of capitalism. The T.U.U.L. makes an energetic struggle against capitalism."

But the T.U.U.L. did not limit itself to words. It prepared for action by resolving that "*the T.U.U.L. organizes the unemployed.*"

In October 1929 the Central Committee of our Party adopted a resolution calling upon its membership

and the working class to get set for the imminent struggles.

A few days later came the great stock-market crash, when the Wall Street gamblers themselves took note of the beginning of the economic crisis.

Thus ended the "golden era" of American capitalism. The crisis hit the workers with unprecedented force. Millions were added to the army of unemployed. Employment dropped 35.7 per cent, according to the conservative estimate of one of President Hoover's own economists.

Hardest hit of all were the Negro people, particularly the Negro workers.

The plight of the workers still employed became progressively worse. They were subjected to an ever increasing speedup and slashing cuts in pay.

Big Business may have been panicky—but not panicky enough to dig into its sacred profits to aid the unemployed. Its program for the unemployed, which it transmitted in various forms through President Hoover, the Federal government, the liberals, the reactionary Socialist leaders and the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, was "block aid," "share the work," "self-help," and street-corner apple-selling. For those most desperately in need, the philanthropy program consisted of poorhouse care, token baskets of food or orders on local merchants.

It was only the Communist Party, the Communist-led T.U.U.L., the Communist and Left-led A. F. of L.

local unions which organized popular struggles against the objectives of the monopolies and sought to make Big Business pay for the suffering they were inflicting upon the working masses.

A key question in this struggle was the forging of the unity of employed and unemployed. The reactionary A. F. of L. leaders not only refused to concern themselves with the many millions of unemployed workers outside the sparse trade-union organization; they even abandoned the hundreds of thousands of A. F. of L. members who had lost their jobs in the crisis. Theirs was a policy of immobilizing the working class and their main interest was in collecting dues from members who were still employed. They were at one with the monopolies in foisting speed-up and wage-cutting schemes on the employed workers, who were threatened with layoffs unless they acceded to these schemes.

But the Communist Party, the T.U.U.L. and the Communists in the A. F. of L. recognized the mutual interests and imperative need for the common action of the employed and unemployed. They organized the unorganized, led the struggles of the employed workers resisting wage cuts and speed-up, and strove to build the unity of the employed and the unemployed in the fight for immediate relief, against evictions and for unemployment insurance.

Great numbers of workers responded eagerly to the slogans, the program and the leadership of the

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Communists. They joined the Unemployed Councils, which were organized immediately upon the outbreak of the crisis through the initiative of the Communist Party and the T.U.U.L. They demonstrated at the relief stations for immediate aid, halted evictions, participated in local, state and national "hunger marches"—all under the leadership of known Communists.

One of the most glorious examples of this mass response to Communist leadership was the long-to-be-remembered nation-wide demonstrations of March 6, 1930. Responding to the call of the Communist Party and the T.U.U.L., more than 1,250,000 workers streamed onto the streets of the cities and towns of our country to march for relief for the jobless.

In Detroit, 100,000 participated in the demonstration. In New York City there were 110,000.

The first answer of New York Mayor Walker's police was to club the demonstrators. They arrested the leaders of the demonstration: William Z. Foster, General Secretary of the T.U.U.L.; Robert Minor, then editor of the *Daily Worker*; Israel Amter, then N. Y. District Organizer of the Communist Party; and Harry Raymond, a representative of unemployed maritime workers, now on the staff of the *Daily Worker*. Comrades Foster, Minor, Amter and Raymond were convicted on a framed-up charge of inciting to a riot actually perpetrated by Grover Whalen's police.

But the "conspiracy" of the Communist leaders forced the New York City government to appropriate \$1,000,000 for jobs for the unemployed. And that same "conspiracy" forced city and state governments all over the nation to provide some kind of relief for the millions of jobless.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

In the very forefront of the struggle against the monopolists' policies was the battle for unemployment insurance.

At its founding convention in August 1929 the T.U.U.L., on the initiative of the Communists in the organization, demanded "state insurance against unemployment, sickness, accidents, old age, etc., this social insurance to be paid for entirely by the employers. . . ."

For the monopolists and their agents in the labor movement unemployment insurance was a "Bolshevik plot" to "enslave" the workers. Hoover told the workers: "Unemployment insurance is a dole that would degrade the American worker." William Green echoed him: "The danger is that there is but one step from compulsory unemployment insurance to the dole." And the N.A.M., headlining its advertisements in the daily newspapers with "Menace of Unemployment Insurance! Avoid the Plague!" was happy to quote its friend William Green as "authority."

