

political affairs

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TOMORROW'S CHINA

by ANNA LOUISE STRONG

Anna Louise Strong is the only foreign correspondent to have penetrated the Liberated Areas of China, including Manchuria, shortly after it fell under Communist control. Tomorrow's China is based on a year's stay, from July, 1947, to July, 1948, in these newly liberated areas.

By jeep, donkey and airplane, this indomitable reporter has visited places hardly to be found on maps. She has interviewed not only leaders like Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, but spoken to workers, peasants, factory managers, doctors, intellectuals, and hundreds of others. Her on-the-spot description of the agrarian reform, how Mao-Tse-tung's military principles are applied in the fighting against Chiang Kai-shek's armies, Chinese attitudes to the Marshall Pan and U.S. intervention, and the developments leading to the establishment of a new democratic all-China government, throws a brilliant searchlight on the China of today. Published by Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy.

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political affairs

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

Editorial Board: V. J. JEROME, Editor, ABNER W. BERRY, ALEXANDER BITTELMAN, JACK STACHEL, MAX WEISS

Lenin and Opportunism in the American Labor Movement

by V. J. Jerome

I

POLITICAL ACTION has been promoted from a place in the wings to the center of the stage in the American trade-union movement.

The focal interest in political affairs, as manifested especially at the recent conventions of the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O., with their preponderantly reactionary decisions, should cause us to remember Lenin's statement: "There are politics and politics."

Lenin employed this statement in his polemic against the contenders for "Economism," the opportunists who sought to confine the Russian workers to the spontaneous economic struggle, who denied the independent political role of the working class,

and belittled the importance of consciousness and the role of the vanguard Party. Lenin's words, written nearly half a century ago, assume a special bearing on the trend of our American labor movement, growing in recent years, toward open participation in political affairs.

It is therefore appropriate at this time, when, in unison with ever-increasing millions the world over, we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Lenin's death, to evaluate this trend in the light of his great teachings.

Arguing against those who saw the term "Economism" misapplied to the Russian trade unions, in view of the latter's growing concern with political action, Lenin stressed that: "The economic struggle of the workers is

I

very often connected (although not inseparably) with bourgeois politics, clerical politics, etc. . . .”* He taught that the “Economist” position includes not merely labor’s abstention from political action, but also its extension into political action that holds the working class subservient to the ideology and politics of the bourgeoisie.

Thus, Lenin stated:

Trade unionism does not exclude “politics” altogether, as some imagine. Trade unions have always conducted political (but not Social-Democratic)** agitation and struggle.***

The bourgeoisie has always aimed by various means to perpetuate the political subservience of the working class. But the direct impact of bourgeois ideology, together with the various forms of economic and political pressure, could not alone achieve this objective. Faced with labor’s growing strength and political awakening, the capitalist class operates through reformist and Social-Democratic aides in the labor movement. As valid today as when it was written (1921) is Lenin’s statement that without its reactionary Social-Democratic prop in the working class, the international bourgeoisie would be totally unable to retain power.****

But while in the past, Wall Street, through its agents in the labor move-

* V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, International Publishers, New York, Vol. II, p. 65.

** To be understood in this historical context as imbued with Socialist consciousness and theory.—V.J.J.

*** *op. cit.*, p. 53 n.

**** *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 228.

ment, sought to line up the workers *in support* of reaction’s programs, today it exerts a tremendous effort to make organized labor a *key instrument* of its imperialist policy.

This is the meaning of W. Averill Harriman’s address before the recent convention of the A.F. of L. As the President’s Special Representative Abroad for the Economic Cooperation Administration, Harriman commended American labor, meaning its misleaders, for playing “the key role” in selling the Marshall Plan to Europe. This is likewise the meaning of Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas’ address at the recent C.I.O. convention bidding American labor to assume the role of “a missionary of the American way of life.” Said Douglas: “Today labor stands astride a world fraught with fear. It occupies a strategic position in the affairs of nations.” American labor therefore, “cannot indulge the luxury of complete preoccupation with traditional trade union activities.” It must become “an active participant in international affairs.” He declared frankly:

Labor is peculiarly qualified to bridge a gap that has been growing between the United States and Europe. A new Europe is being born. . . . They are bitterly suspicious of all those who may be undisclosed agents of predatory interests. They fear the threat so frequently voiced in Soviet propaganda that an American imperialism may be extending its power into Europe. . . .

Out of this arises the importance of

the fact that American labor carries good credentials to western Europe. Doors tightly closed to all others may open at its knock. Words from American labor promise to find quick acceptance.

Thus, Douglas called upon labor to disguise the iron chains of imperialist enslavement as the silver cord of benevolent fraternalism.

Douglas continued, saying that while the European course of development “has been based on the concept of ‘class society,’—the idea of class is foreign to us in this country. . . . Man is born here not to class, but to opportunity.” American labor, therefore, has the opportunity of carrying the high message to Europe “that it need not be the victim of the concept of a class society. . . . American labor can spread the faith in the American way, that builds a classless society without exploitation of any group.”

President Philip Murray had anticipated the Justice by declaring in the June issue of the *American Magazine*, “We have no classes in this country. . . . Collective bargaining has become less a contest and more a collaboration.” Now he addressed the delegates, in praise of Douglas’ speech: “. . . never in all my life have I heard a more remarkable exposition of government. . . .”

But President Murray also told the convention, in his Economic Report:

. . . Real earnings are going down. Accumulated savings are being wiped

out. Consumer debt is at an all-time high.

While the great corporations and the wealthy further enrich themselves with unearned profits of inflation, rising prices are robbing the bulk of the American families of the means to consume goods and services that must be absorbed as our national output increases. Here is the seed germ of the next depression.

Who are these wealthy that further enrich themselves? From whom do they press their unearned profits? And who are they whose real earnings are going down? Yes, who are the bulk of the American families whom the great corporations are robbing?

Classes? Away with your inventions! How can that be; when we have no classes in this country? How un-American, how Communist an answer, when man is born here not to class, but to opportunity!

And so, despite all his efforts to mask the contradictions of capitalism and the class struggle, Murray’s statement betrays the essential contradiction that we find in the American labor movement today, a contradiction that arises out of the very reality of class conflict which Murray denies: on the one hand, support of imperialist foreign policy and class collaboration at home—the program of labor’s misleaders; and on the other, the real mood of the workers—militant economic struggle and pressure for progressive political action.

The growing political orientation of our labor movement, beginning with the New Deal period, represents a break with pure-and-simple trade unionism. Nevertheless, labor's course toward *independent, class* political action, which has been greatly furthered with the launching of the coalition Progressive Party, is still being impeded by reformist opportunism.

II

To understand the persistence and present dominance of opportunism in our trade unions, we must understand its social roots. Lenin said: ". . . objectively the *opportunists* are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of certain strata of the working class who have been *bribed* out of imperialist super-profits and converted into *watchdogs* of capitalism and *corrupters* of the labor movement."* And in his polemic against the Russian Kautskians, who sought to conceal the opportunist influences in the working class, Lenin spoke of the opportunists as "*alien* to the proletariat as a class, . . . the servants, the agents and the vehicles of the influence of the bourgeoisie," warning that "unless the labor movement *rids* itself of them, it will remain a *bourgeois labor movement*. . . ."**

In the United States, where, for historical reasons, Social-Democracy has not developed a mass political

party, its reactionary function is performed by the reformist trade-union bureaucracy, which counts Social-Democrats among its key figures. The following, however, needs to be noted: In Europe, the traditional task of Social-Democracy has been to head off the mass socialist consciousness of the working class from the realization of socialism; in the United States, the traditional task of the reformists has been to retard the maturing of mass class consciousness by blocking labor's independent political action.

There are, of course, objective as well as subjective causes for the pervasive opportunism in our labor movement. These have their deep historical roots in the unevenness of capitalist development.

American capitalism, rising rapidly under the unique condition of the frontier and rich natural resources, absorbed successive tides of immigrant labor power, advanced its industrial technics to make possible a high wage level and to create an aristocracy of skilled workers. This development left its ideological imprint on the masses: delusions about the frontier, cheap land, and the mobility of classes, continuing as an ideological lag after the vanishing of the frontier; and a supra-class idealization of bourgeois democracy, fostered by the two-party system of the ruling class. The frequent tides of immigration, with their resultant social flux, hampered the development of working-class homogeneity, and

interrupted the continuity of the generalized experience of the class struggle. Not least, the bourgeoisie devised the vicious "divide and conquer" policy to set white against Negro workers and native-born against foreign-born. The anti-theoretical temper of pragmatism, the dominant bourgeois philosophy, pervaded also the labor movement, expressing itself in a notorious contempt for theory. These major factors have kept the American working class politically backward, and have furnished the seeds for opportunism. They were reinforced by the "100 percent American" ideology of bullying national arrogance as U.S. capitalism became the foremost imperialist power and, after World War II, the citadel of world reaction.

The craft-union philosophy of Gompersism fitted in with the requirements of American monopoly rule. It prevented industrial unionization and the organization of the unorganized. Under the "non-partisan" motto, "Reward your friends and punish your enemies," it held back labor's independent political action.

In the absence of a consolidated working-class party with a strong base in the trade unions, the political potential of labor's great historical strike struggles remained largely unrealized. The workers' aspirations toward independent political action were diverted into petty-bourgeois reform movements—into Greenbackism and other monetary reform proj-

ects, the Single Tax, etc.,—into populist movements which could not, by their very nature, bring forward the leadership of the working class.

Nevertheless, American labor, throughout its history, has manifested an impulsion toward class consciousness, taking the form of movements toward independent, class political action. This urge achieved its highest political expression in the formation of the Communist Party, after the First World War.

The Great Economic Crisis, which caused mass discontent with the two parties of capitalism, gave new impetus to labor for independent political action. The demand for a "Labor Party" was embodied in five resolutions at the 1935 convention of the A. F. of L. This movement, led by Francis Gorman of the United Textile Workers of America, was supported by an estimated 104 delegates.

The workers sensed the threat of an American Hitlerism when bosses and government rode roughshod over them in the great strike struggles of the middle 'thirties. The growing movement for a Farmer-Labor Party was spurred on by the militant struggles at home and by the anti-fascist upsurge in Europe: the armed revolt of the Austrian workers, the heroic uprising of the workers in Asturias, the developing United Front of the Spanish working class, and the sweeping advance of the People's Front in France.

* *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, p. 752.

** *Ibid.*, p. 753.

Thus, the traditional resistance of the A. F. of L. leadership to political struggles was in large measure broken, although its dominant isolationism in the sphere of foreign policy continued. They who had not so long before fought against unemployment insurance as a "dole," were forced to make a turn toward sponsoring social security legislation.

The C.I.O., born in revolt against the old-time A. F. of L. leaders' opposition to organization of the unorganized, early indicated a break with the "non-partisan" electoral policy of Gompers. Its promotion of Labor's Non-Partisan League as its political wing augured such a change.

L.N.P.L. meant a decided advance toward working-class political action. Yet it tended from the beginning to subordinate labor to Roosevelt and to act increasingly as an appendage to the Democratic Party electoral machine. This was so, notwithstanding its assertions throughout the 1936 election campaign that in supporting Roosevelt, it was not supporting the Democratic Party—a recognition, in itself, of the mass resentment against both capitalist parties and of the widespread sentiment for a Farmer-Labor Party.

In its 1936 election drive, L.N.P.L. failed to organize the independent power of labor for daily struggle on the political and economic fronts, reducing the struggle mainly to the act of balloting. Although it led to the formation of the American Labor Party in New York State and

of the Washington Commonwealth Federation, it failed to initiate a national independent coalition party under labor's leadership.

Labor's continuing political subservience to capital expressed itself likewise during this period in the official stand of the trade union movement on foreign policy.

Still fresh in our memory is the refusal of the 1936 convention of the A. F. of L. to support the Spanish people's fight against the fascist invaders, although the American working class, and the majority of the people, sided with the Loyalists. The convention held on to its isolationism by refusing to apply for membership even in the reformist International Federation of Trade Unions.

This disastrous course was pursued through the period of the unfolding of the Munich policy. The labor movement, committed by its main leadership to an espousal of "neutrality," did not back Roosevelt's "Quarantine the Aggressor" slogan, and failed to take up the crucial fight for collective security.

This was true, not alone of the A. F. of L., whose 1938 convention rejected the O'Connell Peace Act for "quarantining the war makers," but essentially also of the C.I.O., in its official national commitments. The National Maritime Union, at its 1937 convention, was the first union in the C.I.O. to adopt a forthright position against the aggressor states. And the United Auto Workers convention,

early in 1939, demanded an embargo against the fascist aggressors. But the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. were contented with resolutions calling for the boycott of Japanese and Nazi goods, and, despite a more "international" ring in the C.I.O. program, both federations failed to come forward with an unequivocal and effective program for concerted action in behalf of peace. Moreover, by its official position, the labor movement did not oppose the imperialist "Neutrality Law"—a law adopted during Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, which denied aid to the victim nations while allowing the aggressors to benefit deviously.

Despite the anti-Munich actions of its more advanced sections, the trade-union movement as a whole did not assert labor's independent political position in the foreign policy sphere.

The conclusion is inescapable. Organized labor, beginning with the middle 'thirties, steadily moved beyond the confines of pure-and-simple trade unionism and increasingly employed action on a political level. But this activity, besides concentrating mainly on pressure for legislative programs, fell short of independent working-class political action, even on a limited, still non-class conscious level.

Actually, labor bound itself ever more closely to the Roosevelt Administration, and thereby to the two-party system. The advantages which the labor movement obtained, as a result of struggle, through the pro-

gressive features of the New Deal, were for that reason, acquired at the cost of retarding its independent political organization. The situation demanded, and the forces were at hand to achieve, a third party, which, while supporting Roosevelt in 1936, would take the field as a fighting political party, asserting its independence whether the existing government was responsive to certain of the people's demands or whether the issues would have to be resolved in intense struggle. But the tide that had set in toward the formation of a third party was turned away, by opportunist hands, from its historic course, to become a tributary flowing back into the bourgeois political stream.

The lesson is clear. The concessions wrung from the capitalist class are impermanent and precarious so long as the political energy of the labor movement remains harnessed to the wagon of capitalism. Ergo: the Wagner Act of the 'thirties can be exchanged for the Taft-Hartley Act of the 'forties.

Any discussion of the subjective factors making for the persistence of opportunism in our labor movement demands the self-critical study of our Party's work. During the New Deal period we did not consistently heed Lenin's great lesson "to *utilize* the flashes of political consciousness which gleam in the minds of the workers during their economic struggles. . . ."*

* *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 92n.

The vanguard Party must alert the labor movement to be most on guard precisely when the bourgeoisie is "kind" to it. While reformists use reforms to "appease" the workers and bind them to their bourgeois "benefactors," Leninists fight for immediate gains, not only to improve the workers' conditions, but to heighten the self-confidence and class consciousness of the workers for greater struggles and greater gains.

Although our Party endeavored to pursue a Leninist course, there was much tail-ending behind the reformist labor movement. Right opportunism was already showing itself in our Party, and, because it was unchecked, paved the way for Browder-revisionism. We tended to view one-sidedly labor's increased organizational strength, to evaluate it quantitatively. We realized imperfectly that the very growth of trade-union organization both deepens the vanguard responsibility of Communists and makes their task more difficult. Our forces working in tactical coalition with reformist trade-union leaders lacked vigilance in the struggle against the strategy of those leaders. We were often all too ready, in the interests of formal unity, to surrender our Communist identity, to accept the status of third-class citizenship, to hide the face of the Party. Thus we lowered the prestige which by right accrued to our Party as pioneer in the campaign to organize the unorganized and as a prime builder of the new industrial unions. This

negation was seen in the accessory silence during adoption by certain union conventions of anti-Communist resolutions.

There developed an opportunist loosening of ties between the Party and many of its leading forces in the unions and of the ties between these same forces, in their role as Communists, with the union rank and file. All of this meant that Communists were conducting trade-union activity on an "Economist" level. We slackened in Party building in the factories and mass-industry communities, thus thinning down the basic working-class component in the Party's membership.

In breaking with revisionism, our Party regained the highroad of Marxism-Leninism. The 1945 Emergency Convention established a correct basis, with clear perspectives and tasks, for the Party's trade-union work. In the progressive unfolding of its activities, the Party strove to raise the sights of the working class to come forward as builder and leader of the people's anti-monopoly peace coalition, and undertook the struggle against "Economist" ideas and practices, against all opportunist trends in the labor movement.

Along with the correct effort to rid the Party of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influences, there developed a mistaken idea that revisionism had gained no foothold at least in the Left-led trade unions, that these were citadels which had withstood Browderism. This romantic illusion came

from a failure to understand that the Left-led unions operated in a milieu of trade unionism permeated with bourgeois ideology—with pragmatist "practical"-ism and Keynesian reformism—and subjected to Social-Democratic pro-imperialist influences. The leadership of these unions—not excluding Communists—were subject to these pressures, especially inasmuch as the Party, during its revisionist period, had not functioned as vanguard.

Thus—in this postwar period, when bourgeois ideological pressures increased—despite the Party's struggle against "Economist" ideas, and despite a correct policy and a general improvement in the Party's trade-union work, certain opportunist tendencies continued in the course of carrying through the policy. These have been reinforced by the sharpened attacks on Communists and all progressives in the trade unions from the monopolies, the Administration, and the reactionary reformists and Social-Democrats, whose ranks were augmented when the Murray camp, breaking up the Left-Center coalition, moved over to outright support of imperialism.

Thus, certain Communist trade unionists have evidenced opportunism in the continued hiding of the face of the Party, hesitancy to relate the struggle for peace to the economic issues before the workers, failure to imbue the Progressive Party with trade-union strength and leadership, and the harboring of illusions about

Truman and Murray. While the Communists and Left-progressives in their majority unequivocally and courageously faced up to their responsibility to the American working class at the recent C.I.O. convention, certain other Communists and Left-progressives flinched before the reactionary offensive.

What is the lesson to be learned from this brief survey of the continued subservience of American trade unions to the politics of monopoly capital—even with the growing abandonment of pure-and-simple trade unionism? The ending of such subservience, and the growth of the independent political action of labor evolving toward Socialist consciousness, will not come automatically out of the trade-union level of struggle. Such an historic development requires the Leninist performance of its vanguard role by the political leader of the working class, the Communist Party.

For, only the theory of Marxism-Leninism provides the key, in the words of Stalin:

... to understand the inner connection of current events, to foresee their course and to perceive not only how and in what direction they are developing in the present, but how and in what direction they are bound to develop in the future*

III

The reactionary policies adopted

* *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, International Publishers, p. 355.

at the 67th convention of the A.F. of L. and the 10th convention of the C.I.O. did not reflect the main trend in the labor movement. As Marxists, we distinguish between the official line of the labor misleaders who run the show, and the rank and file, in terms of the workers' aspirations as well as their interests. Today the workers demand adequate wage increases in the face of unabating inflation. They openly resist the intensified exploitation through speedup in such major industries as auto and textile. The dramatic strikes in 1948 of the soft-coal and "captive coal" miners, packinghouse workers, Chrysler auto workers, brewery workers, and East-West Coast longshoremen and seamen (C.I.O. and A.F. of L.) have highlighted the general struggle.

The workers, the Negro people, and the other anti-monopoly forces are in a militant mood, expecting positive results from the elections. Actual support for the Wallace platform cannot be gauged by the one and a quarter million votes cast for it at the polls. Can we discount the demagoguery and deception, not to mention the intimidation and terror, with which the monopolies waged their bipartisan election campaign? Or can we discount the "lesser evil" delusion spread by the Social-Democrats and labor's top officials? The influence of this propaganda is evident from the fact that the Progressive Party's total vote far exceeded Wallace's, and was in some districts

four or five times higher. The Left-progressive forces in the trade unions, despite serious setbacks, are neither crushed nor isolated. Nor did the conventions, especially that of the C.I.O., reflect their actual strength.

In characterizing the policies adopted at the conventions as the policies of the misleaders, we should, however, avoid oversimplification. Such an error can only blur that which is concrete in the situation and lead to confusion in our tactics. For, although those policies did not reflect the main trend in the labor movement, it cannot be said that there is a clear-cut differentiation all the way down the line on all major issues between the misleaders and the thinking of the rank and file.

Certainly there is militancy in the labor movement. Militancy is in the bone and marrow of American labor. But militancy must always be assessed anew in terms of the tasks labor faces in each given situation. These tasks must be seen today in relation to the general movement of the capitalist class, and to the parallel political course of the reformist labor leaders.