Hoping to stifle the rising militancy of the rank-and-file, the A. F. of L., at its 1930 convention, squelched five resolutions for unemployment insurance offered by Communist and Left-wing delegates.

While Hoover continued his opposition to unemployment insurance, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Democratic candidate for President in 1932, sensed the temper of the people when he declared on October 6 of that year:

We need for them [the workers] a greater assurance of security. Old-age, sickness and unemployment insurance are the minimum requirements in these days.

But on March 6, 1933, two days after Roosevelt was inaugurated as President, when a delegation from the National Unemployed Council presented the demand for unemployment insurance at the White House, it was answered by Roosevelt's secretary, Louis C. Howe, as follows:

You cannot go to a fire insurance company and ask them for a policy after your house has been burned down. In the same way you cannot get insurance against unemployment after you have been unemployed.

If there were at that time any illusions in the working class that Roosevelt and the Democratic Party would of their own accord give unemployment insurance, Roosevelt had dispelled them. As the Communists consistently told the workers, this demand would not be won without constant, united strug-

gle by the working class. And as events proved later, the Roosevelt Administration put through the unemployment insurance law only under pressure of militant mass struggle led by the Communist Party.

To defeat the sabotage of the Communist Party, the T.U.U.L., and the Unemployed Councils organized the A. F. of L. Committee for Unemployment Insurance, under the leadership of Communist Louis Weinstock of the New York painters' union. The Committee rapidly won representation from more than 3,000 A. F. of L. locals all over the country.

The Eighth National Convention of our Party, held in April 1934, resolved:

A ceaseless fight for unemployment insurance must be carried on, widening its mass basis, gathering around this demand the fullest possible support of workers, farmers, professionals, teachers, students, and raising the struggle to a higher level, developing political demonstrations and strikes for the realization of the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill.

It was this ceaseless fight of our Party and the Communist-led organizations that forced dozens of municipal and county governments to endorse the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill and petition Congress for its adoption. It was as a result of our Party's mass campaigns that thousands of A. F. of L. and independent local unions

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and scores of central trade-union councils overrode the resistance of the reactionary labor leaders and joined in the endorsement of the bill.

And it was this same ceaseless fight led by the Communists that finally forced a reluctant Congress to pass the Wagner-sponsored Social Security Act in August 1935.

Though its passage was an important victory, the Social Security Act was an emasculated law, a partial concession to the militant mood of the working class. It would not go into effect until 1938. It did not provide for the millions already unemployed. Benefits were fixed at a bare subsistence level. It left to the state governments the authority to determine the size and length of payments, which in no case were to exceed half a year. And it put the administration of the law in the hands of the state governments, where it could be used more effectively as an instrument against workers in need, especially workers locked-out by the union-busting bosses, workers on strike, etc.

But at least the partial victory assured a limited defense of the workers against the ravages of future unemployment.

#### MASS CAMPAIGNS AND THE PARTY'S ROLE IN THE NEW-DEAL YEARS

The economic crisis, from its very beginning in 1929, projected the working class into the national political arena in such a way and with

such a magnitude as had never happened before. Faced with the rising indignation of the broad masses against the "virtues" of capitalism, Big Business called upon its state power, represented by the Hoover Republican Administration, to ignore and silence—by armed force if necessary—growing popular protest.

The class-collaborationist executives of the A. F. of L. and the reactionary Socialist leaders, who tied their destinies to the capitalist system, joined in the pressure to hold the workers in line, while Hoover pumped millions of tax dollars (under the guise of "loans") into the coffers of the trusts.

The Hoover Administration's program strengthened the hand of the financiers and industrialists, and served also to intensify the crisis by widening the gap between the producing and consuming power of society. As a result, growing hundreds of thousands of workers, under the leadership of the Communists, began to make demands upon the government for bread and jobs. Their illusions about the "impartiality" of the government were weakened as the Hoover government resorted to force and violence to silence their demands. The Communists organized and led magnificent battles for the immediate and urgent needs of the unemployed and employed workers, the Negro people, the poor farmers, the youth, and the ruined city middle classes.

Despite these achievements, the Party's work was marked by

serious short comings. In a sharply self-critical evaluation of its work in 1930-32, the Party, at the Extraordinary Conference held in early 1933, took note of the fact that it had failed to deepen the understanding of the masses and to broaden the political struggle to the degree that was possible and necessary. It particularly underscored the fact that its sights were not directed to the basic industrial workers, without whom no solid united front of the wide ranks of the exploited and impoverished masses was possible. Lacking strong support among the basic industrial workers, whose organized ranks were still small, the Party was not able to achieve an independent political coalition of the working class and its allies. The labor misleaders were thus able to misrepresent the Democratic Party, the other arm of capitalist rule, as the best instrument of demonstrating dissatisfaction with monopoly capitalist rule.

In the absence of a broad, independent political coalition of the working class and its allies, the labor misleaders were able to misrepresent the Democratic Party, the other arm of capitalist rule, as the best instrument of demonstrating dissatisfaction with monopoly capitalist rule.

Roosevelt's campaign was pitched on a note of attack on the monopolists for betraying the American people and plunging the economy into a crisis. He promised a "New Deal" for the exploited and oppressed. His

1932 campaign was heavily permeated with the traditional demagoguery of the Democratic Party. This was evidenced after his election, when Roosevelt made it clear that his main objective was to save capitalism. And during the first two or three years his Administration was devoted to strengthening capitalism and the trusts. The situation, however, made concessions to labor unavoidable. At that stage, the most important of these concessions was the ambiguously worded Section 7A of the N.I.R.A., which granted the right of the workers to collective bargaining through representatives of their own choosing. Thanks to the workers' good sense and energy, they seized upon this clause and turned it into a weapon for broad, bona-fide union organization. Roosevelt's first acts were to give the trusts the right to fix wages and prices under the N.R.A., and, under the A.A.A., to "solve" the farm crisis by an "economy of scarcity" which would raise the price of food at a time when millions were near starvation. He continued Hoover's policy of priming the pump of Big Business by granting huge "loans" through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. But, under mass pressure, he was forced to start a public works program, which brought some amelioration to the unemployed.

The works program did not, however, appreciably reduce the mass unemployment. The bare-subsistence wages paid on the works-program jobs served to lower the living stand-

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ards of the unemployed and to set the example for Big Business in its program of speed-up and wage cuts.

The worst victims of this program were the Negro people. When the economic crisis hit the South, which had already been suffering from years of chronic agrarian crisis, the Bourbon-landlord allies of Wall Street unleashed a campaign of terror and violence against the Negro people, who were seething with anger over starvation, evictions, and Jim-Crow rule. When the Roosevelt works program was introduced in the South, the landlords made certain that they would be able to continue their super-exploitation of the Negro workers, sharecroppers, tenant farmers and poor farm-owners. The jobs were planned so as to help the landlords. And the wages were set at an even lower level than in the North. During this period, our Party greatly extended its activities in the South, pioneered in building Negro-white unity and fought back against Southern lynch-terror.

The reactionary A. F. of L. bureaucrats and the "Socialist" sell-out artists supported the reactionary, monopoly features of the N.I.R.A. and sought to discourage the masses from struggling. But the workers increasingly refused to follow this policy of the misleaders. Organizing themselves into unions, they began to strike on a large scale, through A. F. of L., T.U.U.L., and independent channels. In growing militancy and numbers, they responded to the leadership of the Communists

and the Left-progressives, who showed the working class and its allies that they would not win any concessions from the capitalist ruling class unless they demonstrated their power through struggle.

The forging of unity of the employed and unemployed against the ravages of the economic crisis set the workers in motion and schooled them for industrial organization. The C.I.O. was launched and grew rapidly in all the basic industries. The Communists provided much of the impetus for the organization of the workers in the mass-production industries through its shop concentration, intensified in 1933, and through the many organizers who had been trained in the struggle against unemployment.

In the meantime, a significant realignment had taken place. Big Business was up in arms against the many concessions which the Roosevelt Administration, under great popular pressure, had been forced to yield. A loose coalition between the Left-progressives, organized labor, and the Roosevelt liberal reformists had emerged.

The vast majority of the capitalist class supported Wall Street's Alfred E. Landon, the Republican candidate, against Roosevelt, whom they hated for making such concessions to the workers as the National Labor Relations Act, the Social Security Act, the Wages and Hours Law, etc. The vast majority of the people, however, lined up in support of Roosevelt.