The pressure of the rank and file at the C.I.O. convention achieved the adoption of a few progressive resolutions—outstandingly, the demand for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act and the resolution on Civil Rights. But this rank-and-file pressure did not impede the barrage of reactionary resolutions backing the biparti-

san war-headed foreign policy, pledging unqualified support to Truman and the two-party system, rejecting the Third Party, preparing to withdraw from the W.F.T.U., and resorting to vindictive attacks with disruptive organizational measures against the Left-progressive unions.

Is it correct, then, to speak today of militancy in the labor movement in the sense of militancy against class collaborationist policies? Today, can we place foreign policy—the struggle for peace—and economic issues into separate compartments? As Marxists, we know that this can never be done. But, especially when the general line of U. S. imperialism—the Marshall Plan—is as much a domestic issue for the American workers as it is a foreign-political issue, where does one "compartment" end and the other begin? We are not helping the working class or better fitting ourselves for the vanguard task by complacently speaking of militancy as regards economic struggles and the fight for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act—vital as these struggles are—when the economics and the politics of the Marshall Plan become the guiding line of organized labor's conventions. Even more, while recognizing that these struggles will facilitate a Leftward trend in the labor movement, we cannot regard them as automatically constituting such a trend.

Nor can we accept the idea that the reactionary line of the labor bureaucracy is the line of the labor move-

ment. We must make clear that the masses do not want the imperialist objectives of the Marshall Plan, and that the bourgeoisie, the Administration, the church hierarchy, and the reactionary labor leaders are striving to poison their minds and "sell them a bill of goods." But we must also recognize that these forces have temporarily succeeded in ideologically corrupting a section of the labor movement.

They have done this through increasing terror and intimidation, through the cold-blooded drive to deprive the slightest dissenter of his means of livelihood. They have done it through shameless demagoguery, with all the agitational and "cultural" media brought into action. They have shouted the virtues of their falsified "Americanism," "Democracy," "Freedom," and "Aid to Europe." Masking the true intent of its "Doctrine" and "Plan," Wall Street furnishes its piratical program with a "moral" base. Since its crusading purposes, both for the people at home and the world at large, are most cynically destructive, its banners flutter with most self-righteous slogans. In the name of America's "manifest destiny," Wall Street has unleashed a campaign of mass chauvinization directed simultaneously at nations abroad and at the Negro people and the foreign-born on our own shores. The workers have been handed promissory notes to fill them with illusions that they will be the beneficiaries of Marshallization. And the

super-profits of finance capital are bribing the labor bureaucracy.

We must keep our eye on the danger signals. With this current of ideological poison which the opportunists channel into the labor movement, our monopolies strive for what Lenin once characterized as a possibility in capitalist countries: "something like an alliance . . . between the workers of a given nation and their imperialists *against* the other countries."*

How shall we sound the warning? How shall we build labor's resistance to this danger and mobilize its forces against the monopolists and their labor aides?

First, we must not view the struggle for peace against the Marshall Plan as a line of demarcation between the Left and the rest of the working class. We can and must show that this struggle is today the central line for *integration* of the labor movement, for building a bridge uniting all workers, Right- and Left-led as well as unorganized, in behalf of their immediate and basic interests.

But success in this effort cannot be achieved through any Leftist reliance on agitational means alone, through an infantile abstraction of the political issue from the economic. The Marshall Plan cannot be fought without intensified economic struggles. Through such struggles the workers will learn that the leaders who are "all-out" for the Marshall

Plan are the very leaders who are stabbing labor's wage demands in the back. The truth of Lenin's maxim will be driven home upon them: "Politics are the concentrated expression of economics."*

Secondly, we must expose the "moral" attitude which claims that although the Marshall Plan aims to subjugate other nations, it is "O.K. for the American workers." We must show concretely how American imperialism makes the American masses pay for its aggressive war policy, how the battle is for *both* the material and the political interests of America's workers. This stress does not mean indifference to the fate of other nations, or belittlement of proletarian internationalism. True international solidarity is for the American working class related organically to its own needs, to the question of its destiny. The American workers, chafing under mounting taxes and spiralling prices, can be made keenly aware that every dollar of Marshall Plan "aid" undermines their own living standards, as well as the standards of the workers in the Marshallized countries. We must show up the ruinous promises of the Marshall Plan, with its bribing prospect of "full employment" through armaments production and wartime jobs. To do this, we must expose the decay and bankruptcy of capitalism in decline, profoundly intensified as the system bogs down in its general crisis.

* *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 54.

Does the extended opportunism in the labor movement today, fostered by the bribed bureaucrats, indicate an extension of the material basis for the labor aristocracy?

Each new day makes it clearer that American imperialism is no "exception" to the inherent contradictions of imperialism revealed by Lenin. Indeed, events have confirmed the forecast which Engels made, with prophetic insight, in 1886:

America will smash up England's industrial monopoly—whatever there is left of it—but America cannot herself succeed to that monopoly. And unless *one* country has the monopoly of the markets of the world, at least in the decisive branches of trade, the conditions—relatively favorable—which existed here in England from 1848 to 1870 cannot anywhere be reproduced, and even in America the condition of the working class must gradually sink lower and lower.*

And what are the facts?

At home, monopoly capital is exposing its incapacity to fulfill its promises. It is continuing its assaults on the people's working and living conditions: intensified speedup, reduced real wages, increasing unemployment and indebtedness, appalling deterioration in the quality of commodities and services along with soaring prices; and with this, growing social oppression, increasing terror against the Negro people, and

* Marx-Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, International Publishers, p. 443.

wholesale destruction of the people's democratic rights.

After two world wars, in the course of the permanent general crisis of capitalism, the world market has shrunk for American finance capital, even though the United States has supplanted Britain as the foremost imperialist power. The Marshall Plan is far from unfurling the flag of Wall Street over an empire on which the sun never sets. All its interventions, fomented civil wars, and economic subjections cannot keep its puppet fascists, royalists and feudalists enthroned. What is happening today in China—"senior" among the Marshallized countries—is not peculiar to the physical geography of the Far East. Finance capital had a great fall; and all the President's Doctrines and all the Secretary's Plans cannot put it together again.

Clearly, there is a decline in monopoly capital's material basis for bribing a labor aristocracy in the United States. (The labor aristocracy itself was diminished by the 1929 crisis, continuing unemployment, and the rise of industrial unions in the mass-production industries.) Without foundation, therefore, are current notions, inducing defeatist moods, that the material basis for the labor aristocracy is extending, and that the class struggle must gear itself to a "slow-down."

We cannot assume, however, that the diminished bribing power of the bourgeoisie will automatically bring

* *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, p. 757.

about a growth in class consciousness.

No real progress in the labor movement is possible without a Marxist-Leninist struggle for the masses, mobilizing them against monopoly capital at home and abroad. Fighting against labor-imperialism, Social-Democratism, white chauvinism, and all opportunism in the labor movement means *involving the workers' ranks* in the struggle for their pressing needs and interests. It means, therefore, combatting all tendencies toward sectarian Leftism in the very course of fighting Right opportunism—carrying on a struggle on two fronts. It means building the necessary coalition movements of labor and its allies, with a strong labor base and leadership—without which the coalition cannot succeed. It means, too, ending all opportunist hesitations to voice, when necessary, criticism of allies.

It means building the Communist Party in the shops and unions of the basic industries. It means battling all "Economist" tendencies to rely on trade-union spontaneity, to "soft-pedal" the independent political struggle, or to belittle the Party's role. The clarity and unity of Communist forces in the trade unions are essential for strengthening the bond of the political vanguard with the working class.

IV

Douglas' summons to American labor at the C.I.O. convention to be-

come "an active participant in international affairs" calls to mind another exhortation, at the founding of the First International, impressing on "the working classes the duty to master themselves the mysteries of international politics."

Perish the thought, however, that the Supreme Court Justice and his sponsoring C.I.O. top leaders were smuggling Marxian propaganda into the convention! For these gentlemen could indignantly point out that Marx called upon the workers to do something altogether different—"to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective governments; to counteract them, if necessary, by all means in their power; when unable to prevent, to combine in simultaneous denunciations and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations." Marx's underlying meaning, they could further protest, was that, "The fight for such a foreign policy forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes."*

For our day, in the United States, this means that organized labor would have to penetrate and expose the diplomatic maneuvers and ideological defense-mechanisms of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. The entire American labor movement would have to combine in

* *Founding of the First International: A Documentary Record*, International Publishers, pp. 38-39.

the broadest United Front, forming a people's coalition against Wall Street's policies of war and fascism—"to counteract them by all means in their power." American labor would have to join in international solidarity with the workers and all anti-imperialists the world over to defeat atomic diplomacy and to establish the purposes of peace and democracy "as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations."

By this token, the conventions of organized labor would hear neither a Wall Street financier-diplomat nor a high dispenser of bourgeois justice, but rather a spokesman of the people's anti-monopoly coalition, a Henry Wallace—or a leader of the vanguard Party of the working class, a William Z. Foster. By this token, too, American labor would strengthen its international working-class alliances, instead of moving toward withdrawal from the World Federation of Trade Unions, as did the C.I.O. convention. By this token, further, American labor would act as leading force in the nation for re-establishment and maintenance of cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union in the com-

mon interest of both countries and of world peace, instead of asking, as did the A. F. of L. convention of shame, playing the role of perverse "vanguard," for a breach of trade relations with the U.S.S.R. American labor would stand solidly with the Communist Party—consistent fighter for better living standards and the democratic rights of the people, for peace and social advance; it would denounce before the world the persecution of the Communists in the United States today, instead of permitting its officials to act as anti-Communist hatchet-men for the bosses and the Taft-Hartleyites. Finally, American labor would proclaim its irreconcilable struggle against the capitalist system of exploitation; it would launch a fighting program against the monopoly profiteers and warmakers, with the historic class perspective of final emancipation from the "classless" capitalism of the Douglasses and Murrays.

Such is the Marxist meaning of working-class concern with international politics; such is the Leninist concept of labor's political action released from the fetters of opportunism.

"This Obvious Violence"

by Marion Bachrach

IT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE in our country that momentous issues, centers of great mass struggle, also present themselves as legal questions around which struggle develops in the courts.

Such an issue reached the Supreme Court in 1857. In the words of Chief Justice Taney, "The question is simply this: Can a negro [sic], whose ancestors were imported into this country and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights, and privileges, and immunities guaranteed by that instrument to the citizen?"

The Supreme Court decided the question in the negative, and as it thought, for all time.

Speaking for the majority of the divided Court, Chief Justice Taney declared: "The right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution. The right to traffic in it, like an ordinary article of merchandise and property, was guaranteed to the citizens of the United States. . . . And no word can be found in the Constitution which gives Congress a greater power over slave property, or which entitles property of that kind to less protection than property of any other description."

Those who challenged the validity of that decision were denounced as traitors, and charged with offering violent resistance to the government of the United States. But Abraham Lincoln, emerging as the leader of the new anti-slavery alignment and Republican Party, cut through all legalistic interpretations of the Constitution. Lincoln denounced the Dred Scott decision "for doing this obvious violence to the plain, unmistakable language of the Declaration of Independence."

Debating the issue with Stephen Douglas, Lincoln asserted that the authors of the Declaration:

"... meant to set up a standard maxim for a free society, which should be familiar to all and revered by all—constantly looked to, constantly laboured for, and, even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colours everywhere. The assertion that 'all men are created equal,' was of no practical use in effecting our separation from Great Britain; and it was placed in the Declaration, not for that, but for future use. Its authors meant it to be as, thank God, it is now proving itself, a stumbling block to all those who in after times might seek to turn a free people back into the hateful

paths of despotism. They knew the proneness of prosperity to breed tyrants, and they meant, when such should reappear in this fair land and commence their vocation, that they should find left for them at least one hard nut to crack."

Desperately determined to preserve their "right" to traffic freely in the "private property" of human beings, the slave holders of the 1850's sought to extend their system of production to new territory and make its infamous social conditions prevail throughout the whole of the United States.

Under "the single impulse of resistance to this common danger," a loose people's coalition gathered around Lincoln and the new Republican party. It was, as Lincoln said, made up "of strange, discordant and even hostile elements, gathered from the four winds." It embraced homesteaders and industrial workers, substantial sections of the rising industrial bourgeoisie of the North, abolitionists and the early American followers of Karl Marx who advocated the abolition not only of chattel but also of wage slavery.

Held together by the common purpose of resisting the expansion of slavery, this broad coalition elected Lincoln President in 1860. In 1861, it was obliged to wage armed struggle in defense of the government of the United States—which the slave holders attempted to overthrow and destroy by force and violence in a desperate effort to preserve the his-

torically outmoded productive relationships of their slave system.

It was in the course of this revolutionary and armed defense of a progressive government that the system of chattel slavery was forcibly overthrown and destroyed, and, incidentally, the Supreme Court decision in the Dred Scott case reversed.

The Emancipation Proclamation expropriated the "private property" of the slave holders, and declared that the Negro people "are, and henceforward shall be, free."

But, to implement and perpetuate that freedom, it was necessary to amend the Constitution of the United States. To achieve that purpose, and secure the revolutionary fruits of the people's victory in the Civil War, the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments were incorporated in the basic law of the United States.

* * *

"Can a Negro, whose ancestors were imported into this country and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights, and privileges, and immunities guaranteed by that instrument to the citizen?"

Once again, though under different historical conditions, this issue is being fought out in the arena of mass political and economic struggle in our country—and once again it presents itself as the subject of litigation in the courts.

This time it is not an escaped slave, but the General Secretary of the Communist Party who pleads the cause of the Negro people, and carries into court the struggle for their full liberation which American Marxists have never ceased to wage on every front since the time of Joseph Wedemeyer, Lt. General in the Union Army.

Following in the foot-steps of Chief Justice Taney, the ultra-reactionary Judge Bennett Champ Clark has already dismissed as "sheer nonsense" Eugene Dennis' claim that he cannot be jailed for refusing to recognize the authority of a man whose presence in Congress constitutes a flagrant violation of the 14th Amendment.

The enormity of the opinion rendered by the Court of Appeals is this: 91 years later, Judge Bennett Champ Clark is still echoing Chief Justice Roger Taney. The great Civil War and Reconstruction victory embodied in the 14th Amendment goes for naught—Judge Clark's court holds that enforcement of the Constitution is *optional*, where it touches on the rights of Negroes and Southern poor whites.

Consequently, the issue now comes before the Supreme Court, which at this writing has under consideration Dennis' petition for a review of Judge Clark's decision, rendered for the U.S. Court of Appeals.

A brief review of the facts in the Dennis case will help to distinguish the special features which give it even

greater significance than the host of other cases involving the defense of the Bill of Rights against violation by the notorious House Un-American Committee.

In March, 1947, the Un-American Committee began public hearings on two proposals to outlaw the Communist Party—the Rankin and Shepard bills. Availing himself of the only official forum for opposing this fascist legislation, Eugene Dennis demanded an opportunity to testify on behalf of the Communist Party. At the same time, he stated categorically that in thus exercising his rights as the spokesman for a legal political party, he in no way implied *de facto* recognition of the constitutionality of the Thomas-Rankin Committee.

Dennis appeared, and was sworn. Immediately, and in obvious pursuance of a pre-arranged plan, J. Parnell Thomas denied him the opportunity to present his testimony, ordered him served with a subpoena which was ready at hand, and had him hustled from the hearing room. Incidentally, this is the same J. Parnell Thomas now facing trial on charges of defrauding the government.

Eugene Dennis did not respond to the subpoena, summoning him to appear before the inquisitors on April 9, 1947. Instead, he sent the committee a letter, setting forth his reasons for holding it to be an unconstitutional body without legal authority to order his appearance. He was summarily cited for "contempt of Con-

gress," tried before a District of Columbia jury composed mainly of government employees under "loyalty" order intimidation, convicted, and sentenced to a year in prison and a \$1,000 fine.

In a statement made to the court before hearing sentence, Dennis declared, "My own liberty is, of course, dear to me. But more dear is the liberty of the whole American people." The grounds on which the General Secretary of the Communist Party bases his case are eloquently summed up in those few words.

Like other anti-fascists challenging the usurped authority of the Un-Americans, Dennis argues that the House Committee was established solely to investigate into the propagation of ideas, and that the House of Representatives is without power to authorize such investigation, but on the contrary expressly forbidden to do so by the First Amendment to the Constitution.

For taking this stand, the staunch Communist, Leon Josephson, has already served almost a year in prison. Other patriotic Americans, like the Anti-fascist Eleven and the Hollywood Ten, share with Dennis the honor of risking their own liberty in order to preserve those liberties won for the whole American people in the great bourgeois democratic revolution of 1776, and guaranteed in the Bill of Rights as the result of further struggle.

But, as befits a leader of the Communist Party, Dennis has raised the

struggle against the House Un-Americans to a still higher level, and made his own case an instrument for advancing the struggle for the national liberation of the Negro people, which reaction betrayed in the period of Reconstruction.

He charges that the Un-American Committee is not in fact a lawful committee of Congress, since it is tainted with the illegality of John Rankin's presence in Congress, where he sits in violation of the second section of the 14th Amendment.*

Significantly, it is this contention—the distinguishing feature of the Dennis case—which has won both wide support among the Negro people and the special venom of Judge Bennett Champ Clark.

Judge Clark arrogantly ruled that Dennis "has set up an intricate system of calculation of his own from which he has arrived at the conclusion satisfactory to himself." This conclusion is that abridgement of the rights of voters in a given state should be penalized by a proportional reduction in the number of that state's representatives in Congress.

But the "intricate system of calculation" which demonstrates that Mississippi is not entitled to hold seven seats in the House of Representatives was not worked out by Eugene Dennis. It resulted from nationwide and congressional discussions in the post-

* The full text of the section of the Dennis brief dealing with the 14th Amendment will be found in the December, 1947 issue of *Political Affairs*.

Civil War period. It was the problem that received the primary attention of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, and formed the subject of its first report.

As the Dennis brief in support of his petition for a writ of certiorari from the Supreme Court points out, congressional debate on proposals to amend the Constitution to change the basis for apportionment revolved around two essential positions. "On the one hand," Dennis argues in his brief, "it was urged that Representatives should be apportioned on the basis of the number of voters in each State. On the other, many argued for an Amendment which would eliminate from the total population all persons of any race or color when the right to vote of any individual of that race or color was denied or abridged within any State.

"The purpose of these proposals was two-fold: firstly, to relate the political power of any State to the degree to which political liberty was extended to its inhabitants, and secondly, to encourage the extension of the franchise to the Negro people in the South. These objectives were constantly reiterated during the course of the debates in Congress."

The debate was resolved by the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment, whose second section provides that when the right to vote in Federal elections is denied to any citizens of voting age, or in any way abridged in any state, that state's basis of rep-

resentation in Congress shall be proportionally reduced.

Dennis offered to prove in the lower court that denial and abridgment of the suffrage rights of the Negro people in the state of Mississippi reaches an extent requiring a reduction in that state's representation from seven to four seats. Judge Clark upheld the lower court judge, who refused to permit the introduction of such proof.

The vindictiveness and vituperation of the Clark opinion hit a new low in reactionary judicial writing. Clearly, its political intent is to smash this and all future attempts to breach the system of white supremacy through demands for the enforcement of the 14th Amendment.

To conceal this political purpose, Judge Clark brings forth a number of specious "legal" arguments—"answering" his own deliberate distortions of the position taken by Dennis. Chief among these is the wholly false contention that Dennis is making of the courts the "fantastic" demand that they annul all laws passed with the participation of representatives from poll-tax states, and that they order the House to reduce the representation of all states which abridge the suffrage rights of their citizens.

But Dennis is not here contesting the validity of a law passed by Congress on the ground that an improperly elected representative from Mississippi, or some other state, par-

ticipated in its enactment. He is not directly calling on the court to require that Congress comply with the provisions of the second section of the 14th Amendment. In this case Dennis is contending simply that, since there was no constitutional authority for the creation of seven seats for representatives from the State of Mississippi—there was no office which John Rankin could lawfully fill. And hence, in the words of the brief, "This Court is simply asked to decline to comply with a Committee's insistence that the petitioner [Dennis] be sent to prison upon the basis of his alleged refusal to heed the summons of that Committee, among whose members was a bald usurper of the mantle of a Congressman."

Thus Dennis has chosen firm legal ground from which to make his limited, though significant, attack on the whole system of Negro oppression in the United States.

Judge Clark has purposely brushed aside the legal limitations placed by Dennis on his appeal, precisely to avoid giving an excuse for its dismissal. But broad sections of the Negro people have associated themselves with the stand taken by the Communist leader, correctly understanding that the whole struggle for Negro rights will be advanced if the court refuses to punish him for upholding the 14th Amendment by challenging John Rankin's usurped authority.

This understanding led a group

of noted Negro leaders to form the Committee to Enforce the Fourteenth Amendment, which supported Dennis with an *amicus curiae* brief in the U. S. Court of Appeals. In a blistering attack on the Clark opinion signed by an additional seventy-five nationally known Negro leaders, this Committee recently urged the Supreme Court to review the Dennis case.

Unfortunately, however, the role which the Dennis case can play in the growing struggle against the national oppression of the Negro people is not generally recognized. Even in the ranks of the Communist Party there has been insufficient realization of the vast scope of the issues involved, and a consequent failure to rally the broad forces of the labor-progressive movement to a campaign for a reversal of Dennis' conviction.

Yet, the times and the Supreme Court being what they are, only a militant mass campaign can assure that the high court will agree even to review this historic case—not to speak of reversing the infamous Clark decision.

The mass campaign for Supreme Court review of the Dennis case—already too long postponed—cannot be separated from the mass campaign to quash the indictment of the twelve Communist leaders whose heresy trial is scheduled for January 17th. Eugene Dennis is one of those twelve, and it would well serve the fascist aims of the Justice

Department to have the Communist Party General Secretary appear in the court room as a defendant already serving a prison term.

But the Dennis contempt case can be a two-edged sword. And if we grasp the handle of its full significance, we can use it to cut through the web of lies spun around the Hitler-like charge that the twelve indicted members of our National Committee "conspired to teach and advocate the duty to overthrow the United States government by force and violence."

It is time to remind America that the political forebears of Eugene Dennis and the other Communist leaders were upholding the government of the United States, while the slave holders and Copperheads, forebears of the bipartisan monopolists, were conspiring to attempt its forcible overthrow.

Yes, once again it is time to stir the American workers and people to united action under "the single impulse of resistance to a common danger."

It is in the spirit of "constantly spreading and deepening the influence" of the Declaration that we must now bring into every shop, union hall, church and community

the word that the rights of, not 12, but twelve million times twelve Americans are at stake in the case of Eugene Dennis and the Communist Party National Committee.

The prosperity of the profiteering men of the trusts has bred more rapacious tyrants than any dreamed of by Jefferson or Lincoln. It has bred the Wall Street urge to rule the world and the twin dangers of fascism and imperialist war. As Robert Minor, that veteran winner of "lost causes" put it: "The focus today is not Dred Scott, but another 'colored man'—Mao Tse-tung. And this is a world in which it is not safe for imperialists to say that the lynchers must prevail."

The Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the constitutional amendments won in struggle to implement the Emancipation Proclamation remain "a hard nut for them to crack."

The monopolists will never crack it—if we go boldly and confidently to the American workers and common people, rallying them to united action in defense, not alone of the Communist Party and its General Secretary—but in defense of their own democratic rights.

Two Conventions of Labor: The Situation in the Trade Union Movement

by John Williamson

WHETHER by accident or design, both the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. Conventions were held in cities—Cincinnati and Portland—that are traditionally Republican, have small labor movements, and are still saturated with the poison of Jim Crowism. The *New Republic* correspondent noted this, observing that Portland is "a congenitally conservative city" that put its "Jim Crow policies in mothballs for a week," adding that "it is obvious that the national officers [C.I.O.] should consider similar decisions in the future" because it means there can be less pressures upon the convention from workers in the galleries. Indicative of the change in policy and outlook of the dominant C.I.O. leadership in this respect was the comment of Right-wing Secretary Stanley Earl of the Oregon C.I.O. Council: "Why take the C.I.O. to trade union centers such as New York and Cleveland." Earl's conclusion was that "we ought to see that it goes every year to some community where fresh breezes need to blow."

But the "fresh breezes" that blew in Portland did not reflect the interests or moods of the workers in the basic industries. There was, in reality, a span of continents between the Multnomah and New Heathman

Hotels, and the waterfront and logging camps of Oregon. Actually, what blew in Portland, or in Cincinnati for that matter, was not "fresh breezes," but only the foul smog of Wall Street conspiracies against the people of the world and against our own workers, sweetened up with the perfumed demagoguery of Social Democracy and bourgeois liberalism.

Before examining the policies and decisions of these two important labor conventions, let us examine briefly the political situation in which they met, and the way in which this situation had an effect upon, or relationship to, the problems before both conventions.

(1) There is a sharpening of relations between the two world camps of peace and of imperialism. On the one side, there is the strengthening of the camp of progress and democracy. This is seen in the heightened world role of the Soviet Union, leading all the peace-loving forces, in thwarting the war-provoking designs of Wall Street imperialism. It is seen in the rapid postwar recovery of the Soviet Union and in the great progress of the New Democracies. World-shaking in their effects also are the great victories of the Chinese Liberation Armies, which are striking a

mighty blow for freedom against imperialism in general and American imperialism in particular. Of significance, too, is the continued progress of the liberation forces in Greece, despite American aid to the royalist-fascist regime, and the growing struggles of the working class in the countries of the so-called Western Union against their own exploiters and Social-Democratic lackeys, as well as against the U.S. imperialist intervention. Completing the picture, there are the moods of struggle among the American workers and other exploited and oppressed sections of the population.

On the other side is the camp of reaction and imperialist war, organized and led by Wall Street and comprising the dregs of fascist regimes, worn-out royalty, idle rich, colonial exploiters, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, and Right-wing Social-Democratic leaders. These representatives of the past are desperately trying to hold back the onward torrents of social progress, even if they must plunge the world into a new war of destruction in a vain effort to save the Profit System and everything it represents. The feelings of hatred toward the very word *American* which are developing among the peoples of the earth as a result of the Wall Street-Washington role of imperialist gendarme, demand that the voice of the American people, of the workers in the first place, convey the reassur-

ance that the Economic Royalists speak for the trusts alone.

(2) The second feature of the overall political situation that formed a backdrop for both labor conventions is the Truman electoral victory, a Communist estimate of which was published in the December 1948 issue of *Political Affairs*. Here we must take note of the progressive intentions of the majority of working-class voters, even though these were diverted into votes for Truman. This emphasizes the danger of continued illusions among the workers; but it also presents opportunities for united struggles to achieve the measures the workers mistakenly thought, as a result of Truman's demagoguery, that a Truman victory would bring.

We know the historic significance of the launching of the Progressive Party, and of its securing a place on the ballot in 45 states—which in itself destroyed an old myth. The Progressive Party and Wallace campaign brought forward the real issues, helped stimulate the people's hatred of the 80th Congress, and forced Truman to participate in unlimited demagoguery. It was the dynamic factor in the campaign. The elections further emphasize the fact that, in their majority, the workers and the Negro people are clear as to the role of the Republican Party, but that they are still vacillating between the Democratic Party, with its demagoguery and exploitation of the mantle of F.D.R., and indepen-

dent political action in the form of a third party of labor and the people—the Progressive Party.

(3) Another feature of the overall setting is the deteriorating economic situation in the country, which is intensifying and multiplying the economic problems of the workers. A crisis of overproduction, whose outbreak has been delayed primarily by the production of war material and reserves, as well as by Marshall Plan exports, is definitely in the making. The billions of dollars in the war kitty cannot, however, solve in any decisive way the problems of markets—either domestic or foreign—for the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, the basic inner contradictions of capitalism are growing sharper and more intense by the day as the program of Wall Street unfolds. It is reported that, despite the Marshall Plan, there is a 24 percent decline in foreign trade. A number of American industries have been and are being hard-hit by the effects of the Marshall Plan on European economy. Typical of this is textile. The recent pamphlet, *What's Ahead for Textile Workers*, points out:

... Our American Big Business men operate through the Marshall Plan on this principle: *Sell all you can and buy as little as you can.* And, at the same time, they ruin European industry in the Marshall Plan countries.

The result is that these countries suffer from a "dollar shortage." They have *no dollars to buy American goods.* That is why, even while the Marshall

Plan has forced European textile mills to close down, our own export of textiles has decreased in the past year.

Result: the textile mills of Ghent, in Belgium, work four days a week and mills in Lawrence and New-Bedford work four days a week!*

Reports are coming in from all over the country of growing unemployment, particularly in factories producing consumer goods: radios, washing machines, furniture, electrical appliances, etc. For the first time in several years, unemployment is growing substantially and is again becoming a real problem for the American trade union movement.

These developments result in a steady worsening of the workers economic conditions, which, to all intents and purposes, received no attention at either convention. As the postwar boom loses its force the capitalists try to shift the burdens onto the shoulders of the workers by speedup—a tremendous increase in the exploitation of the workers on the job. In some places, this is combined with the extended introduction of labor-saving machinery. Further, the monopoly course of maintaining and raising prices results in the constant slashing of real wages. Add to this the reduction of the work-week in some factories and the accumulation of a host of other grievances, and the workers' cause for alarm is unquestionable.

These developments explain the

* Emanuel Blum and Joseph C. Figuieredo, *What's Ahead for Textile Workers*, The Communist Party of New England, 1948, pp. 19-20.

mood of resistance and the emergence of struggles on the part of the workers in both C.I.O. and A. F. of L. unions, irrespective of leadership, and against it if necessary. This has not yet reached wide-spread proportions; but recently the Ford workers in Detroit developed great concern over, and undertook action against, the growing speedup, and the textile workers in Lawrence rejected efforts to introduce a system of 40 looms per worker as against 36. There was the strike waged by the fighting rank-and-file of the East Coast A. F. of L. longshoremen, against the opposition of the Ryan machine, around the two vital issues of speed-up and security.

On the basis of this sketchy statement of the overall situation in which the union federations convened, it is crystal clear that there is no basis for pessimism today regarding the American working class. While we cannot ignore the influence of national chauvinism among some sections of the workers, and an increase in the influence of Social-Democracy, it would be fundamentally incorrect to speak of the masses of workers moving to the Right. We must not confuse the increased accommodation of reformist trade union leaders to the program of American imperialism and the capitulation of certain trade union leaders formerly associated with the Left as a result of the pressure and intimidation of American imperialism, with the real moods of the great

mass of trade union members. Rather, we must understand:

(1) That the potential ability of the trade unions, with their increased numerical strength and strong roots in decisive industry, to defeat the attacks of Big Business, has been clearly demonstrated in the postwar period. Labor weathered the initial onslaughts of the trusts after World War II with far greater success than it was able to achieve in the face of similar attacks after the First World War. The defeats suffered by the organized workers in the recent period—and there have been important ones in both the political and economic fields—have been primarily due to: (a) the failure of the unions to develop aggressive struggles by the workers in support of pending anti-monopoly legislation and against anti-labor legislation; (b) labor's neglect with regard to gaining adequate allies in common struggles from among the Negro people, poor farmers, and sections of the middle class; (c) the role of misleadership performed by the reformist and Social-Democratic trade union leaders in directing their attack against the Left-progressives and the Communists instead of against the trusts; and (d) the continued weakness of the Left-progressives in a number of trade unions, and of the Communist Party itself, in all the basic industries.

(2) That while it is true that the great mass of trade unionists still do not challenge the political domina-

tion of the monopolists, nevertheless it would be wrong to conclude from this fact that the workers are unable or unwilling to struggle against monopoly capital on issues that represent their vital needs. Although this basic political weakness in the thinking of American workers endangers the consistency of their struggles, we must join with the workers in their struggles on things they are ready to fight for, and help them draw more fundamental conclusions. To place the readiness of the workers to struggle against the Marshall Plan—and we Communists know it must be struggled against—as a yardstick to determine whether or not the workers are moving to the Right, is fundamentally unsound.

The fact is that despite this lack of basic understanding of the reactionary role of American foreign policy, two things are obvious: (1) there is a growing minority of workers who do understand the real imperialist purposes of the Marshall Plan and are fighting against it as contrary to the interests of the American workers and people; and (2) other important sections of the workers have displayed a willingness to fight and a capacity for struggle, in the course of which it has been possible to help them to see the connection between the attacks upon their economic and political conditions at home and the war-breeding character of Wall Street foreign policy.

Foremost, in recent weeks, are the West Coast maritime workers who,

under progressive leadership and with active rank-and-file participation, won a great victory despite belligerent ultimatums from the ship-owners to the effect that they would “never” sit down and negotiate with Harry Bridges, or they would “never” sign a contract until the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union signed the Taft-Hartley yellow-dog affidavits. Among other significant struggles there were the East Coast International Longshoremen's Association strike, the brewery workers' strike, struggles in the various building trades, and the continuous struggle of the Ford workers against speedup—all of these struggles being waged in opposition to various types of Right-wing leaders.

In developing the struggle around such issues as wages, layoffs, defense of the trade unions, etc., the key link whereby the rank-and-file can be won away from the policies of the Right-wing trade union leaders consists in the maximum use of the united front tactic.

It is precisely because of the continued existence of militant moods of struggle among the rank and file and because of the outlook of greater struggles to come as a result of the deteriorating economic situation and the increased activity and strength of the Communist Party, especially among the basic workers organized in the C.I.O., that the bourgeoisie is particularly determined to remove the C.I.O. as a threat to their war

plans. The bourgeoisie is therefore under the cloak of patriotism enlisting as much of the C.I.O. leadership as possible in support of its imperialist foreign policy.

The real reason for the Red-baiting hysteria of Phil Murray at Portland is that he, also, has some inkling of the moods of the members, and he knows that this militancy will mount as the economic situation worsens. With nothing but the Marshall Plan to offer the workers, since his support of the cold-war policy of American imperialism strips him of all ability to make an effective fight on economic issues, Murray tries to cover up by resorting to flag-waving and anti-Communist hysteria.

What stood out at both conventions, but especially at the C.I.O., is the role of a new combination of forces representing Social-Democracy, bourgeois liberalism, labor reformism, and Roman Catholic Church influence—a coalition that is on the ascendancy and unfolding a class collaboration policy with new wrinkles.

AN ESTIMATE OF THE A. F. OF L. CONVENTION

The outstanding thing that characterized the 1948 A. F. of L. convention was not only that this assemblage had nothing in common with the real moods of growing sections of the rank-and-file A. F. of L. members, but that it did not even make an effort to engage in lip ser-

vice to these moods and needs of the members. Even the conventional stock resolutions adopted each year in support of the shorter work-week and opposing Universal Military Training were omitted.

As regards a wage policy, the emphasis at the convention was to discourage a fight for wage increases, while presumably calling for price reduction. But on the specific question of price control the convention shied away from taking an affirmative policy. Indications of the character of this policy on such an elementary trade union question as wage-price policy is the National Association of Manufacturers' praise of the A. F. of L. for its "sane" approach to wages and prices.

On foreign policy the A. F. of L.'s position was not an iota different from that of Big Business. The resolutions called for the strengthening of military alliances with Western Europe, continued support of the Marshall Plan, further integration of the non-Soviet zones in Germany, and revision of the U.N. charter with special attention to the exclusion of the so-called veto. The convention actually went further, to show that it is more anti-Soviet than the men of Wall Street, by calling for the "breaking off of trade relations with the Soviet Union. . . ." Generally speaking, the A. F. of L. conventionaped American imperialism programmatically to the complete neglect of the urgent needs and problems of its own members.

A substantial part of the convention time, including 40 pages of the printed Officers' Report, was spent on "overseas activity." This is a cover-up name for the activities of a number of A. F. of L. leaders hired by the government or sent directly by the A. F. of L. to sell the Marshall Plan and to organize fifth column movements inside the originally united trade union federation of all the European, Latin American, and Asian countries. The central objectives are to smash the World Federation of Trade Unions and the Latin American Confederation of Labor (C.T.A.L.) to prevent a really militant, democratic trade union federation from arising in Germany and Japan; and to try to restore to posts of leadership all the riff-raff of discredited Social-Democratic trade union leaders from prewar times. William Green disclosed that 160 millions of dollars have been spent by the A. F. of L. since 1943—mostly during the last two years—on this type of "overseas activity."

The A. F. of L. bureaucracy tried to center a lot of attention on their newly organized but little functioning Labor's League for Political Education (L.L.P.E.) They decided to establish it permanently and set it up on a community basis as well, and stated their readiness to cooperate with other, similar organizations. In this connection it should be noted that, despite the speeches of Vice-President-elect Barkley, Secretary of Labor Tobin, and Am-

bassador-banker Harriman, certain doubts as to whether Truman would "deliver" on his promises were expressed throughout the convention. The A. F. of L. spokesmen therefore did talk about momentary pressure on Congressmen for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, although they admitted they were not against retaining some of its worst features.

It is also important to note that for the first time the usual Red-baiting attacks upon the C.I.O. were absent. The emphasis, on the contrary, was on re-establishing organic unity, for "we have more in common than we have differences."

While Social-Democracy, as typified by Reuther and Rieve, is not as decisive in the A. F. of L. as in the C.I.O., nevertheless there was registered in Cincinnati an increase in Social-Democratic participation and influence. The Social-Democrats form the backbone of the "overseas activity" cadres, who are under the direction of the expelled renegade, Jay Lovestone. They play a considerable role in the L.L.P.E. David Dubinsky, and Alex Rose of the millinery workers' union were more prominent at this convention than usually. Sponsored by the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union and the *New Leader*, the notorious erstwhile Trotskyite and anti-Sovieteer, Max Eastman, made a speech that registered a new low for any A. F. of L. convention in history. He concluded his lynch-spirit fulmination of anti-Soviet and anti-Communist

slanders by imploring the delegates not to "kill the goose that laid the golden eggs," adding: "Capitalism is the only goose that ever laid golden eggs." Eastman knew well that he didn't have to give such advice to the majority of those present; he is aware that these "labor businessmen" don't have anything in common with their rank-and-file, and that the "golden eggs" of capitalism are the sheerest fairy tale to the average A. F. of L. member.

It is of major significance to note that the A. F. of L. reported a dues-paying membership of 7,223,000, exclusive of the disaffiliated United Mine Workers of America and the International Association of Machinists. This constitutes some 60 percent of the organized working class in the country, and important lessons must be drawn from this fact.

In a self-critical way, we must recognize once again that although some beginnings have been made toward influencing workers in A. F. of L. organized industries, particularly outstanding being the East Coast longshore strike and various experiences in California, nevertheless the Party generally continues to underestimate and even ignore these A. F. of L. workers. While the national Trade Union Department has actively participated in these limited activities, there is a strong tendency in our own day-to-day work to separate A. F. of L. and C.I.O. activity into two separate compartments and to concentrate on the latter.

Throughout the years, it has been demonstrated time after time that precisely when the A. F. of L. rank and file is moving forward, the A. F. of L. bureaucracy will intensify its support of the reactionary policies of American capitalism. Was this not historically so in regard to the struggle for unemployed insurance, recognition of the Soviet Union, organization of the unorganized in the mass production industries, etc., etc.? The mere weight of nearly 8 million members emphasizes that these are workers who are little different from those in C.I.O. union, and reemphasizes the decisive importance of increased activity on the part of the Left-progressive forces.

The key to a fundamental change toward influencing A. F. of L. workers is to fight to have the Party understand that trade union work is the responsibility of the entire Party and not just of a Department, and above all to master the methods of working amongst the rank-and-file workers.

AN ESTIMATE OF THE C.I.O. CONVENTION

In a series of articles in the *Daily Worker** this writer has already gone into much detail on the C.I.O. Convention. It is sufficient to emphasize here that which is of decisive importance.

* See *Daily Worker*, December 6-8, 1948, and *The Worker*, December 9.—Ed.

BASIC POLICIES OF THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP

The Right-wing majority at this convention led by Murray and Reuther, followed a political policy that: gave support to the reactionary foreign policies and activities of American imperialism; pledged to adhere to, and work within the framework of, the two-party system of capitalism, and to support President Truman; slavishly repeated all of the anti-Soviet and anti-Communist slanders that one expects to find in the Hearst press; and in all domestic affairs evidenced a class-collaborationist approach that would not collide with this orientation.

How far the C.I.O. leadership and Phil Murray have traveled can be gleaned by contrasting the foreign policy resolutions adopted in 1946 and 1948. In 1946, the foreign policy resolution stated in part:

The foreign policy of our country must be in the interest of all our people and not merely for the benefit of a few. . . .

We know that an enduring peace requires first and above all assurances that there will not be a resurgence of militarism or Nazism within Germany or Japan. For that reason there must be a fulfillment of the agreement between the big powers of the complete demilitarization, utter destruction of all vestiges of fascism. . . .

We know that an enduring peace requires an early agreement . . . for world disarmament. Grandiose demonstrations of military power . . . do not lend themselves to . . . trust. As a re-

sult our nation now has an annual military budget of billions of dollars. . . .