Roosevelt had earned the hate of the monopolies because in the course of his efforts to "save" capitalism he had made concessions to labor and restricted their policy of placing the full burden of the economic crisis upon the toiling masses. In support of his reform policies, he had found new allies—in the working class whose strength was growing and among the small farmers, the Negro people, and the ruined lower middle class of the cities. As the result of this shift in the relationship of political forces in the period of 1936-39, the trade unions and progressive forces were able to influence the Roosevelt Administration to adopt many progressive measures.

Therefore, it was fully correct to support Roosevelt against Landon. But our Party, while expressing the need for independent working-class political action, and although it put forward its own Presidential ticket, tail-ended Roosevelt in practice. Browder's reformist influence, which later blossomed into full-scale revisionism, was already at work after the 1936 election campaign, accommodating the Party to the labor reformists who, flushed by the partial victories won under the Roosevelt Administration, and chained to the capitalist two-party system, sought to tie the workers to the tail of the Democratic Party.

The policy of tailing Roosevelt found expression in the unemployed movement. This was evident in the work of the Communists in the Workers' Alliance. The Alliance

came into being as a united organization of the unemployed through amalgamation of the Communist-led National Unemployment Councils with other groups controlled mainly by the Social-Democrats. The Communists in the leadership of the Workers' Alliance did not always and sufficiently struggle against the plans of such Socialists as David Lasser, the president of the Alliance. These Socialists were following a policy of integrating the Workers' Alliance into the program of Roosevelt, even when it meant a surrender of the unemployed workers' interests. There was an appreciable lessening in the pressure on the Roosevelt Administration for further measures in the interests of the unemployed. In particular, the Workers' Alliance diminished its efforts to raise the wage level of Negro workers on the Federal works program in the South.

And, worst of all, at a time when chronic mass unemployment persisted and the Roosevelt Administration was floundering in its efforts to "solve" the economic crisis, the Workers' Alliance did not prepare the unemployed for united action with the employed workers organized in the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. to forge an independent political instrument as a weapon in the struggle against the crisis.

#### NEW, IMPENDING BATTLES AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

It was only the coming of World War II that ended temporarily the ravages of mass unemployment. The

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necessity for all-out production of the materials of war and the shifting of more than twelve million people from the labor market into the armed services, absorbed the unemployed for four or five years.

But since the war's end, the shadow of unemployment has again begun to envelop the working class. The Marshall Plan and the armaments programs, while serving for a short time to postpone the outbreak of the crisis, have only intensified the basic capitalist contradictions, further unbalanced the economy, and paved the way for an even more resounding collapse.

Speed-up, rationalization, the introduction of more "labor-saving" machinery are once again taking their toll on the workers. The growing mass unemployment and the rise of productivity and partial reconstruction in Marshallized Western Europe are beginning to make their impact felt in the further narrowing of the markets of U.S. imperialism. The withdrawal of the Eastern European countries which have established People's Democracies from the orbit of American imperialist exploitation, the great wartime military and postwar reconstruction victories of the Soviet Union, the smashing victories of the people in China, and the rising revolt of the colonial peoples are further sharpening all the contradictions of capitalism caught in the grip of its deepening general crisis.

In his illuminating article which appeared in the July and August is-

ues of *Political Affairs*, Comrade Bittelman has already shown how the new economic crisis is beginning to develop. We shall therefore deal here mainly with the unemployment aspect of the situation.

The alarming news from Washington in February of this year that employment had dropped by 2,000,000 between December 1948 and January 1949 and that unemployment had increased by 700,000 over January 1948 to a total of 2,650,000 was only a foretaste of what was to come. Despite deliberate efforts to minimize the extent of unemployment month by month, the government has had to admit a continued increase in the number of unemployed. In August, it had to confess that there were more than 4,000,000 unemployed at the end of July, an increase of more than 1,500,000 in six months.

But this does not by any means give a complete picture of the situation now shaping up for the working class.

Not included in the government statistics are: the close to 2,000,000 war veterans reported as attending school in 1948 who in growing numbers are being thrown onto the labor market; the more than 2,600,000 dismissed wartime women workers; the 1,000,000 reported in August 1949 to have "left the labor force" in 1948; the one to two million unpaid farm laborers on family farms officially considered "employed" although they draw no wages. In addition, the government estimate leaves out

of account the extent of partial unemployment, which in the fiscal year 1948 involved more than 6¼ million unemployed at some time during that period. Finally, a true estimate of the extent of unemployment must also consider the under-employed, that is, workers employed less than 35 hours a week, whose number rose to 9,756,000 in February of this year.

To counteract the precipitous rise in unemployment, Truman is adopting the disastrous policies of Hoover. He and his advisers are shouting up and down the country that there is "nothing to be alarmed about." They echo Hoover's derided slogan that "prosperity is around the corner." They propose tax "relief" to profit-swollen Big Business to overcome any losses they may suffer in an economic crisis and they propose bigger and better "loans" to the trusts.

But the Truman Administration's real "solution" for the economic crisis is to shift the economy to a war-time basis. Their plans envisage the building of vast armaments and the siphoning off of the unemployed, particularly the youth, into a huge standing army.

The labor bureaucrats, aping their capitalist masters, deny the development of an economic crisis, and also place their hopes on the shift to a war economy.

John L. Lewis plays directly into the hands of the monopolists by cutting the work-week of the miners to three days, with a proportionate

cut in the miners' wages. Thus, 600,000 miners are forced to share their misery, while the profits of the bosses continue unabated.

The Roman Catholic hierarchy, which has captured certain commanding positions in the American labor movement in the recent period, especially through the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists and through the strategic position of Philip Murray, has indicated its "solution" for unemployment in the plan proposed by the Rev. John M. Corridan for the longshore trade in New York port. Corridan, associate director of the Xavier Labor School, suggested that 20,000 of New York's 46,000 longshoremen be thrown out of the industry.

It is obvious that all of these "solutions" can only serve to place the burden of the crisis on the working class, which is precisely what the capitalists want. Only the workers, through their own organization and struggle, can successfully wage the battle against unemployment.

#### TASKS BEFORE THE WORKERS AND THE LEFT-PROGRESSIVE FORCES

The working class is today in a much better position to wage its battles than in the early 'thirties. At that time there were only about 3,000,000 workers in trade unions, large numbers of them misled and demoralized by the labor-lieutenants of the capitalists. An independent organization of the unemployed was forced to operate in the vacuum left

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by the refusal of the trade-union bureaucrats to lead the struggle against joblessness.

But today there are some 16,000,000 organized workers, most of whom have been trained in the school of struggle for their economic demands. The Negro people are on the move in defense of their jobs and for a realization of their rights. The poor farmers still remember the decade of large-scale evictions and near starvation which ended only ten years ago.

The task of the whole trade-union movement, clearly, is to throw itself into the fight against speed-up and mass layoffs.

A fundamental condition for the struggle against the ravages of the rapidly developing economic crisis is to isolate and destroy the influence of the labor agents of imperialism, who disarm the working class by disseminating their treacherous reformist ideology. At the same time that our Party intensifies its day-to-day agitation and activities in unfolding from below the united front of struggle against crisis and unemployment, it must undertake to teach the masses the fundamental Marxist-Leninist truth that capitalism cannot banish unemployment, which is inherent in the anarchic system of commodity production, wage-slavery and production for profit instead of use. We must make it clear to the broadest masses that it is impossible to achieve full employment under capitalism.

Our Party must teach the masses

that only a Socialist society provides genuine, permanent insurance against economic crises and unemployment, the guarantee of a job to everyone willing and able to work, the guarantee of an ever-rising standard of living, the guarantee of lasting peace. Only when the means of production are owned by the producing classes and appropriation of profit by the parasitic capitalist rulers is ended, does it become possible for the people to banish insecurity and build a happy, abundant life.

The People's Democracies of Eastern Europe, now traveling on the road to Socialism, are rapidly abolishing unemployment. An interesting report issued by the U.N. in February makes it clear that it is precisely these countries of People's Democracy—despite the fact that, besides the U.S.S.R., they were the most ravaged by the Nazi hordes—which have made the most rapid economic recovery. The Western European countries, with their Marshall-Plan "aid," are, by contrast, experiencing growing unemployment and a developing economic crisis, and the workers there are faced with ever-greater impoverishment.

In only one country, the Soviet Union, which has a fully-developed Socialist society, has unemployment been completely abolished. There are no economic crises in the Soviet Union, and none are possible. The Soviet Constitution guarantees a job to every willing worker, and it provides generously for those unable to work.

While pointing to Socialism as the only ultimate, permanent solution to the recurrent and deepening crises, the Communist Party, as in the 'thirties, advances a program of struggle against mass unemployment, speed-up, mass evictions, the super-exploitation of the Negro people, and all the privations and miseries engendered by the developing crisis.