Above all the common people of this country demand that there be a fulfillment of the basic policy of our late President Roosevelt for friendship and unity among the three great wartime allies. . . .

The President recognized that friendship and unity could flow only from understanding, negotiation and agreement and not from maneuver, pressure and denunciation. . . .

We reject all proposals for American participation in any bloc or alliance which would destroy the unity of the Big Three. . . .

Murray attacked the Left-progressives at Portland by accusing them of saying different things in 1948 than they said in '46 or '44 regarding the Democratic Party. Let Murray look in the 1948 book of resolutions for anything that speaks the above clear and correct language with reference to the struggle for peace. *It is not to be found.* Actually, it is Murray himself who has repudiated 1946 by stooping to a gutter level of anti-Soviet and anti-Communist slander and name-calling unparalleled anywhere except in the filth of the Peglers, Riesels, and Von Wiegands. Mr. Murray will be indignant at this characterization, but let him re-read his daily speeches in the record. The foreign policy resolution this year whispers not a word for Big Three unity. Instead it condemns the Soviet Union; it supports the Marshall Plan; it is silent regarding the restoration

of the Nazis and the Nazi cartels in Germany; it condemns the alleged misuse of the veto in the U.N.; it supports the bi-partisan foreign policy with its cold war leading to a new war; it speaks out against disarmament, and for the first time does not go on record against peace-time military conscription.

The logic of this political position of the Convention majority led to:

(1) Complete neglect or evasion of most of the burning issues confronting the workers, such as speed-up and the short work-week and unemployment. There was no plan for the militant defense of conditions on a day-to-day basis in the shops, no real outlook for a fighting policy on wage increases, etc. In fact, one even detected a note of preparation for a program of austerity for one resolution refers to "the drains necessarily occasioned by rearmament and the E.R.P. . . ."

(2) Lower representation by Negro workers than at previous conventions, and a most formal and routine approach to the problems of the Negro people—limited essentially to civil rights. The Right-wing machine running the convention machinery also pursued the condescending practice of following up a Left-progressive Negro delegate-speaker by one of the other, few Negro leaders tied to the Right-wing majority machine.

(3) The laying of the foundations for withdrawing the C.I.O. from the W.F.T.U., and the failure, for the

first time in years, to mention and greet the C.T.A.L.

(4) A sharp restriction on the traditionally democratic practices of the C.I.O. This is evidenced in the bureaucratic lifting of the charter of the New York C.I.O. Council merely because the latter did not goose-step in line with Truman and the Marshall Plan. It was further seen in the unprecedented Executive Board action of issuing a 60-day ultimatum to the Farm Equipment Union (F.E.) dictatorially ordering that union to merge with the United Auto Workers (U.A.W.) without so much as consulting the democratic will of F.E. members. This trend was capped by the resolution giving the Executive Board power to move against the jurisdiction as well as the very existence of Internationals that do not accept political dictates—dictates that would destroy the autonomy and independence of thought and conscience that was one of the cornerstones on which the C.I.O. was founded.

The actions of this Right-wing Murray-Reuther Convention majority correspond neither to the feelings nor the interests of the C.I.O. membership. Over the last year, strike struggles in such industries as maritime, packing, auto, communications, and brewery, and the expression of rank-and-file moods of struggle among workers in Ford's, New York transport, the rubber convention, etc., all indicate the real spirit of the workers. This sentiment, especially

in view of the presence of a Left-progressive minority fighting at the Convention, could not as it was at the A. F. of L. Convention, be completely excluded at the C.I.O. meetings. Therefore, resolutions were adopted calling for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, protection of civil rights and of democracy, farmer-labor unity, a better Fair Labor Standards Act, and rent control, and opposing injunction. The Executive Board also called for the abolition of the House Un-American Committee. Even the anemic wage resolution is a sop designed to placate the growing discontent below. These actions should be utilized to develop mass struggles by the members—of *all* affiliates—thereby exposing the reactionary character of the overall C.I.O. program, with which such struggles must inevitably collide.

The widely-publicized keynote political address of the convention, that of Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, laid the ideological foundations for the class-collaborationist policies and actions of the convention. Douglas, singling out Reuther for special praise as one of the present-day labor leaders who furthered such class-collaborationism,* went on to deride the idea of the existence of class and of a class struggle in the U.S.—"the American way builds a classless society without exploitation of any group"—and to call upon

* See, for example, Reuther's speech at the 1947 Boston C.I.O. convention, in which were voiced essentially the same notions as those preached by Douglas.

American labor—which "is peculiarly qualified to bridge a gap that has been growing between the United States and Europe"—to act as a fifth column in the working-class movement of Western Europe in the interests of U.S. imperialism's designs to dominate the world.

The Right-wing coalition of majority leadership that emerges from this Convention is a combination of Social-Democrats, Murray-supporters, and the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. Its leadership is personified by Murray and Reuther, neither of whom is subordinate to the other and between whom there was absolutely no difference on basic policy at this Convention. It is important, nevertheless, to take note that this convention of the C.I.O. has gone a long way toward adopting in full the Social-Democratic policies that Reuther represents. The Reuther forces and ideology can therefore be said to have greatly extended their influence at this convention.

ROLE, PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES OF LEFT-PROGRESSIVES

The Left-progressive current in the C.I.O. was represented for the first time at a C.I.O. convention by its own independent program on fundamental issues. These issues comprised higher wages, condemnation of the raiding of progressive unions by Right-wing unions, complete repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, and criticism of C.I.O. Secretary James A. Carey's testimony before

the House Labor Committee as an unprincipled attack on the United Electrical Workers. The Left-progressives demanded support for a real peace policy based on the program of American-Soviet friendship launched by F.D.R., and opposition to the present atomic diplomacy of cold war, the Truman Doctrine, and the Marshall Plan. It presented a positive estimate of trade union support for the Progressive Party and Wallace as a contribution in the election campaign; and for united action and reliance on labor's own strength, not the good will of the Administration, to secure the things for which the trade unionists voted. The Left-progressives called for a united C.I.O. with the right to political difference and with an immediate end to union raiding.

The majority of the Left-progressive and Communist forces fought for this program at the Convention and in its committees and clearly expressed the position of the Left on fundamental issues, thereby creating a new precedent and a new opportunity for bringing these issues to the ranks of the workers. Despite hysteria and intimidation, and lack of unity in the ranks of the Left-progressive forces themselves, the convention record shows many delegates fighting for this program. Outstanding in the overall work of the convention and of the Executive Board was the leadership of Ben Gold (International President of the Fur and Leather Workers' Union) and Joseph

Selly (International President of the American Communications Association). Any notion that the Left-progressive forces "collapsed" or suffered a "debacle," or that the Left-progressive forces based their convention preparations on accommodating themselves to Murray's program, *is neither in accord with the facts nor a correct analysis.*

In fact, an important feature of this convention is the new role of the Left-progressive forces. This is so because:

(1) For a long time during the life of the basically correct Left-Center coalition (1936-1946) the Left forces too often did not bring forward, or fight for, their own independent position.

(2) At the 1947 Boston convention, the Left-progressive forces maintained the expression of the Left-Center coalition through the medium of unanimous but unclear resolutions, although there was no unanimous policy.

(3) At the Executive Board meetings of January and September, 1948, the Left-progressive Executive Board members expressed their viewpoints in a negative way by voting against Murray's policies on controversial points, but were never able as a group to sponsor a common minority viewpoint on policy.

(4) Therefore, at this convention, when a Left-progressive minority policy was introduced and fought for, even though it still demonstrated a certain lack of unity of the Left, an

important step forward in the interests of all members of the C.I.O. was taken.

Without detracting from the significance and contribution of introducing and fighting for a constructive Left-progressive program—which deserves the main emphasis—the C.I.O. members, and in the first instance the Left-progressive forces themselves, must recognize serious weaknesses, and even the capitulation of certain forces, in this fight. These weaknesses were: (a) The lack of unity of the Left, as expressed in the small vote against the lifting of the New York Council charter; only a portion of the Left delegates on the Resolutions and Officers' Report Committees signed the minority reports; the vote of such delegations as U.E., longshore, and the furniture workers in support of the Officers' Report; the failure of some important delegations to join with the others to provide floor leadership in support of the minority resolutions, even though voting for them; (b) the failure to grasp the initiative effectively on some of the important issues close to the hearts of the rank and file of all unions and capable of more clearly exposing the role of Murray, Reuther, and Rieve; (c) allowing Murray to misuse the issue of organizing the unorganized as a means of threatening the disorganization of a number of smaller progressive-led Internationals and of detracting from the established record of the Left-progressive unions as

among the foremost in organizing the unorganized; and (d) failure to show in simple and convincing terms, how the Marshall Plan undermines the conditions of the American workers and the whole people through wage cuts, speedup, increased taxes, layoffs, regimentation of trade unions, etc.

The question arises: Why the division in the ranks of the Left-progressive forces at the Convention? Undoubtedly there is no one answer, but a complex of reasons. Some Left delegates exhibited timidity and fear under the impact of intimidation and hysteria. Others mistakenly thought that if they "don't stick their necks out," or if they "sit this one out," they might be forgotten or passed over. The F.E. delegation felt the whiplash of that mistake. This should be a lesson to such delegations as those from the packinghouse and shoe workers.

However, there are some more fundamental reasons. Should any Left-progressive trade union leaders have interpreted the election of Truman as a defeat for reaction, or thought that Truman's election is equivalent to a revival of the Roosevelt New Deal principles, they would find it difficult to wage a consistent struggle against the convention policies of Murray, Reuther, Rieve, and Potofsky. Of if any Left-progressive trade union leader saw the strength of the Wallace movement mirrored only in one million votes, and not in the several million supporters it actually

had and in the political role it played, such a person would have been more easily intimidated. Then, too, there may still have been some lingering illusions regarding Murray, or reliance on alleged differences between Murray and Reuther. These factors, together with an underestimation of the strength of the Left-progressive unions if their forces were united in defending their position instead of being chopped to pieces one by one, are the main reasons for the division in the ranks of the Left-progressive forces at the convention.

Contributing to this situation was the absence of complete unity of action on the part of a few Communist forces at the convention, although the majority, joined by the other Left-progressive forces, made a fight and registered their position.

Without minimizing the main shortcomings, as well as certain other weaknesses on the part of the Left-progressives in their preparations for the convention, the central thing that stands out is the positive feature of the introduction of the program of the progressives and their fight on its behalf.

The convention experiences emphasize the need for alertness by all Left-progressives to the Right-wing strategy of "divide and conquer" by threats or flattery. The Left-progressive ranks, irrespective of events at Portland, must be reunited and further strengthened. Maximum unity of all Left-progressive forces in the struggle around issues that advance

the interests of their own membership and of the whole C.I.O. is the urgent need today.

CO-ORDINATION OF ALL LEFT-PROGRESSIVE FORCES AND A PROGRAM FOR THE LEFT-PROGRESSIVE TREND IN AMERICAN LABOR

The Left-progressive trend in the trade unions is not limited to any given union, but is developing in the C.I.O., the A. F. of L., and independent unions. It represents forces on all levels, including internationals and divisions of internationals; but above all, its base is the active, growing force of local union leaders, shop stewards, and rank-and-file members in both Left- and Right-led unions. Together, this is a potentially powerful force. Its greatest problem is to learn how to assert and extend its influence among the rank and file and to overcome the very grave weaknesses of lack of unity and of a common approach to basic problems.

MAIN EMPHASIS ON WORK AMONGST THE RANK-AND-FILE

In every union, Left-progressive or Right-led, the most effective way to strengthen the fight for the interests of the membership and to strengthen the union itself as a fighter for those interests, is to activate and win the rank and file for progressive policies. This means solid work primarily in the shop, on the

job. In the course of struggles around those issues that arouse the workers most, the advanced workers must help all the workers to draw political conclusions; they must demonstrate the connection between individual, immediate issues and the imperialist, reactionary program of Big Business and the Administration.

Full understanding of this emphasis on the role of the rank and file means that Left-progressive leaders must have confidence in the rank and file. It means strengthening and extending the shop steward and grievance systems, and bringing the leadership and membership into closer contact.

The rooting of activity in, and development of struggle on, issues understood by the rank and file is the only effective way to maintain the unity of the union, expose the policies of Right reformist leaders, give support to, and maintain in leadership, Left-progressive forces, and in the course of day-to-day struggles show the connection between the economic and political issues.

With this approach, we nevertheless believe it is necessary and possible to maintain existing coalitions of leadership which are based upon a program of struggle on those issues representing the needs of the rank and file. Moreover, such coalitions should be strengthened and extended on all levels. Even where there are sharp differences on certain basic programmatic questions, all trade unionists should strive to establish a

united fighting front around such issues on which they agree.

PROGRAM OF STRUGGLE

The central task is to organize the workers and lead them in united struggle for defense of their economic and political interests. Effective application of the united front tactic, especially among the workers on a shop, local union, or city level, is the medium for advancing successful struggle and simultaneously maintaining maximum united action. To accomplish this, it is essential for the Left-progressive forces to have a program and a concerted plan of action which takes into account not only the role of the Left-progressive trade unions, but also the militant rank and file and progressive-led locals of the Right-led internationals. The following are the key lines of daily struggle in the period ahead:

(1) Develop mass struggles from below around such urgent economic issues as wages, speedup, layoffs, the 30-hour week, etc. In the course of such struggles, help the workers draw lessons as to the relationship of the "cold war," the Marshall Plan, increased armaments, and the domestic growth of reaction, to the struggle for their economic demands. A propaganda campaign must be launched around the issue of the 30-hour week, discussing the issue itself, and the concrete way in which it can be raised, particularly in industries where layoffs and speedup are being

felt the most. It should be our objective to help develop a nationwide movement and coalition on this issue.

(2) Work out a concrete wage program and strategy which will influence the development of a militant fight by the workers of all trade unions for a substantial wage increase now and reject all attempts to tie wages to "escalator clauses" or to statistics of government bodies. This must become the fight of the rank and file in both the Left-led and Right-led unions.

(3) Be alert on, and keep to the fore within the framework of the general struggle, the specific issues that confront the Negro workers. The Right-wing leaders, while paying lip-service to the struggle for civil rights for the Negro people in general, systematically neglect and resist the fight for the additional, special demands of the Negro worker in industry and within the union itself. Too often, the Left-progressive leaders are also negligent on this, and must be prodded from below on the basis of common support of the rank and file for these demands.

(4) Develop a broad movement for the complete and unconditional repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, without allowing it to be left in the hands of the Right-wing leaders. While the latter formally declare themselves in favor of repeal, their tie-up with the Truman Administration can well result in their accepting the so-called compromises of Truman and Tobin

—which include many of the restrictive features of the Taft-Hartley law itself. The Left-progressive forces should take the lead on this issue while working in co-operation with the rest of the labor movement in attempting to build the broadest united front movements of labor on a local, state, and national level. The Left-progressive forces should fight uncompromisingly for complete repeal, and by the effective strength of the movement below, bring constant pressure to bear on the officialdom against accepting any "compromise" measures. The Left-progressive forces in the trade unions, in co-operation with all other progressive forces, should also take the initiative to see that the provisions of the Wagner Labor Act and the Norris-LaGuardia anti-injunction act are introduced in Congress, and that a real fight is conducted in and out of Congress for their enactment into law.

(5) The convening of the 81st Congress calls for the maximum efforts of the Left-progressive forces—on the basis of a comprehensive legislative program on both domestic and foreign policy—to mobilize masses of workers to fight for the enactment of such progressive legislation. Only through this kind of struggle will the workers learn to depend upon their own organized strength and break with the tendency to regard gains which are won as the gifts of the Truman Administration or the reformist labor leaders. The effectiveness of such a legislative fight

will help determine whether Truman and the C.I.O. Right-wing leadership will continue to be able to perpetuate the "lesser evil" theory, or whether such illusions in the minds of the workers will be smashed.

As a result of the involvement of the workers in such struggles, and the maximum development of united front action around individual, specific issues, the C.I.O. members, in growing numbers, will become aware of, and combat, the class-collaboration policies and maneuvers of the Murray-Reuther leadership.

Side-by-side with the struggle on these issues, the Left-progressive forces, in whichever union they may be, must again champion the organization of the unorganized. Toward this end, they should help develop in each industry, and with special attention to the South, a concrete program of organization. Without underestimating certain difficulties which may be expected to arise, it is possible to try to overcome them by working out a program embracing demands that will represent the interests of the unorganized, and to involve, in a completely new way, the rank and file itself as the decisive organizers of the unorganized. In the course of such organizing work, consideration should be given to various forms of struggle for the demands of the workers concerned—and not merely to the signing of cards—as the decisive form of activity.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND TRADE UNION WORK

Estimate of Developments in the Trade Union Field, and Perspectives

It is a primary responsibility of a Communist Party to be ever alert to new developments—to make a proper estimate of such developments, analyze the work and policies of the Party self-critically, and outline perspectives and tasks for the period ahead.

Since the time when our Party attained any degree of Marxist-Leninist maturity, there has been one overall strategic line guiding us in trade union work—the maintenance of contact with the main body of workers in the organized labor movement, and the strengthening of this bond without obscuring our own vanguard role. We have not always been successful in this respect, but we have always been conscious that this is our main guidepost.

Of course, it is clear that while the Party has only one basic and uniform trade union policy, the concrete application of this general policy will vary from industry to industry, and from area to area.

THE 14TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

The 14th National Convention gave our Party the required estimate of new developments: it analyzed our work and policies, and outlined perspectives and tasks. Within the general framework of convention de-

isions, this applies to trade union work as to every other major field of activity.

The Convention, examining the relationship of forces, emphasized that "the central task of the Party in this period is to help forge the broadest people's anti-monopoly and peace coalition, in which the working class must play the leading role."

After analyzing the trends in the labor movement, the relationship between the Party and the working class, and the breakup of the Left-Center coalition in the C.I.O., and after self-critically examining all our trade union work, especially our setbacks, the Convention adopted the following main perspectives and tasks in the trade union field:

1. The need for all Communist trade unionists to relate their day-to-day work to longer-term perspectives (which were outlined by the Convention).

2. The necessity for developing confidence in the ability and willingness of workers to struggle and fight back if issues are made clear and effective leadership is provided.

3. The need to influence the workers, on the basis of their own experiences and struggles, toward becoming the backbone of the developing anti-monopoly, peace coalition and of its organized political expression, the Progressive Party.

4. The need of the Left-progressive-led trade unions to unite their strength and co-ordinate their activities.

5. The necessity for elevating activity among members of Right-led unions—whether A. F. of L., or C.I.O.—to first place in our overall work.

6. The need to develop struggles on the basis of maximum unity of labor, and in the course of such struggles to raise the level of class consciousness of the workers.

7. The need for a sharp change toward a consistent policy and program of Party concentration among the workers in the basic industries.

8. The need, in the course of developing the above activities, more effectively to help the workers to fight against the growth of class-collaborationist influence in the labor movement.

Basing ourselves upon the policies of our 14th Convention, and in the light of new developments, including the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. conventions, what are our main perspectives for the immediate period ahead?

FIGHT FOR UNITED TRADE UNIONS ON A DEMOCRATIC BASIS

We emphasize the need for continued and intensified work inside the existing trade union centers with accompanying steps to formulate and clarify a Left-progressive program and rally maximum support behind it. Within the A. F. of L., the work will be exclusively among the rank-and-file and the local union activists. In the C.I.O., there must be a combination of work on all levels,

but with main attention devoted to rallying and uniting the rank-and-file in support of a Left-progressive trade union program drafted by all these forces, Communist as well as non-Communist.

The C.I.O., despite its present Right-wing leadership, is still the trade union federation of the majority of the organized workers in the basic industries and large shops. This gives it a special significance and weight among the entire nationwide trade union membership. Recognizing this special weight of C.I.O. members in no way minimizes the role of, and need to work among, the workers in the A. F. of L.-organized industries, not to speak of the coal miners, machinists, and railroad workers. In the day-to-day trade union work of the Party we must liquidate all remaining tendencies toward dealing with trade union work in two separate compartments. On the contrary, we must view our trade union work as the task of influencing and winning *the workers* for a correct policy that advances their interests. Once won for correct policies, the workers themselves will carry the fight into their mass organizations. With the A. F. of L. representing some 60 per cent of the organized working class, it is clear that developing effective activity amongst all workers in the shops will result also in influencing the A. F. of L. unions.

We emphasize, therefore, the decisive importance of augmenting our

influence amongst the workers in all reactionary-led unions, whether A. F. of L., C.I.O., or unaffiliated. We especially lay stress on the need further to improve our work among A. F. of L. workers and to eliminate all tendencies in our ranks which base themselves on the view that successful activity among A. F. of L. workers is impossible.

As regards the C.I.O., the Left-progressive forces have not only been among its best builders, but have fought for its unity on behalf of the interests of its members. Today, the unity of the C.I.O. is threatened by the Right-wing leadership's neglect of the interests of the members, by the raiding of progressive-led unions conducted by Right-led unions, by the effort to destroy trade-union democracy and impose a regimented political opinion, and by injecting into the bloodstream of the C.I.O. the reactionary practice of Red-baiting and political discrimination.

The fight today for a united C.I.O., on the basis of the prohibition of raiding, and defense of the right to political differences and the inviolability of the autonomy and democracy of international unions and their locals in Councils, is a central and profound task of all C.I.O. members.

Proposals that lead away from the fight to remain in the C.I.O. and to restore it to the membership and to progressive policies, are unsound and contrary to the present interests of the members, and do not correspond

to an exact estimate of the overall situation in the labor movement at this moment.

RIGHT AND "LEFT" ATTACKS ON PARTY TRADE UNION POLICY

Precisely because of the sound trade union policy adopted at the 14th Convention after a self-critical examination of the trade union work of the Party, Communist trade unionists have been able to join with other Left-progressive forces in every phase of work—whether in shop struggles or at the C.I.O. convention—to help influence the adoption of correct, fighting policies. There are still serious weaknesses that the Party must direct itself to overcoming, as we have indicated in this article, but progress has been made in carrying out the Convention policy.

As could be expected, the Party's trade union work is under attack from both the Right and "Left" renegades. Browder has just issued, under the pseudonym of "Americus," a new pamphlet attacking the Party, entitled *Where Do We Go From Here?* This is not the place to expose this Browderite slander. Where Browder is going is no longer an open question—it is settled. He is a part of the camp struggling against the Communist Party. He accuses the Party of responsibility for a "general wrecking of the powerful Left-wing movement," and further asserts that the Left forces in the C.I.O. are re-

sponsible for breaking up the Left-Center coalition because they demanded "decisive authority in coalition councils" and adopted toward Murray's formerly Center forces "an intransigent, Left position" on the question of the Marshall Plan and the candidacy of Wallace in the 1948 elections. Such ingenious conclusions, not to speak of his deliberate falsehoods regarding Convention trade union analyses, all flow from his revision of Marxism-Leninism. He continues to defend the concept of "progressive capitalism," and clearly believes that the Left and Communist forces in the C.I.O. should have found some accommodating position on the Marshall Plan and probably on the question of supporting Truman in the campaign. No wonder that in 57 pages there is not one word of criticism of Murray or Reuther, but only an attack on the Communists and a defense of the deserters from the Left-wing of the trade union movement. Browder continues with unbounded egoism—although the effects of his revisionist policies still contribute to some of our problems today—to prate pontifically about the "profound theoretical inadequacy" and "ineptness of practice" of the Party. Just as in 1946 and 1947 he was an apologist for Truman, so today he performs the same role with reference to Murray and Reuther in the labor movement.

From the camp of the Trotskyite and "Left" phrasemongering

Francis Franklin renegades comes an estimate of the role of the Communists at the C.I.O. convention as "a Stalinist debacle." Such slanders must be exposed and decisively rejected. Precisely at this convention, as we have described earlier, the Left-progressive forces, for the first time in C.I.O. conventions, introduced and fought for an essentially correct program, representing the interests of all C.I.O. members.

Thus, we see the unity of the Right and "Left" opportunists in their hatred of, and attacks on, our Party. The roots of the anti-Party policies of both groups lie in their isolation from the masses of the workers and their departure from and assault upon Marxist-Leninist theory and practice.

GAP BETWEEN DECISIONS AND THEIR EXECUTION BEING CLOSED

The work of the Party since the 14th Convention, especially since the events at the C.I.O. convention and the development of such activities as the struggle against the deadly speedup system in Ford, represents an important advance in the Party's struggle to close the gap between the formulation and execution of decisions. Nevertheless, we do recognize that in our trade union work, as in other fields of mass work, there continues to exist a certain gap between the arrival at Party decisions and their fulfillment. We further recognize that the experiences of the

Party in the past period, in particular the failure fully to mobilize our trade union forces in the 1948 election campaign and the lack of unity in the ranks of the Left-progressive and Party forces at the C.I.O. convention, show that the struggle against Right opportunism and the fight to cement the unity of the Left and Party forces in the trade unions around a militant program, must be further sharpened and improved.

However, the Party, unitedly, and with firm conviction, rejects as completely unfounded any notions of a growing gap between our Party theory and our practice in trade union work.

A remaining central question consists in clarifying and placing on a correct basis the relations of the Party to all Communists who are trade union leaders. The Communist Party has not now, and has never had, a desire to intervene in the affairs of any trade union. It is the duty of all the members of the trade unions democratically to regulate their own union affairs, adopt policies, and elect leadership. The Communist Party is concerned with political policies that will influence the workers in the direction of advancing their struggles for a better life today as well as tomorrow. It is a prerequisite of this approach that just as there is only one Communist Party, so also there is only one policy of the Communist Party, adopted democratically by the workers, but applicable to all its members, irrespective of where

they are or what position they hold. Insofar as any Communist weakens this concept of a united Party, he weakens the effective struggle of the workers concerned.

We should do everything possible to convince those non-Party Left-progressives who evidenced momentary vacillation and weakening, of the incorrectness of their actions; but we must do this to strengthen, not weaken, the united front relations with them. As to the Right opportunist disagreement with, and even resistance to, Party policy on the part of some Communist trade unionists who capitulated in the course of the class struggle, their conduct must be condemned.

It is necessary to wage an intensified ideological struggle to win these comrades for a recognition of the impermissibility of their actions and the correctness of Party trade union policy. All of our recent experiences emphasize as never before the need for a conscious, persistent, and sharp struggle to strengthen the Party and our press. This is decisive for the successful carrying-through of our policies. It requires a new initiative in executing our concentration policy and program in the selected basic industries. It requires a systematic campaign on the ideological front in the press and over the radio, by debates among the workers, and in our own trade

union ranks, by a larger circulation and reading of *Political Affairs*, the *Daily Worker* and *Worker*, and the Marxist classics. Special attention should be given to Comrade Foster's recent book, *American Trade Unionism*, as a most valuable weapon in this struggle.

This requires, also, an energetic and bold fight for Party ideology among the workers, as well as carrying to them the significance of the defense of our Party and its leaders. It also makes mandatory the consistent building of our Party by daily mass struggles around vital issues, and an improvement in the composition of our Party so that it is made up in its largest numbers of industrial workers, especially from the basic industries.

In its trade union work, the Party's own style of work should be improved to help guarantee greater collective leadership, integration of trade union and organizational work, proper distribution of forces, and increased attention to work among the rank-and-file. Trade union work must become the concern and responsibility of the entire Party without diminishing the political responsibility of the Labor Secretaries of the various Party committees. Special attention should be given to the work, life and activities (including shop papers) of the basic Party shop organizations.

The Two Major Variants of Keynesism*

by William Z. Foster

SOME WRONG NOTIONS ABOUT KEYNESISM

DURING THE PAST decade there has been a vast amount of discussion of the doctrines of the late Sir John Maynard Keynes, the noted British economist, both in bourgeois circles and in the ranks of the Communists in the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, Canada, and the United States. Indeed, rarely does an economic discussion take place nowadays without the name and ideas of Keynes playing a key role in it. Nevertheless, there are still prevalent many misconceptions and under-estimations of the very A.B.C. of Keynes' doctrines, and of their significance as a whole. It is the purpose of this article to try to clarify a few of these wrong opinions, preliminary to analyzing the two main orientations within Keynesism, and to explain why Americans should especially concern themselves with the question of Keynesism.

First, there is the current notion that Keynes, although manifestly an outstanding thinker, was just another bourgeois economist, with nothing particularly new or important to say. But this is a big mistake. Keynes does have something of significance in his ideas and every Marx-

ist should acquaint himself with them. The fact is, Keynes is the most important bourgeois economist since Adam Smith and Ricardo. Keynes' main theoretical-practical accomplishment was to undermine, in bourgeois-economic thinking Say's so-called law of markets and its derivative "equilibrium" theories. Of course, Marx and Engels had long before settled accounts most effectively with that absurdity. Sismondi and certain other bourgeois economists of the early nineteenth century also denied the validity of Say's "law"; but it was not till Keynes that academic economics (pushed by the general crisis of capitalism and the great economic crisis of 1929-33) broke loose from Say's "law" of markets.

According to Say's "law," the capitalist economic system has automatic, self-adjusting powers or instrumentalities. Thus, supply creates a corresponding demand, prices balance costs, imports balance exports, capital investment automatically equals accumulation, etc. In effect, Say's "law" gives the obvious implications that there are no inherent contradictions in capitalism, and that the whole "self-regulating" capitalist economy automatically develops in an upward spiral of progress. But

* A speech delivered to a group of students in New York, June 24, 1948.

Keynes, in his major work, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, written during the great world economic crisis and published in 1936, pulled the props out from under Say's comfortable theory.

Noting the vast increase in the productive power of modern capitalist industry in contrast to the lagging capitalist markets, together with the deepening cyclical crises and the spread of mass unemployment, Keynes arrived at the conclusion that there is a basic unbalance in the capitalist system and that this flaw gets worse and worse as capitalism matures. According to Keynes, this flaw originates in a growing tendency for the accumulation of capital (savings, he called it) to take place in such huge amounts that it can no longer find profitable investment, with the result that cyclical economic crises occur, producing increasing mass unemployment. And these economic breakdowns, Keynes pointed out, grow constantly more frequent, extensive, and severe. Far from the "self-regulating" harmonious development, as Say conceived them, the cyclical crises have become so devastating as to threaten the capitalist system. Keynes proposed to overcome this serious "flaw" of capitalism through state intervention in various forms, to stimulate capital investment. Such investment, he believed, would "fill the gap" between production and consumption, thereby keeping the industries in operation and seriously weakening, if not

completely overcoming, the growing danger of mass unemployment. Obviously, this theory, which has become widely accepted in capitalist circles, constituted a major development in bourgeois economics and made of Keynes anything but a routine economist.

A second widespread misconception of the nature of Keynes' ideas is the common belief that Keynes' objective was merely to alleviate the cyclical crisis to a greater or lesser degree. But Keynes set his sights upon a far more ambitious target. Although, of course, Keynes does not admit the Leninist concept of the general crisis of capitalism, his doctrines have the ambitious aim of overcoming this crisis and of stabilizing the capitalist system. That is, Keynes proposes to do away with the general crisis of capitalism by essentially eliminating the cyclical crises in the individual capitalist countries. With the cyclical crises abolished, according to Keynes, and with full employment achieved, there would be no basic economic urge for capitalist countries to wage ruthless international competitive campaigns against each other, to grab for themselves individually all possible markets, supplies of raw materials, and peoples to exploit. Hence, the logical conclusion, which Keynesians pretty generally subscribe to, is that imperialism (in the limits of their understanding of the term) would automatically die out, and so would war. Capitalism would thus become a

sound, viable, and progressive social system. Says Keynes on these larger aspects of his theory:

But if nations can learn to provide themselves with full employment by their domestic policy (and, we must add, if they can attain equilibrium in the trend of their population), there need be no important economic forces calculated to set the interest of one country against its neighbors . . . there would no longer be a pressing motive why one country need force its wares on another or repulse the offerings of its neighbors.*

Here is exposed the full meaning of Keynesism as an attempt to rescue the capitalist system from its deepening general crisis; for if capitalism could overcome its cyclical crises, imperialism and war, as Keynes supposes, obviously there would be no general capitalist crisis left. It is significant that the Keynesian panacea was born in the midst of the great international economic crisis of 1929-33, just when the world capitalists and their economists were so deeply alarmed as to the future of their cracking system. They wracked their brains to find a solution to their overwhelming problem. Keynes furnished the most plausible answer to their fears and prayers, and it is one that satisfies them. His is a scheme which allegedly can make capitalism well and strong. Keynes, therefore, is the major capitalist economic theoretician of the period of imperial-

* *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, p. 382.

ism, of the decline of capitalism. Marxists should not be surprised at this emergence of Keynesism as a new trend in bourgeois economics just at this time, for it is obvious that capitalism, although about to be overwhelmed by its inner contradictions, will nevertheless seek every possible way out of its predicament. Keynesism is capitalism's economic answer to its own general crisis.

A third prevalent error about Keynesism that Communists need be on guard against is the notion, more assumed than openly expressed, that Keynesism is pretty much a matter of abstract sectarian theorizing by bookish bourgeois economists. This is entirely incorrect. Far from being the intellectual plaything of a few professors, Keynesism is very real in the everyday world of bourgeois economics and politics. Keynes, himself a member of the Board of the Bank of England, was the outstanding leader of his time in British economic thinking and policy-making. Actually, his doctrines are widely accepted, in one form or another, by capitalists and bourgeois economists in many capitalist lands. They represent the major course of present-day capitalist economic theory and policy in the imperialist countries. The influence of Keynes has become so far-reaching in capitalist economics that Keynesian policies are now being followed by industrial and political leaders who either have never heard of Keynes or, who, if they have, may

be even formally opposed to him. Their position is much like those many modern historians who, even being radically opposed to Socialism, nevertheless are deeply influenced by Marxist historical methodology. Keynes' influence on bourgeois economics, by the same token, runs far beyond the specific acceptance of his direct proposals.

Alvin Hansen, the leading American Keynesian economist, points out that the major capitalist governments of today, including those of the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, Australia, etc., are all basing their economic policies primarily upon Keynesian thinking.* The fascist governments of Germany, Japan, and Italy were also Keynesian in their economic outlook. Many warm admirers of Keynes, for example, Lawrence R. Klein**, claim that Keynes revolutionized bourgeois economics. But this is not true. Keynes, an enemy of Marxism and Socialism, defended capitalism in theory and practice. Keynes thus did not seek to overthrow the system of bourgeois economics, but to strengthen it. Although Keynes did not revolutionize bourgeois economic thinking, he nevertheless gave it a new orientation, as is to be seen by the widespread acceptance of his ideas, either directly or indirectly, by capitalist leaders. It is not too much to say that Keynesism, far from being

a sectarian "ism," constitutes the main-stream of modern capitalist economic thinking and policy-making. What were Keynesian economic novelties in bourgeois ranks a few years ago are now accepted as commonplace truths.

THE TWO VARIANTS OF KEYNESISM

Another widespread error about Keynesism, akin to those in the foregoing paragraphs, assumes that Keynesians are exclusively liberals. This is by no means the case. Keynes, himself, a prominent British financial leader, was a reactionary. The fact is that, to a greater or lesser extent, and in varying ways, almost all the groups and classes who support capitalism, regardless of what may be their outlook otherwise, are supporters of the basic Keynesian principles. Thus, there are liberal Keynesians of the well-known Roosevelt-Wallace type; there are the Right Social-Democrats—examples, Dubinsky, Reuther, *et al*, who have made Keynesian ideas the basis of their economic program; there are also the conservative trade unionists of the type of Green and Murray, who fundamentally have a Keynesian economic program; there are the reactionaries of the National Association of Manufacturers stamp, who despite their incessant blather about "free enterprise," are also deeply affected by Keynesian conceptions, and fascists, too, are notoriously Keynes-

ians—the writings of Keynes were very popular among the Nazi economists and financial leaders, Schacht being an especially ardent admirer of the noted British economist. The common thread that makes Keynesians of all these elements, of such widely differing class background, is that, as supporters of capitalism, they all accept, each group with its own special application, the main Keynesian thesis that the cultivation of capital investment by the state is indispensable in order to "bridge the gap" between the producing and buying power of the people under capitalism and thus to keep the industries operating.

Although, strictly speaking, there are many sub-varieties of Keynesism, as indicated above, due to the varying applications of Keynes' theories and the different class composition of his devotees, nevertheless, Keynesians may roughly be grouped under two general heads, or variants. These may be designated the "reformist" or "petty-bourgeois" variant, and the "reactionary" or "big capitalist" variant. These two variants differ from each other, in addition to the different class content of their supporters, by the specific means by which they aim to "close the gap" between production and distribution.

The reformist, or petty-bourgeois, ideological variant of Keynesism, better known in the United States as the Roosevelt New Deal economic program, proposes to achieve full employment and maximum industrial

operation by the help of government stimulation of capital investment through the initiation of public works—flood control, road building, soil conservation, reforestation, and other work-making devices. At the same time, it aims at strengthening the purchasing power of the masses through lower prices and higher wages, a more democratic distribution of the tax burden, lower interest rates on the national debt, social security systems, national health plans, and certain curbs on monopoly capital. Toward the end of the Roosevelt period there was added the concept of government-regulated large-scale investment abroad, as exemplified in the Bretton Woods agreement. The main support for this reformist variant of Keynesism comes from large sections of the middle class, from almost the entire trade union bureaucracy, and from Right-wing Social-Democracy. Also, great masses of workers are affected by this variety of Keynesism. Few capitalists, however, support it. Generally, reformist Keynesism has as its expressed goal the development of a "progressive capitalism," as contrasted to "reactionary capitalism."

The reactionary variant of American Keynesism has the backing of the decisive big capitalists, ranging from conservatives to outright fascists. These capitalists, although seldom endorsing Keynesism openly (many of them even condemn Keynes), nevertheless pretty generally accept in practice Keynes' basic

* *Economic Policy and Full Employment*, Chapter V, page 57, etc.)

** *The Keynesian Revolution*, page vii.

thesis as the foundation of their economic policies. They realize quite well that, with the tremendous productive power of modern capitalist industry, there is a constant and imminent danger of a paralyzing cyclical crisis of over-production. Hence, definitely with Keynesian concepts in mind, they seek to accomplish the investment of the dangerous surplus of capital by redoubling their imperialist drive to conquer the world's markets, and by pressing the government into making huge investments for a war economy program. The end goal of their policy is a huge fascist-like military regime at home and war abroad for the conquest of the world.

Building a war economy in the United States has many economic and political advantages for the reactionary capitalist Keynesians, as against the measures proposed by the reformist petty-bourgeois Keynesians. Armament expenditures by the government are incomparably more favorable from a profit standpoint to the capitalists (especially as they lead to the final grand profit orgy of war) in contrast to the less profitable reformist program of public works and the strengthening of the workers' buying power and social security systems. Moreover, gigantic munitions orders can easily be secured under the cover of hysterical war scares, and besides this, the resultant militarization greatly facilitates big capital's drive toward fascism. Hence, the whole trend of

the capitalists is to buttress their normally anemic industries by flooding them with munitions orders. Many economists, more conscious theoretically than the average business men, frankly evaluate the present war economy in the United States as a Keynesian stimulus to industry. At the same time that the big capitalists readily agree to have the government spend many billions yearly for the war economy, they also fill the air with strident cries for government "economy." It will be seen, however, that their ideas of economy in government sum up pretty much to reducing the outlay for all sorts of social services and to the securing of lower taxes for themselves.

The reformist and reactionary variants of Keynesism, despite the essentially different class content and policies of their supporters, are by no means separated from each other in airtight compartments. There is much overlapping between them. Thus, in the United States at the present time, many persons (Berle, Bowles, Henderson, *et al*) and various groups (A. F. of L., C.I.O., A.D.A., etc.) who basically are supporters of the reformist variant of Keynesism, nevertheless are now giving their support to the war economy and militant imperialist program of Big Business. Indeed, at the present time, the great bulk of the reformist Keynesians are in this dangerous position. This signifies that these reformist elements, caught in the logic

of their support of capitalism generally, have been sucked into the powerful vortex of big capital's aggressive offensive to secure world control. The reactionary variant is the dominant aspect of Keynesism in the United States.

Neither the reformist nor the reactionary variant of Keynesism can solve the cyclical economic crisis, and, of course, not the general crisis of capitalism. This is because they do not abolish the basic weakness of capitalism, the fundamental contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of appropriation. Keynesism, in both of its variants, deals only with superficial aspects of capitalism, especially in the field of consumption. It has to do with effects, not with causes. While both variants of Keynesism, by artificially stimulating production and mass purchasing power, through government investment of capital, may temporarily delay the outbreak of a cyclical crisis, nevertheless, in the long run, they both lead to an intensification of the general crisis of the capitalist system.