It is the task of the Left-progressive-led unions and of the Communists and Left-progressives in the reactionary-led unions of the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. to initiate mass campaigns around the issues facing the workers.

Central to the task of organization for this purpose must be the unity of the employed and unemployed. The unemployed must not be abandoned by the unions when they are no longer able to pay dues.

Among the forms organization could take is the setting up of unemployment committees in the local unions and the development of city and state-wide unemployed centers to include the representatives of the local unions, organizations of the Negro people and other interested groups. At the earliest practical time a national conference could be called to establish a national center for struggle in defense of the interests of the unemployed.

The program should include the following points, which were presented by the National Committee of the Communist Party in its 1949 Labor Day Manifesto:

*I. Increase and extend unemployment compensation benefits.*

1. *Increase unemployment compensation to a minimum of \$40 a week.*
2. *Extend unemployment compensation to cover the full period of unemployment.*
3. *Extend unemployment and social insurance benefits to include categories of workers not now covered, especially young people, who have never had employment, who seek work now.*
4. *Provide pensions for the workers at the cost of the employers.*

*II. Raise the purchasing power of the common people.*

1. *Increase wages for all industrial and white collar workers by 25 percent.*
2. *Eliminate pay-roll taxes for all those earning less than \$5,000 a year!*
3. *Prevent rent increases—demand effective rent control!*
4. *Raise the minimum hourly wage to \$1.00!*

*III. Reduce the profits of big business.*

1. *Increase taxation for all millionaires, multi-millionaires, and huge corporations. Reduce taxes on low income groups. Do away with sales taxes!*
2. *Prosecute the monopolies that conspire to maintain high prices. Curb the power of the monopolies and trusts.*

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3. Give federal loans and credits to small businessmen hit by the depression.

IV. Launch a huge government-financed slum clearance and building program to provide at least three million new homes, and hundreds of schools and hospitals! Enact an adequate government health insurance program! Put through a program of rural electrification! (These public works can be financed by increased taxation on the big corporations and by reducing the swollen budget for armaments and new war preparations.)

V. End the cold war! Put into effect a foreign policy based on peace and not war! Renew Soviet-American friendship—key to world peace.

1. Re-open trade with the Soviet Union, the new China, and the People's Democracies. These countries are in the market for manufactured goods and machines of all kinds. Billions of dollars of trade can be organized with these countries so as to keep millions of additional workers employed at home. But this can only be done if the cold war is called off and normal diplomatic and trade relations established.

2. Grant large-scale loans and credits with no political strings attached to all democratic countries and particularly to the new China and the European new democracies. Put an end to the Marshall Plan which is a plan for reaction, war

and economic chaos and not for economic recovery.

3. Put an end to huge military budgets and to military alliances! Use these funds for constructive purposes.

VI. Shorten the work week with no reduction in pay. 40 hours pay for 30 hours work! Win severance pay for laid off workers! Reduce speed-up on the jobs!

VII. Lower the age upon which workers can apply for old age insurance now from 65 to 60! Increase old age benefits to a minimum of \$100 a month!

VIII. Pass a federal F.E.P.C.! End all discrimination in employment! Guarantee that all union contracts safeguard the job rights of Negro workers!

IX. Safeguard the rights of women workers and young workers! Equal pay for equal work! Establish federal-financed nurseries for the children of women workers! Raise the school-leaving age and guarantee a high school education for every youth.

X. Re-establish and expand 52-20 for veterans! Renew eligibility for all veterans! Give the veterans a federal bonus!

XI. Pass an adequate federal farm program based on giving aid to the small farmer and not for the rich

*farmer and absentee owner! Adequate subsidy payments to compensate small farmers for differences between market prices and full parity prices for farm products! Insure a decent minimum annual income to every family-sized farm! Appropriate federal funds to enable tenant farmers and share-croppers to purchase land of their own!*

Key to the struggle must be the special problems of the Negro workers, who have already been the hardest hit by the developing crisis. A special struggle must be waged to save the jobs of Negro workers, with adjustment of seniority regulations wherever necessary. A battle must

also be undertaken to force the rehiring of those Negro workers who have already been fired.

In the very center of the struggle must be the building of a democratic, anti-monopoly, anti-war political coalition led by the working class. The basis for this already exists in the Progressive Party. The building of this independent political party would have as its aim the defense of the living standards and fundamental rights of the people and the drastic curbing of the power of the trusts, and could rally the masses around the slogan: "For an anti-monopoly, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist people's government."

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