This fact is quite clear regarding the reactionary variant of Keynesism. The huge armaments program (coupled with its intensive drive to capture world trade), by considerably expanding the market for commodities of all kinds, undoubtedly tends to delay somewhat the outbreak of the cyclical crisis. It is primarily because of a failure properly to evalu-

ate the economic effect of these armaments appropriations (in a Keynesian sense) that the tempo of the coming American economic crisis has been greatly exaggerated. But the armaments program can only postpone the economic crisis in the way in which it is being done in the United States now, accompanied by increasing inflation and signs of economic slackening in various branches of industry. Eventually this imperialist war-economy policy, unless checked by broad mass peace pressure, must inevitably lead to war itself. And far from stabilizing capitalism, modern war will more certainly have a devastating effect generally upon capitalism. War deepens the capitalist crisis in every respect. World War I ushered in the general crisis of capitalism and World War II, expressing the deepening of the general capitalist crisis, greatly intensified it. The two world wars resulted in the elimination of capitalism in many countries, undermined it gravely in many others, and were basically responsible for a large part of the world turning to the path of Socialism. And a World War III would very probably shatter the capitalist system altogether.

The reformist variant of Keynesism, with its program of government-made jobs, social security, higher wages, health programs, etc., also may temporarily delay the outbreak of the cyclical economic crisis and ease somewhat its effects on the workers when it breaks out. But

such policies cannot abolish the cyclical crisis itself, nor do away with mass unemployment, because they, as previously indicated, leave untouched all the basic contradictions arising from the private ownership of the industries and the social character of production.

The futurity of the reformist Keynesian recipe for the economic crisis was demonstrated during the Roosevelt regime. The New Deal policies were, in the main, an application of the reformist variant of Keynesism. Roosevelt, during seven years, sought systematically, by big government expenditures, totaling about 35 billion dollars, to revive lagging industry and to restore so-called prosperity. He also facilitated the growth of the trade unions and the establishment of the beginnings of social insurance of various sorts. The workers, during the Roosevelt regime, fought militantly for these measures, which put them in a much better position to defend their standards of living. That the workers deeply appreciate these gains was dramatically illustrated by their strong endorsement of the New Deal program during the recent Presidential elections, even in the sheerly demagogic form in which it was put forward by President Truman.

However, while the workers, during the New Deal period, were saved from actual starvation by government "pump-priming," and while industry partially recovered in the middle 1930's, the basic economic

fact remains that Roosevelt could not overcome the Great Depression. Production stayed far below normal and there remained constantly a minimum of not less than 10,000,000 unemployed. Pump-priming, or "the multiplier" as the Keynesians call it, could not restore the pre-crisis levels. It was only with the outbreak of World War II and the consequent development of a vast flood of munitions orders, that it was possible for the industries again to go into boom production and to provide approximately full employment. Moreover, during the New Deal period the *basic* contradictions of capitalism, far from being weakened by Roosevelt's Keynesian reforms, were actually intensified, as an examination of the economic facts would evidence (the rapid growth of monopolization and the heightened exploitation of the workers).

Fundamentally, while the Roosevelt New Deal policies, generally speaking, were progressive, in terms of facilitating the struggle of the working class in behalf of its immediate interests, those policies could not change the nature of capitalism as a system based on exploitation of wage labor by capital, and hence could not rid the system of its basic contradictions. As Stalin so cogently put it:

If capitalism could adapt production, not to the acquisition of the maximum of profits, but to the systematic improvement of the material conditions of the mass of the people, if it could

employ its profits, not in satisfying the whims of the parasitic classes, not in perfecting methods of exploitation, not in exporting capital, but in the systematic improvement of the material conditions of the workers and peasants, then there would be no crisis. But then, also, capitalism would not be capitalism. In order to abolish crises, capitalism must be abolished.*

Besides being unable to overcome the cyclical crises of capitalism, there is the dangerous fact that reformist Keynesian illusions regarding a "progressive," crisis-less capitalism, can lead the masses to a defeat by, or a surrender to, the fascists and warmongers of American imperialism. Indeed, as has been indicated above, already many reformist Keynesians are now in the trap of reactionary Big Business through their support of its war economy and imperialist expansionist program.

Any real effort to eliminate the cyclical crisis and its attendant evils must involve an attack against the capitalist system as such. Any mass organization, whether a trade union or broad political party, if it is not to be overwhelmed physically and ideologically by Big Business, must inevitably, by determination of the logic of its general fight against economic chaos, fascism and war, come to the development of a strong fighting program providing for the nationalization of the banks and key industries with democratic controls, the break-up of semi-feudal planta-

tion holdings in the South and the elimination of large-scale corporation farming, the introduction of economic planning, the condition for which is the setting up of a People's Government in transition to Socialism, with the working class in the leadership.

The masses must be made aware that there can no longer be any such thing as a "progressive capitalism," that capitalism in its final stage of imperialism can only bring new hardships and disasters to the people, and that there can be no return to an expanding pre-monopoly capitalism. But this does not mean that all who have illusions that the people can advance by working for a "progressive capitalism," are in their practical activity following a reactionary course. If they identify themselves with reforms involving the curbing of the power of the monopolies, and support a program of united struggle of the people, led by the working class, to realize these immediate objectives then they are objectively acting to promote progress despite their subjective outlook and illusions.

So long as they support a struggle directed against the monopolies along these lines, the ideological differences, which must always be made clear by the Communists, should not make impossible the joint struggle for peace, democracy, and greater economic security. The masses, of course, will inevitably learn from these struggles the necessity for a

* Joseph Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. II, p. 253.

fundamental change. And it is our task to facilitate this development among the masses. What one or another bourgeois-liberal leader will do as the masses go over by necessity to the next and higher stage of the struggle will be determined by many factors which cannot be decided with precision in advance. But the basis for joint action lies in the people's coalition program of action of today and should not be jeopardized on the basis of differences that may arise in the future, provided that the fundamental ideological distinctions between Marxism and bourgeois liberalism are kept clear.

WHY AMERICAN COMMUNISTS SHOULD UNDERSTAND KEYNESISM

Communists in every country should pay far more attention to Keynesism than is yet the case. For, obviously, when a theory is enjoying such wide acceptance in capitalist circles under the pretext that it can cure the general crisis of capitalism, and when it has so profoundly affected all sections of capitalist economic and political thinking, then it certainly merits major analysis by Marxists-Leninists. Therefore, the studies of Keynesism that our Party has been making for the past 18 months have a definite international value. But our Party, too, needs to dig into Keynesism more deeply than it has so far done. Below are several very important reasons why American Communists should especially

concern themselves with this subject and thoroughly understand it, both in its reactionary and reformist variants and in all their implications.

(a) The United States may well be called the birthplace of Keynesism. Although it was Keynes, a British economist, who theorized this new trend in bourgeois economics, nevertheless the practice of it, which preceded the theory, actually had its strongest and earliest impulse here in the United States. Already in the middle 1920's, during the Republican "boom" period, numerous American economists and industrialists, including Tugwell, Carver, Foster & Catchings, Henry Ford, and (believe it or not) Herbert Hoover, began to express alarm at the rapid expansion of production and the failure of the markets correspondingly to grow. They already sensed, and in some cases actually realized the need of strengthening the purchasing power of the masses and of the stimulation of industry by organized capital investment by the government. Many of the economists of this period looked to Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, as a leading champion of bolstering industry by government expenditures. When the great crisis came in 1929, Hoover made a first essay in practical Keynesism with his notorious "trickle down" plan. That is, he allocated billions in subsidies to the capitalists through the newly-organized Reconstruction Finance Corporation, on the assumption that the benefits

therefrom would eventually trickle down to the workers in the shape of additional employment. This plan failed dismally to relieve the crisis. It was not until the advent of Roosevelt in March, 1933, that public works and other characteristics of American Keynesian policies were applied on a large scale. The Keynesian experiments of the British government during the crisis years, even under the Tory government, were also extensive. Roosevelt's New Deal was a specifically American brand of government stimulation of capital investment. Keynes, who visited Roosevelt in the White House, agreed with the general idea behind the New Deal's cultivation of industry, but many of its specific features he disagreed with. Keynes' role was not that he "invented" this new bourgeois orientation in economics, but that he theorized the already extensive practice and gave it more conscious direction.

(b) Another reason why Americans should study Keynesism is that, far more than any other country, the United States offers a fertile field for Keynesian policy. This is because in this country the gap between the expanding producing power of the industries and the lagging consuming power of the markets is much greater than anywhere else in the world. Here, the piling up of surplus capital (called "savings" by the Keynesians) is altogether unprecedented, now reaching the fabulous figure of at least 25 billions per year.

Consequently, the American economy, more than that of any other land, is subject to devastating economic crises. This provides an imperative challenge to the Keynesian economists, both of the reactionary and reformist varieties, to apply their supposed panaceas for the prevention and cure of these economic earthquakes. At the present time, with most of the capitalist countries starved for capital and with the United States saturated with surplus capital, this country provides the world's testing ground for Keynesism.

(c) American Communists must also very carefully study the reactionary variant of Keynesism because this trend is dominant now in American bourgeois economics. The strong Keynesian content in United States government bi-partisan policies is obvious. The bourgeois economists and politicians writing these policies understand very well that while the Marshall Plan billions constitute a subsidy to European industry, they are likewise a stimulant to the industries of this country. The economists, therefore, also definitely consider the present huge armaments outlays in the national budget as a real shot-in-the-arm for American industry. It is now a commonplace to find statements by prominent economists, pointing out that these huge foreign and domestic expenditures by the government are indispensable if an economic crisis in this country is to be either averted or

delayed. President Truman's economic soothsayers are saturated with Keynesism. Thus, T. H. Keyserling, vice-chairman of President Truman's Council of Economic Advisers, in explaining what his committee advocates in order to "prevent" the threatened economic crisis, makes the following typical Keynesian statement:

If full employment is maintained and productively improved, a large increase in consumer incomes will be needed in addition to high business investment to avert a sharp recession and depression in the fifties unless still larger foreign and defense measures are undertaken. . . . The business outlook might be dampened by a decline in government-created demand for foreign aid and preparedness.*

Dr. E. G. Nourse, another of the President's economic advisors, as reported by the Associated Press, stated on November 29, 1948:

The economy is at a "critical point." Except for enlarged defense program and foreign outlays, "deflationary influences would be clearly evident by this time."

A Dewey administration would have had much the same Keynesian consciousness as Truman's government in developing policies of foreign "aid" and a huge armaments program at home. All the more so because, according to Joseph Alsop, Dewey consciously supports Keynesian ideas, although such con-

* *New York Times*, June 13, 1948.

sciousness is unusual among Keynesian-minded reactionaries. Says Alsop in the *Saturday Evening Post*, October 16, 1948:

The evidence even strongly suggests that the Dewey collective accepts Keynesian economics, and will dictate new spending to prime the pump if the present inflationary boom turns into a bust.

Economic Notes, November, 1948, published by the Labor Research Association, contains a whole series of statements by prominent businessmen and economic publications, all to the effect that the present huge armaments expenditures by the government are having a pronounced delaying effect upon the developing economic crisis. This Keynesian idea is now general in Big Business circles. *Barron's*, October 4 (quoted by *Economic Notes*), gives the keynote to this type of thinking, in the following statement, "All fear of a business setback should now be removed by the revelation that a plan for military aid patterned on the E.C.A. program will be one of the first problems submitted to Congress next January."

(d) For Americans, in studying Keynesism, a further very special important consideration is to analyze the direct and powerful relationship that Keynesian thinking has upon the policies of American imperialism. Keynesism has given reactionaries a new and potent impulse to seek, by extreme imperialist policies, to secure all possible fields for capitalist invest-

ment. While under imperialism generally the chief form of export is that of capital, with commodity export of secondary importance, today the pressures have increased for the largest scale export of commodities as well. In earlier periods, foreign investments were sought chiefly because of the rich profits which they provided; but now, to this powerful impulse is added the further pressure that the imperialistic investors realize that they must make the largest possible capital and commodity exports or else, they are sure, their home economy will collapse for want of markets. By the same token, the American Keynesian imperialists have all the stronger reasons for building up the huge armaments program with which to back up their intensified drive for foreign investments and markets.

Certain of the Keynesian economists claim that their program modifies or even liquidates imperialism; but the reverse is the case. Imperialist reactionaries who have a practical grasp of Keynes' theory that the piled-up surplus of capital must be invested on pain of disaster to the capitalist system, are by this very fact made all the more determined and malignant in their imperialist policies. Keynesism does not invalidate Lenin's analysis of imperialism, but involuntarily emphasizes its fundamental correctness. Keynesian conceptions in the minds of the capitalists, while they, of course, do not create imperialism, greatly strengthen

it and make its supporters more conscious. These considerations are especially vital regarding the United States, the greatest of all imperialist powers. The relation of Keynesian thinking to imperialism deserves a thoroughgoing analysis on our part.

(e) American Communists should also study carefully the reformist, as well as the reactionary variant of Keynesism. This is necessary, on the one hand, in order to understand the position of those Keynesians—liberals, trade union leaders, farmer leaders, etc.—who, while in words supporting the Roosevelt line of raising the purchasing power of the masses, nevertheless have allowed themselves to be sucked into the huge armaments and militant imperialist program of Wall Street Big Business. And even more important, it is also necessary to understand that wing of the reformist Keynesians, the Wallaceites, who are so actively fighting against the war policies of the bipartisan reactionaries. Only a Marxist evaluation of Keynesian ideas in general will enable us to realize how to cooperate with the growing people's coalition and also how to combat illusions regarding a so-called progressive capitalism.

(f) A further consideration stressing the special importance of Keynesism to American Communists is the fact that the labor movement in this country is largely following a Keynesian line in its economic policies. The A. F. of L., the C.I.O., the coal miners, the Railroad Brother-

hoods and various independent unions, all subscribe in varying degree to the Keynesian theory that the industries can be kept in full operation and furnish full employment if the capitalist government will stimulate capital investment and systematically strengthen the purchasing power of the workers. If the trade unions in general can be said to have any definite social perspective at all it is the Keynesian objective which is described by Henry Wallace as "progressive capitalism." In the C.I.O. the Keynesian trends are clearer and more pronounced than in the older A. F. of L. and independent unions. All these trends should be carefully studied and analyzed by us.

The rank and file of labor, the great mass of the workers, are also deeply saturated with the Keynesian (Rooseveltian) convictions that government works programs and extended systems of social security suffice to solve all their social problems and are a final guarantee against enforced idleness. Ours is not yet a class-conscious, socialist-minded working class, as is by and large the case in Europe. The workers here are still deeply affected with capitalistic illusions, and these are mostly of the peculiar Keynesian brand, which they absorbed chiefly during the Roosevelt regime. Our workers, nevertheless, are definitely on the advance ideologically. The fact, however, that they now realize that only by political action, by di-

rect government stimulation of industry, can they have a reasonable assurance of jobs, represents objectively a step forward from their former reliance simply upon the automatic operation of the capitalist system to furnish them work. All this, however confusedly, indicates the beginnings of the politicalization of the workers, a first important stride along the route of political struggle, the final end of which is Socialism. Whoever wants to understand the ideology of the American working class, therefore, must understand Keynesism. Left and progressive trade-union leaders should especially acquaint themselves with this whole subject. We need articles, too, on this entire aspect of Keynesism.

(g) We American Communists must, above all, understand Keynesism because it constitutes a head-on challenge to Marxism-Leninism. Whether in its reactionary variant, which leads directly toward fascism and war, or in its reformist variant, which cultivates dangerous illusions about the possibility of transforming the present social system into one of "progressive capitalism," and which largely tends to surrender to the warmakers, Keynesism is a direct attack upon Marxism-Leninism and its goal of Socialism. Nor can it be denied that the Keynesians, particularly during the Roosevelt regime, have scored substantial ideological successes. The Social-Democrats, lost in visions of "progressive capitalism"

(type, Dubinsky, Reuther), never even mention Socialism any more. The liberals have lost their old-time "laissez faire" attitudes and are now ardent supporters of Keynesian policies for government make-work schemes. The Negro masses have also been penetrated to some extent by various Keynesian illusions. And we have seen to our cost that Earl Browder became a Roosevelt Keynesian and actually wanted us to sell our Marxist-Leninist birthright for a mess of "progressive capitalism" pottage. And some try to prove that Keynesism constitutes an addition, and an improvement, to a "somewhat outmoded Marxism."

If we have to acknowledge the fact that there is now far less ad-

vocacy of Socialism being carried on in the trade unions of this country than there was a generation ago, this is very largely to be ascribed to the tremendous growth of Keynesian illusions in the labor movement during the Roosevelt regime. Emboldened by these successes, the conscious followers of Keynes declare that their masters' ideas have rendered Marxism and Socialism obsolete. The Keynesians are would-be saviors of the capitalist system, and we Communists must resolutely take up the challenge thrown by them to us. But we can do this effectively only if we understand Keynesism thoroughly, in all its ramifications and implications.

"Marxism is the scientific expression of the fundamental interests of the working class. If Marxism is to be destroyed, the working class must be destroyed. And it is impossible to destroy the working class. More than eighty years ago have passed since Marxism came into the arena. During this time scores and hundreds of bourgeois governments have tried to destroy Marxism. But what has been the upshot? Bourgeois governments have come and gone, but Marxism still goes on."

Joseph Stalin, *Leninism: Selected Writings*, p. 359.

The Meaning of the Chinese Revolutionary Victories

by Frederick V. Field

IN THESE MOMENTOUS DAYS the most populous nation on earth is passing out of the orbit of imperialism into the camp of peace and democracy. The Chinese people, who comprise nearly one-quarter of the world's population, are joining the orbit of Socialism. They are divorcing themselves from monopoly capitalism and setting their course against its war-making machinations.

This is an historic event, the significance of which is equalled only by the outstanding revolutionary moments of world history. It seizes the emotions of the democratic people throughout the world. In unison with them, we American democrats, all who hold freedom dear, greet our victorious Chinese brothers and sisters with jubilation.

INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHINESE VICTORIES

Such an event does not merely alter the situation in China, nor does its influence simply extend to neighboring areas, important as these developments may be. Nor can one say that the victories of the Chinese Revolution affect only the relations between American imperialism and

China, which it had attempted to make into its colony. None of these formulations gives adequate expression to the importance of this event. We must recognize that the Chinese people are today changing the face of the world. The new world relations which are emerging as a result of the Chinese Revolution are qualitatively different from the old ones.

A year ago, Mao Tse-tung, chairman of the Communist Party of China and leader of the Chinese Revolution, spoke of the events then taking place as "a turning point in history."* He declared that between June and September 1947, the People's Liberation Army had gone over to the offensive on a nation-wide scale. This, he said, marked the turning point "from growth to extermination in 20 years of the counter-revolutionary rule of Chiang Kai-shek," and the turning point "from growth to extermination in more than 100 years of the rule of imperialism in China." Mao then went on to speak of the significance of this change from the defense to the offense:

This is a great event. This event is

* Mao Tse-tung, *Turning Point in China*, New Century Publishers, New York, 1948.

great because it occurs in a country of 450 million people. Once it has taken place, it will of necessity move toward nation-wide victory. This event, furthermore, is great because it occurs in the eastern part of the world where there is a population of more than one billion (half of mankind), suffering from the oppression of imperialism.

The turn of the Chinese people's war of liberation from the defensive to the offensive cannot but bring jubilation and encouragement to these oppressed peoples now struggling in various countries of Europe and the Americas.

With the passing of China into the camp of freedom, it is obvious that imperialism is correspondingly being forced to retreat. Special importance attaches to the particular time and circumstances under which imperialism suffers this defeat.

Historically, the victory of the Chinese revolution is taking place in a period marked by the enhanced position and prestige of the Soviet Union and the deepening general crisis of imperialist capitalism. The Soviet Union, rapidly recovering from the horrible devastation of the war against fascism, is preparing to make immense leaps forward in all spheres of life—in the material circumstances of its people, in scientific discoveries and their application, in culture, and in the political well-being of its vast population. Its great postwar Five Year Plan is advancing the Socialist Soviet Union along the course of gradual transition to Communism. More and more sections of world opinion recognize that the potentialities of Socialism for rapid for-

ward progress far exceed those of capitalism, which is indeed in the historic period of decay. The Eastern European countries, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, have removed themselves from the sphere of imperialism, have politically removed the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and are in transition to the establishment of Socialism. Throughout the world, moreover, the colonial peoples are in ferment. Their revolutionary status is not everywhere alike.

The development of their emancipation struggles is uneven. A great ideological battle, which can be symbolized as a struggle between the "third force" leadership of Nehru and the Marxist leadership of Mao, has erupted throughout the colonial world. The imperialists are, correspondingly, being forced to make concessions to the colonial bourgeoisie, or, as in China, where the revolution is under Marxist leadership, to get out.

The anti-imperialist movement within the capitalist nations forms part of the international progressive camp. In our own country, despite the weaknesses and vacillations of the labor movement, and despite the treacherous course of Social-Democracy, the anti-imperialist movement is growing and struggling to find more effective and powerful expression.

The victories of the Chinese revolution are taking place at a time when world imperialism has been contracted. The Imperialist War of 1914-18 eliminated the German and

Austrian Empires and weakened those of England and France. The Russian Revolution eliminated the Tsarist Empire. World War II brought about the downfall of the relatively new Japanese Empire, destroyed the empire of Mussolini, shattered the new empire of Hitler, and further weakened the position of the British, French and Dutch Empires. Thus, in 30-odd years, the shape and position of imperialism has undergone drastic changes. Only the imperialism of Wall Street has been strengthened and expanded, until today it commands undisputed leadership in the world camp of capitalism.

Mao Tse-tung has described American imperialism as very lonely, as a center of monopoly capitalism, all of whose friends are very ill. "Even penicillin," he says, "will not cure them." The Chinese Communist leaders have never been cowed by the specter of American imperialism. Indeed, during one of the most hazardous periods of the revolution, long before the historical "turning point" of which Mao Tse-tung spoke a year ago, they would jestingly refer to the American imperialists as the best providers the Chinese Communists ever had! They were speaking, of course, of the American arms and ammunition they were seizing in such significant quantities from Chiang Kai-shek's troops. But if it is noted that the Chinese Communists have never been cowed by American imperialism, it must also be said that they have not underestimated the role Wall Street has

sought to play in subjugating and oppressing the world.

The victory of the Chinese revolution is taking place at a time and under circumstances which imbue it with a special qualitative significance. It strikes a direct and damaging blow at the citadel of world imperialism and immensely broadens and strengthens the anti-imperialist sector. At a time of acute world crisis, it demonstrates the power of the people when they are correctly led.

THE CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT STAGE OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

What kind of revolution is it that is today being won in China? An understanding of the character of the Chinese revolution and of its present stage is fundamental to an appreciation of the significance of this historical event.

When we speak of the Chinese people repudiating imperialism and moving into the orbit of world socialism we speak correctly. But we do not thereby imply that the Chinese people are today completing their Socialist revolution. To make such a claim would be the grossest distortion of the facts; it would be to believe in the possibility of an historical anachronism. We mean that the Chinese people are today taking a decisive step on the road to Socialism and away from imperialism. This step is decisive precisely because it removes them historically, practically, and for all time, from the role of puppets to imperialism, and formally places them in the category of

a people's democracy which, in the great contradiction of the modern world, brings them into the great confraternity of the socialist sector of the world.

The Chinese Communist leaders have thoroughly understood the nature of their own revolution for a long time. That goes without saying, for otherwise the revolution would not have been correctly led. Theoretical understanding of the Chinese revolution has been developing ever since the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. The Chinese Communist Party has been tested in severe struggle, including defense against the armed forces of counter-revolution. It has survived and grown under the difficult test of serious Right and Leftist errors within the Party's ranks. It has been hammered out through the united front period of the Canton revolution and the victorious northern expedition, through the period of Chiang Kai-shek's foreign-supported "punitive expeditions," in the Kiangsi "Soviet" period, and during the famous Long March to Yen-an, the Sian Incident, the critical years of the anti-Japanese War, and, finally the postwar struggle against Chiang Kai-shek and American imperialism.

The fullest theoretical work on the nature of the Chinese revolution to be found in English is Mao Tse-tung's *China's New Democracy*,* which was written in 1940 and first published in Chinese in January 1941. For an estimation of the great contributions of Chinese thought

to the revolutionary movement throughout the world, these dates should be underscored. Long before the emergence of the first New Type Democracy in Eastern Europe, Mao had come forward with this theoretical work on the new democracy, which, while concretely addressed to the particular circumstances of China, nevertheless deepens our understanding of comparable revolutionary developments elsewhere. *China's New Democracy* constitutes an elaboration of Marxism-Leninism in the field of colonial emancipation and its particular application to the problems of China which is indispensable to Communists throughout the world.

In view of the difficulty of procuring *China's New Democracy* at the present time (the whole of which is to be included in a volume of Mao's selected writings translated into English, now in preparation), it is necessary to devote some space in the present article to its principal points.

In his article of June 30, 1925 ("The National Problem Once Again"), Stalin pointed out that as early as October 1916 Lenin (in "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up") had noted that, to use Stalin's own words, "the main point of the national question concerning the right of self-determination has ceased to be a part of the general democratic movement, that it has become a constituent part of the general proletarian-socialist revolution." Stalin himself wrote in 1925: "It would be absurd to ignore the fact that . . . a fundamental

* New Century Publishers, 1945.

change has taken place in the international situation, that the war, on the one hand, and the October Revolution in Russia, on the other, have converted the national question from a part of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a part of the proletarian-socialist revolution."

Basing himself upon this thesis, Mao Tse-tung adds that from 1917 on, "No matter to what class or party the oppressed people who participate in the revolution belong, or whether or not they consciously or subjectively understand its significance, so long as they are anti-imperialist, their revolution is a part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution, and they themselves become its allies."

We understand, then, that the struggle for freedom and independence among the colonial and semi-colonial peoples assumed a new orientation following 1917. Mao explains that the struggle for the establishment of an independent democratic society in China dates back to the 1840's, to the period when the imperialist powers first clamped the unequal treaties upon that country. It was then that China began to change "from its original feudal form to the semi-colonial and semi-feudal form." The decades that followed were punctuated by sharp upheavals which played their historical role in the long quest for independence. Mao lists the Taiping Revolution, the Sino-French War, the Sino-Japanese War, the Reform Movement of 1898, the 1911 Revolution. But until 1917, the

Chinese revolutionary movement was dominated by the bourgeoisie, and its goal, under bourgeois leadership, was the establishment of a bourgeois democracy patterned after the capitalist nations of the West.

The change in the Chinese revolutionary movement which took place following 1917 was marked by (1) a gradual transfer of the leadership and support of the movement from the bourgeoisie to the workers and peasants, and (2) a change in the historical orientation of the revolution from the goal of capitalist democracy to that of Socialism. After World War I, the initiative in the Chinese revolutionary movement passed to the people, the ideological leadership to Marxism-Leninism.

The turning point came, according to Mao Tse-tung, with the May 4 (1919) Movement. This took the form of a nationwide protest against the attempt by the imperialist powers to sell out China at the Versailles Peace Conference, and against the corrupt and reactionary Chinese government. Though initiated by students and the intelligentsia, the protest was taken up by other sectors of the bourgeoisie, such as the merchants, and, of crucial significance, by the broad masses of the proletariat. The May 4th Movement was followed by the 1922 strike of Hongkong seamen, which resulted in the first strike victory in Chinese history, the great strike of railway workers in 1923, the imperialist massacres in Shanghai and Canton in 1925, the famous workers' blockade

of Hongkong in 1925-26 which lasted for sixteen months, and other manifestations of popular revolutionary initiative. The Communist Party of China, which had been organizing during 1919-20, was formally launched in 1921. The All-China Labor Congress grew from 70,000 members in 1922 to over 3,000,000 five years later.

It was during this period, too, that the united front between Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary Kuomintang and the Communists was formed, that millions of peasants were organized under Communist initiative, and that Dr. Sun's famous "Three Principles of the People" were given reality and genuine revolutionary significance through adoption of the corresponding three revolutionary policies. A further word should be said on the latter, for, as is well known, the present Kuomintang as well as the Communists claim to be the carriers of Dr. Sun's revolutionary doctrines, and all groups in China fly the new flag adopted during the period of revolutionary unity in Canton.

Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People"—peoples' livelihood, nationalism, and democracy—were, by themselves, abstractions which could be given reality only by those responsible for putting them into practice. Prior to the united front of 1924 and to the important changes in the character and direction of the revolutionary movement which we have noted, these principles belonged to the old period of bourgeois democracy. But at the First Congress

of the Kuomintang in 1924, Dr. Sun interpreted the Three Principles in such a way as to bring them into the new, proletarian stream of history. He did this by linking them up integrally with his three revolutionary policies, namely, alliance with the U.S.S.R., cooperation with the Communists, and protection of the interests of the peasants and workers. This formulation was adopted by the Kuomintang Congress.

It can be readily understood why, on the one hand, the Three Principles, divorced from the three revolutionary policies, became the paper slogan of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang after the betrayal of the revolution in 1927, and why the Principles, with the three revolutionary policies as an integral part of them, became the living slogan of the united revolutionary front of the proletariat, the peasants, and other revolutionary sectors of Chinese society. Peoples' livelihood, nationalism, and democracy, with the three policies designed to endow them with a dynamic reality, have become the program for the workers and peasants. They thus form a binding link among the revolutionary classes during the present stage of the revolution.

It is not necessary in this article to trace the development of the revolutionary movement from the period just described to date. We have dealt at some length with the period immediately following World War I in order to clarify the nature and importance of the changes in direction and leadership which took place in

the revolutionary movement at that time. Suffice it to note, as events make manifest, that the dominant leadership has now completely passed over to the workers and peasants, and that the historical orientation of their revolution, as between the goal of imperialist America or the land of Socialism, is crystal clear.

Nevertheless, the Chinese revolution remains in the category of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. The present decisive victories represent the achievement of the bourgeois-democratic revolution on a scale which no one doubts will soon be nationwide. What we have discussed is the two stages through which that bourgeois-democratic revolution has passed. It failed to be victorious before 1917. Under the dominance of the bourgeoisie, and directed toward a bourgeois dictatorship, it necessarily failed. Under the new leadership and orientation brought about by international events, and marked inside China by the May 4, 1919 movement and the formation of the Communist Party, China's democratic revolution is today being achieved.

With this general background in mind, we may proceed to become more precise in our characterization of the present stage of the Chinese revolution. Before doing so, however, lest there be any confusion as to the historical perspective, we should repeat that the present victories and the achievement of the democratic revolution represent only the minimum program of China's

revolutionary leaders, the Communists. The second and final stage will, of course, be the transition to Socialism. This second stage cannot be entered until the democratic revolution has been consolidated, that is to say, until the preconditions for Socialism have been established.

Mao Tse-tung and other Communist leaders have written extensively on the politics and economics of the Chinese new democracy. But one does not have to rely solely on their writings to know the politics or economics of the new China; for vast sections of the country have been liberated from imperialism and feudalism over a period of years. Already in the spring of 1948, the Liberated Areas approximated 2,350,000 square kilometers, or one-quarter of China's total area, with 168,000,000 people, or 35 percent of China's population, and including 586 towns and cities. A great many features of the new China have therefore already been brought to light in actual practice.

In writing on the politics and the class composition of new China, Mao Tse-tung says: "According to their social character, the various national politics of the world may be fundamentally classified into the following three categories, republics ruled by the bourgeoisie, republics ruled by the proletariat, and republics jointly ruled by several revolutionary classes." The new China, naturally, belongs to the last classification. It is to be governed by a coalition of all anti-imperialist, anti-feudal classes.

The vital social forces of the new democracy are the proletariat, the peasants, the intelligentsia, and other petty-bourgeois elements, which constitute more than eighty-five percent of the population. The coalition will also include important sectors of the middle bourgeoisie and certain of the big bourgeoisie. Generally speaking, in the countryside landlords and rich farmers comprise ten percent of the population, middle and poor farmers and farm workers making up the rest. Our understanding of the Chinese revolution will be deepened by an analysis of the bourgeois elements, including their relation to landlords and rich peasants; for these obviously form the most wavering section of the coalition. Moreover, as we shall note later, it is among these bourgeois groups that imperialism must seek to play its counter-revolutionary role.

We can do no better than turn to Mao Tse-tung's analysis of the role of the Chinese bourgeoisie. In *China's New Democracy* he writes:

The Chinese bourgeoisie is a colonial and semi-colonial bourgeoisie, oppressed by the imperialists, and therefore, even in the epoch of imperialism, it still maintains, for a certain period and to a certain degree, the revolutionary character of opposing imperialism as well as opposing the bureaucratic warlord government of its own country... and can unite with the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie to oppose the enemy whom it is willing to oppose. This is the difference between the Chinese bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie of Tsarist Russia. Tsarist Russia was a

military-feudal-imperialist country, one that oppressed others. The Russian bourgeoisie had nothing revolutionary about it, and the task of the proletariat there was to fight against the bourgeoisie and not to unite with it. However, in China, a country that is colonial and semi-colonial in character and is oppressed by others, the bourgeoisie is revolutionary at certain periods and to a certain extent, and the task of the proletariat is not to neglect the revolutionary character of the bourgeoisie or the possibility of establishing a united front with it against imperialism and the bureaucratic warlord government.

At the same time, the Chinese bourgeoisie, being the bourgeoisie of a colonial and semi-colonial country, is extremely weak politically and economically, and exhibits another characteristic—the characteristic of compromise with the enemy of the revolution. The Chinese bourgeoisie, especially the big bourgeoisie, even in the process of revolution, is never willing to break with the imperialists completely, and being closely associated with rural land exploitation, it is also not willing, and is unable to overthrow imperialism and feudalism thoroughly. Thus, the two fundamental problems or tasks of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution (the overthrow of feudalism and imperialism—F.V.F.) can by no means be solved by the bourgeoisie itself.

Summing up the place of the bourgeoisie in the revolution, Mao writes:

Revolutionary character on the one hand, compromising character on the other—such is the dual character of the Chinese bourgeoisie. This dual character was also seen in the European and American bourgeoisie according to his-

tory. To unite with the workers and peasants to oppose the enemy when the enemy is endangering them and to unite with the enemy to oppose the workers and the peasants when the latter are awakening is a general rule for the bourgeoisie of various countries; only the Chinese bourgeoisie shows this characteristic more vividly.

The revolutionary sectors of the bourgeoisie today form part of the coalition of the Liberated Areas. They will be part of the national coalition of the new China. They will not, however, play a dominant role at any level of government, whether national or village. The composition of these governments will reflect the class composition of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal coalition. As 85 percent of Chinese are workers, peasants, and small farmers, it will be these social forces that form the basic structure of the new local and national governments. The most influential organs of the people will correspondingly be the Communist Party, the trade unions, and the peasant organizations. Mao Tse-tung writes: "A system of genuine, universal election, disregarding differences in sex, beliefs, amount of property, and standard of education in the suffrage, must be practiced, so that it will be fit for the proper status of the various classes in the country, for the expression of the people's opinions, for the direction of revolutionary struggles, and for the spirit of New Democracy." This, together with a system of people's congresses of various grades, from

village to national, through which to elect the various levels of government, "is the system of democratic centralization." This is the politics of the new China which is today being introduced.

What is the economics of the Chinese new democracy? What is the economic organization of China at the stage of the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution which is but a necessary step on the road to Socialism? We need to know how the revolutionary leaders propose to establish in China the preconditions of Socialism.

In his report to the Central Committee of the Communist Party on December 25, 1947 (*Turning Point in China*), Mao pointed out that the object of the new democratic revolution was to eliminate only feudalism and monopoly capitalism, not capitalist economy in general. He said, "Owing to the backwardness of China's economy, it will still be necessary to permit the existence, for a long period, of the capitalist economy represented by the petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie." He described the economic structure of the new China as being composed of three types of economy: (1) State economy; (2) agricultural economy under both individual enterprise and cooperatives, developing from the individual towards the collective basis; and (3) the economy of small and individual industrial and commercial private capital. In interpreting Mao's economic pro-

gram M. T. Yang writes: "This is the transitional period between the conclusion of a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, and the establishment of socialism. It paves the way for the industrial development of capitalism on the one hand and creates the prerequisite for socialism, on the other."*

The present monopolies, concentrated under the Chiang Kai-shek government in the hands of the four ruling families—the Chiangs, Soongs, Kings, and Chens—whose profits go into their private pockets, are, in the new China, to belong to the state. Wage labor will remain, but exploitation of labor in the old sense will not exist in the state sector of the economy of the New Democracy. Small and middle-sized private ventures in industry and commerce will be permitted, and indeed encouraged. Already in the Liberated Areas, public funds have been advanced toward private enterprise. While the development of capitalist enterprise will be encouraged from below, it will be restricted from above. As soon as a privately owned enterprise becomes too big, as soon as it begins to develop into a monopoly, it will be taken over by the state. Thus, the productive and progressive stage of capitalism will be fostered, its monopoly or destructive stage truncated.

At no point will private enterprise dominate the national or local economy of China. The state sector, based upon heavy industry, transportation and finance, will be controlling. In

this way, the foundations of Socialism will be laid, preparatory to the transfer of China's economy to the final stage of Socialism.

The agrarian economy is undergoing the same transition. To speak generally, the first step is the elimination of all traces of feudalism under the slogan "Land to the Tillers" (expropriation, equal distribution, etc.); the second step is encouragement of small and middle farmers; the third step is the promotion of cooperatives (transportation, consumers' labor-exchange, etc.); and the fourth step is the gradual development of strong units of mechanization and collectivization. The growth of this agrarian economy, and that of the industrial economy, will be integrated, each depending upon the development of the other, in terms both of production and of an expanding market.

(For a detailed discussion of the problems and the program of agrarian economy in the new China see "Important Questions in the Chinese Agrarian Reform," by Yen Pi-shih, member of the Central Committee of the CCP, mimeographed and distributed by the Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy.)

The primary constructive objective of the present transitional period is the transformation of Chinese economy from one which is overwhelmingly agrarian to that of an industrial nation. The bourgeois-democratic revolution has established the precondition for industrialization; industrialization will

* *China Digest*, January 27, 1948.

provide the precondition for Socialism.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTIONARY VICTORIES FOR THE U.S.

The victorious offensive of the Chinese People's Armies in the fall of 1948 threw the ranks of American imperialism into confusion. How could the Chinese people prove so ungrateful? How could they repudiate the kindly and generous advice given them by Wall Street? How unmannerly of them to throw the six billion dollars of American taxpayers' money given since V-J Day down the sewer! How was it possible that so few Chinese seemed to appreciate the sterling virtues of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his Madame, their relatives and cronies and fellow-gangsters? Surely these were good people, as good as King George of Greece, or Ilse Koch, or the other noble figures to whom American imperialism had given its postwar blessing. Were the Chinese so stupid as not to realize that what Henry Luce and Bill Bullitt and Roy Howard told them to do, and what Judd and Vandenberg and Taft and the others legislated for them, were in the best interests of the Chinese masses? Were these great Americans not as genuine friends of Chinese independence and democracy as Bevin was of Israel or Churchill of the Indian masses? Surely, the freedom, economic productivity, and human dignity which the Chinese people had chosen appeared to the Wall Street mind to

be "small change" by comparison with the "American Way" of monopoly capitalism which the United States not only offered China, but, in confirmation of the imperialists' deep conviction in their mission, also tried to inject into the Chinese bloodstream with American-made bullets.

What a staggering blow to the prestige of American capitalism! The whole world could now see that it was vulnerable, even stupid. The unschooled, "backward" Chinese peasant had risen up to blow Wall Street off the Asiatic continent, and he was succeeding. How silly it makes the American rulers look in the eyes of the world. Is not the earth peopled by workers and poor farmers? Are not such people the most numerous force in America itself? Might it not be that the rest of mankind would learn something from its Chinese brothers and sisters? Indeed, an awkward and dangerous situation has been created for the new messiah of imperialism.

The blow is the more telling because it was in China that the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine were first tested. Long before Wall Street's gigantic intervention program for Western Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East was launched, American arms, ships, planes, military schools, strategic advisors, funds, political relief, and economic and political advisors were all carrying out their lethal function in China. It has been in China, moreover, that the American interventionary effort, quantitatively speak-

ing, has been the greatest. Thus, where the plans for world domination of the American monopolies have had their longest and biggest test, they have been dealt their most decisive defeat.

These are facts over which to rejoice. Our rejoicing, however, takes the form of heartfelt gratitude to the Chinese people's fighters for what they have done, not the inward rejoicing that could come only with the conviction that we, American anti-imperialists, progressives, trade unionists, ourselves had played a substantial part in these historic events. What ship, carrying guns and bullets to Chiang Kai-shek, has been stopped at its American dock? What ship has even left in its wake the angry cries of American demonstrators? Have the American people or even American progressives stormed Washington to demand an end to this flagrant intervention? No, there has been shamefully little to warrant inward rejoicing on our part. The Chinese people themselves have beaten American imperialism with only feeble aid from the American anti-imperialist movement. It has been one of the striking weaknesses of our progressive movement, and particularly of the trade unions, that it has been so lacking in militancy on the issue of China.

All American anti-imperialists, all progressives, and especially the labor movement and the Communists, must drive into our political consciences the fact that the Chinese victories, and the defeat administered to American imperialism in

the Far East, do not establish a situation in which we can afford to be complacent. There is much left for the Chinese people to do to consummate and consolidate their victory. The struggle in China is not over. Millions have given their lives. Countless more must sacrifice themselves. The Chinese revolutionary struggle for a free and democratic China must and will continue. Its cost will in good part be measured by the struggle within the United States between progressives and imperialists. The opportunity for Americans to help the cause of Chinese democracy, and therefore, themselves, remains with us. There is much we can do to impede Wall Street's interventionist program, to prevent American imperialism from re-establishing itself in China.

American imperialism has been forced to retreat in China, it has not withdrawn. There was nothing voluntary about it. It will do everything it can to penetrate back into the Chinese nation. The new situation, however, brought about by the Chinese people, forces it to develop new tactics, to find new methods and approaches. Out of the confusion and consternation of recent months, the shape of the new tactics begins to emerge. The policies which are now being fashioned are based upon certain propositions which are gaining increasing acceptance among imperialist circles. These are:

(1) That the resources of American imperialism are not unlimited. Wall Street cannot be aggressive all over the world at the same time.

Therefore a choice must be made as to the area for immediate concentration.

(2) Industrial Europe is more vital to American monopoly capitalists than backward China. To relax in Europe at this time would be suicidal. If a choice has to be made, and according to proposition number one it does, the Far East must be relegated to a holding position while imperialist aggression in Europe is accelerated.

(3) The new China provides a situation which in the eyes of the imperialists is not too discouraging. It will take a long time to consolidate the new China (so say the imperialists). Many enemies of the new nation will remain within its borders, and even within its leading circles. A holding operation geared to nurture these hostile groups has a chance of success. If these enemies of the people's new democracy can be kept alive, not only can the new nation be kept off balance for many years, but eventually, after American policies have firmly fastened themselves upon Europe, Wall Street can return in full force to settle its affairs with the Chinese.

(4) China may be the most vital region of the Far East; but it is not the whole of the Far East. The holding operation in China can and should be accompanied by a strengthening of Wall Street's position in Japan and South Korea, by the development of a strong American political and military position in the islands fronting the China mainland, particularly in Formosa,

by greater American participation against the efforts of the peoples of Indonesia, Viet Niam, Malaya, Burma, and India to achieve their freedom.

(5) The defeat suffered in China calls for bolder and more dangerous adventures aimed at securing a quick and decisive victory for American imperialism in other parts of the world, especially in Western Europe.

It is along lines such as these that important sectors of American imperialist circles are speaking and acting. This does not mean that there is unanimity. On the contrary, pressure continues to come from some for an "Asia First" policy for American imperialism. It is likely that this pressure will in the future, as it has in the past, secure certain concessions from those who advocate a policy of Europe first. Moreover, it must be recognized that the policy of harassing the new China, as part of the holding operation, can seriously inconvenience, if not endanger, the new Far Eastern democracy. We have pointed out earlier in this article the unreliability of the Chinese bourgeoisie. In considering the struggle of American imperialism against the new government, we may well repeat Mao Tse-tung's characterization of the Chinese bourgeoisie: "To unite with the workers and peasants to oppose the enemy when the enemy is endangering them and to unite with the enemy to oppose the workers and peasants when the latter are awakening is a general rule for the bourgeoisie of various countries, only, the Chinese

bourgeoisie shows this characteristic more vividly."

Certain it is that Wall Street is not unaware of this lever which exists within China and which they will try to seize upon in order to twist and distort the new democracy.

American progressives and anti-imperialists must be on guard against false "peace offensives" stimulated by a desperate American imperialism. Although the Chinese people want peace, they will accept nothing less than a genuine peace based upon the complete uprooting of all feudal, anti-democratic elements. They will not, under American prodding, accept smaller, lesser-known, "little Chiang Kai-sheks" once more ready to play the game of American imperialism. The Chinese people are not likely to be fooled by pious talk of "coalitions" which include so-called "liberal" elements from among Chiang Kai-shek's old friends.

There is a danger that some Americans, even among those who have been convinced of the utter political corruption and bankruptcy of the Chiang Kai-shek regime, are likely to be "taken in" by new faces and talk of "coalitions" without examining the real nature and the aims of the type of coalition proposed by spokesmen for American imperialism in China.

The labor and progressive movements have the responsibility of exposing the meaning of such "peace maneuvers" before the whole American people. They must insist that

the Chinese people themselves are the only ones competent to say who will or will not be part of a genuine democratic coalition government in China.

Once such a genuine, democratic coalition government is established, it will be the welcome task of all American democrats to urge and work for the recognition and support of such a government.

This month, a new Congress convenes in Washington. It is incumbent on the American people, in the first place the American labor and progressive movements, not to overlook this opportunity to demand an end to all political, military, and financial intervention in China. The Chinese people must be allowed to find their own way to freedom, independence, and democracy without American interference in any guise.

American labor must take the path of international working-class solidarity. There is a tradition, honorable and deep-rooted among American trade unionists, of support to those in other lands fighting for democracy, freedom, and a better life for the toiling people. This tradition, splendidly expressed by the action of the West Coast longshoremen in 1938 when they stopped the shipment of scrap iron to Japan, must be renewed and strengthened until it permeates the consciousness of all organized labor.

The new China will revive and encourage the broad, genuine, trade-

union movement destroyed by Chiang Kai-shek. Already, in Harbin, in August, 1948, an All-China Trade Union Conference laid the foundation for such a development. From this conference its Chairman, Liu Ning-Yi, spoke out to the organized working people of America. He said:

Let there be greater solidarity between the Chinese and American working class. Support the war of liberation of the Chinese people. Oppose the aggressive policy and the anti-labor, anti-people policy of American imperialism. Oppose the reviving of Japanese fascism by the American government. Oppose the American policy of helping the slaughter of the Chinese people. Let the workers and people of China and the United States unite! Let us hold fast to our posts and defend democracy and world peace!*

* Liu Ning-Yi, Chairman, in a letter from the All-China Trade Union Conference in answer to greetings from 130 American trade unionists. Harbin, August 1948, received November 1948.

A special responsibility devolves upon American Communists. The China issue presents a signal opportunity to deal a mighty blow at the fortress of world reaction. The opportunity and the power exist to smash American imperialist plans for China. Under the leadership of the great Communist Party of China and its renowned Chairman, Mao Tse-tung, the heroic Chinese people are discharging their duties with honor. The imperialists are being decisively beaten back in China. It is our task, as American Communists, to help mobilize the forces of labor and all anti-imperialists in our country, to deal such further blows at Wall Street, that the Chinese New Democracy may consolidate its victories and move firmly and powerfully on the road toward Socialism!

Popular Mandate vs. Monopoly Policy in the New Congress

by Max Gordon

THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN the policies of American capital and the mandate of the people in the elections provides the basis for powerful mass actions and struggles around the issues facing the 81st Congress.

It is doubtful whether any previous Congress in American history ever convened with as much popular awareness of the problems before it.

There has been an increasing public consciousness, particularly in the ranks of labor, concerning the actions of Congress ever since the early days of the Roosevelt Era. But the working class and other sections of the people voted for Roosevelt as the personification of the New Deal in general rather than for, or against, specific policies. In the recent election, the people voted *against* the 80th Congress because they did not like its performance in relation to labor, prices, housing, social security, aid to education, farm aid, civil rights, and foreign policy.

Truman won because he demagogically exploited to the full this popular revulsion against the measures of the 80th Congress. The Wallace candidacy, focused sharply upon the issues facing the people,

forced Truman to espouse in words the progressive sentiments of the electorate.

The American two-party system is a highly flexible mechanism. The bourgeoisie, in control of both parties, knows how to manipulate them so as to minimize the danger of the emergence of a genuine anti-monopoly, working class-led party. Whenever the people become politically restive, threatening to break through the system, one or the other major party will make gestures toward progressivism. Sometimes, when the people are in motion, they can win concessions from the bourgeois parties, as under the New Deal. At other times, their restiveness is met with policeman's clubs. This is the classic dual method by which the bourgeoisie attempts to maintain its rule: the carrot and the club.

The bourgeoisie in 1948 was confronted with the danger of a powerful, new anti-monopoly party. And so one of its major party candidates, Truman, made the necessary gestures to prevent it from registering strength. This not only won him last minute votes from an estimated two to three million Wallace supporters; it threw to him the backing of millions of workers, farmers, and

middle class liberals who either accepted the demagoguery as gospel, or who were persuaded by it that Truman was "the lesser evil," as against Dewey. The figures show that the President received his greatest vote from the Negro people and the organized workers, the two sections of the population most deeply attached to the program of the Progressive Party. The workers in voting for Truman expressed their opposition to Dewey and the G.O.P.; the Negro people, primarily their opposition to the Dixiecrats.

The farm vote also shifted toward Truman. He carried several Midwest rural states, scored heavily in the farm districts of the far West, and even made slight inroads in the traditionally Republican rural areas of the East. Here, too, the farmers were reacting against the pro-speculator policies of the G.O.P. Congress, and the fear of war.

If Truman's bourgeois backers were not more aggressive in restraining his "Left" demagoguery, it was because they did not seriously consider he would be elected. His function was to cut into the Wallace vote. The more decisive sections of finance capital expected and hoped Dewey would win. In the one case where Truman's demagoguery apparently threatened to result in some action—the projected Vinson Mission to Moscow—the bourgeoisie quickly stepped in and stopped him.

But Truman did win, and this has created certain difficulties for the bourgeoisie. It has no intention of permitting its Administration and

Congress to make good on Truman's promises to the people. Yet the election showed that these promises represent what the people want and voted for. This contradiction provides a powerful lever for labor and the people to win concessions from the bourgeoisie.

Truman has already backtracked on his electoral pledges. During the campaign he thundered about Wall Street control of the government if Dewey should win, but he has since emphasized he plans no changes in his Wall Street-dominated Administration. He has rejected all post-election proposals to get together with the Soviet Union on outstanding issues, and has given no indication of a let-up in the prosecution of the "cold war," despite pious election statements and the Vinson gesture. On the Taft-Hartley Act, prices, taxes, etc., he has let it be known that Big Business has little to fear from him. He has failed to implement his civil rights program by ending Jim Crow in the armed forces through executive decree, which he has the power to do. He has continued his persecution of the Communist leaders and his "loyalty" witch-hunt.

But the fact that the people are alert to the issues and that they voted for Truman on the basis of his promises makes it possible to bring them into motion to see that their mandate is enforced. The struggle around the issues which Congress will consider can, and should, become the basis for revival of a great, popular wave of resistance to the fascization trend

which has been the hallmark of the American government for the past three and a half years.

COMPOSITION OF 81ST CONGRESS

The popular desire for peace and for a progressive domestic program, registered most consistently in the vote for Wallace, resulted in the defeat of some 80 Taft-Hartley Congressmen, as well as in Dewey's downfall.

The new Congress, on a party basis, has 263 Democrats in the House, 171 Republicans and one American Laborite. This holds as of November 3rd. At least one vacancy in Democratic ranks has occurred. In the Senate, there are, formally, 64 Democrats and 32 Republicans. (Senator Glen Taylor has said he will sit with the Democrats for Congressional purposes.)

Of the House Democrats, 103 are from the Southern states and 160 from the North. The Northern Democrats are supposed to form, with American Laborite Vito Marcantonio and a handful of Republicans, the liberal pro-labor sector of Congress. This group in the House is just about double the size of the comparable group in the 80th Congress. But it is noteworthy that if half the Southern Tories continue to coalesce with the G.O.P. on a reactionary domestic program, the G.O.P.-Southern Tory bloc will still remain in control of both House and Senate. This can well provide Truman and his Social-Democratic al-

lies with an alibi for failure to make good on election pledges. They can plead, on the basis of this "excuse," the necessity for all sorts of "compromise" maneuvers.

As far as the new Democrats are concerned, probably well over half are not new at all. They served in Congress before, but were eliminated in the Republican sweep of 1946. A few are thoroughly and consciously Social-Democratic in outlook. Most are regular Democratic politicians who served under Roosevelt, and by and large went along with his program. Some of these became known as stout pro-laborites and New Dealers.

What they will do in the present Congress, on foreign or domestic issues, will depend primarily on the extent of mass popular pressure, especially in their home districts, and on the organization and activity of the Progressive Party in these districts. If no popular pressures for progressive measures develop, they will tend to go along with Truman, which means hedging on domestic issues, and supporting militarization and aggressive imperialism in foreign policy.

Popular activity can, however, strongly affect the behavior of members of Congress. Its influence is likely to be greater upon the regular Democrats from working-class and other progressive constituencies than upon the more consciously imperialist-minded Social-Democrats. The "regulars" tend to be more sensitive to the sentiments of the voters.

FOREIGN POLICY

The primary questions to come before this session of Congress are those concerned with the one-sided "cold war" which the Anglo-American imperialist bloc is pressing with renewed fury against world Socialist and national-liberation forces. These questions are primary, not only because they are of wider significance historically than the domestic issues, but because the manner in which they are decided will help determine the nature of our domestic policy. More spending for guns inevitably means less spending for butter and less concern for civil rights.

Specifically, the "cold war" program calls for: okaying the North Atlantic Defense Pact; adoption of the rearmament program for Western Europe; renewal of the Greco-Turkish "aid" program and the Marshall Plan; China "aid"; expansion of the U.S. arms budget; adding Universal Military training to the draft; passage of a sweeping "stand-by" National Emergency Act; and possibly military control of atomic energy.

It is of course, a "bipartisan" program. Even though both Congress and the Administration are Democratic-controlled, Sen. Arthur Vandenberg, the G.O.P.'s chief foreign policy spokesman in Congress, is expected to do most of the steering to put through the foreign policy phases.

Opposition is expected, however, from groups within both parties. The opposition will come from pro-

labor elements reflecting the desire of their constituents for an end to the "cold war" and the adoption of a peaceful, progressive foreign policy; and from those who are as strongly imperialist and bitterly anti-Soviet as the "bipartisans," but who fear that commitment of so much of the nation's resources to the "cold war" will hurt the economy, require greater taxes and generally interfere with the "free" profiteering of particular groups of capitalists who depend neither on the Marshall Plan nor the armaments program for their business.

The Social-Democrats and those closest to them in both major parties will undoubtedly be the most aggressive fighters on the floor for the maximum "cold war" program. The fact that they will also be the apparent spokesman for domestic "liberalism" is likely to confuse many people. This tie-up between a reactionary imperialist foreign policy and gestures toward domestic reformism is, of course, not a new historic experience. It has been the trademark of Social-Democracy everywhere.

Ideologically, the "cold war" program depends for its adoption upon the Great Lie of the present century, the Lie which also furnished the basis for Hitler's drive for world hegemony; namely, that we must defend ourselves against "expanding Soviet imperialism." This "expanding Soviet imperialism" includes not only the Communist movements in every country, but every movement for peace with the U.S.S.R. and for colonial and national liberation.

But behind the ideological conflict is the hard material aim of U.S. monopoly capital to loot the European colonial empires, to reduce their economies to those of satellites, and above all to keep as much of the world as possible free for exploitation by Wall Street. This requires both struggle against the liberation elements in all lands, and establishment of the United States as the political and military protector of the bourgeoisie of all other capitalist nations. Experience with the Marshall Plan has shown that the bourgeoisie of Western Europe are prepared to sell their economies in return for American "protection."

The tactic of the imperialists is to maintain continuous crisis in the nation's relations with the Soviet Union. This is essential to put over the "cold war" program, while obscuring its real aim. The peace forces must therefore counter with a campaign to demand a peaceful settlement of outstanding issues with the U.S.S.R. The reaction of the electorate to the Vinson Mission proposal is an indication that such a campaign can win wide response.

But it is also essential in developing opposition to the "cold war" program, to rip the false ideological mask off the bipartisans, and to expose to the public the predatory economic aims of Wall Street in the colonies and in Europe.

DOMESTIC ISSUES

The aspect of the bipartisan foreign policy which is most vulner-

able to popular attack is its effect on domestic policy. Even if the rearmament program should be confined to the fifteen billions set by Truman and his advisers (and this huge figure is being assailed as too low), direct Federal expenditures for the "cold war" will come close to 25 billions and may even exceed that figure. This includes five billions for Marshall Plan renewal and at least another three billion for western Europe rearmament, Greco-Turkish and China "aid," stock-piling of raw materials, financing of subversive activities in the peoples' democracies, etc.

Truman has set the overall budget figure at about 42 billions. Hence, well over half his budget for 1949-50 will be devoted to direct "cold war" expenditures. His advisers and Democratic Congressional leaders have emphasized that they plan to balance the budget, shun all "deficit spending" and practice the "strictest economy." Since there is no tendency to economize on the "cold war" items, the axe will unquestionably be applied to the items dealing with social welfare.

Though this is written before Congress opens and will appear after Truman's Message to Congress, it is safe to predict that he will renege on every promise made relating to the budget and major aspects of the economy. Administration spokesmen have already made it clear there will be no excess profits tax. At best, there will be some increase in the corporate tax, although Vice-President-elect Barkley has implied that

even this may be shelved. It is not likely, either, that there will be a tax cut for the low-income groups, despite Truman's demagogic proposal of a \$40 per person reduction in his budget message last year.

A budget with so large a component for arms and shipments abroad is bound to have inflationary effects on major parts of the economy. But Truman has already made it clear he does not plan to go beyond the thin apology for a price control program contained in the ten-point plan he presented to Congress last year. This calls for "standby" price and wage control powers, to be used for particular items under particular conditions. The prices are to be set at the wholesale level with extremely weak enforcement powers and no special enforcement agency. No wonder Administration spokesmen have been reassuring Big Business that it really has nothing to worry about concerning the Truman "anti-inflation" program! But even this plan may be scrapped on the excuse that the tiny decline in the price index shows prices are coming down anyway.

As regards rent control, the need for which will be more acute than ever as the high military budget cuts into any projected government building of homes, Housing Expediter Tighe Woods, who has been most considerate of the tender feelings of the realty crowd, has already told the world he is for continuation of the 15 per cent "voluntary" increase plan in any renewal of the rent control law.

Truman's only specific commitment in the housing field is support of last year's Taft-Ellender-Wagner Bill. This measure, which called chiefly for stimulation of private enterprise and provided only for 500,000 public housing units over a five-year period, is utterly inadequate today. Private building has shown itself incapable of constructing homes within the price range of the average family needing a home. As a result, private building has been curtailed because people cannot buy. Only through large-scale government building can a dent be made in the housing crisis. Thus, the type of measure needed must go far beyond the meagre provisions of the T.-E.-W. Bill. The "cold war" program will, of course, be used as the main reason why this cannot be done.

Similarly, the construction of great new river valley projects, aid to education, social security expansion, agrarian reform, and health and hospital legislation will all suffer because of the vast proportion of the budget going into military expenditures.

Undoubtedly, there is considerable fear among workers, especially in heavy industry, that they will face unemployment if the armaments budget is cut. This is not the least of the factors which is making it possible for Social-Democracy to spread its pernicious influence in the labor movement. Obviously, employment arising from the armaments program can only be prolonged temporarily—unless there is actual large-scale warfare. There is a limit to the piling up of arms, and

the huge program contemplated indicates the limit cannot go much beyond next year.

Obviously, too, nothing can guarantee workers against unemployment under capitalism. No matter what policies the government adopts, the economic crash will come. It can only be somewhat delayed by government programs. It would appear, however, that the fear of unemployment created directly by proposals to cut the armaments program can be met by an alternative program of housing, hospital construction, public power development, etc., on a scale comparable in size to the armaments program. No such integrated peacetime public spending program has at this writing been projected by the peace forces.

CIVIL RIGHTS

The key domestic issues not directly associated with the budget which will confront the 81st Congress concern democratic rights: the Taft-Hartley Act repeal and restoration of the Wagner Labor Relations Act and the Norris-LaGuardia anti-injunction Act; an anti-lynch law, anti-poll tax and Fair Employment Practices legislation; abolition of the Un-American Activities Committee and of other witch-hunt measures, and freedom for the victims of these witch-hunts.

These are the issues likely to promote the widest mass movements among the workers and the Negro people in particular. They are no less conditioned by the war program

than are the issues associated with the budget.

As regards the Taft-Hartley Act repeal, Truman's statements, those of Labor Secretary Maurice Tobin, and the Democratic platform make it plain that the Administration has no intention of returning to the days before the Taft-Hartley Law.

Secretary Tobin has declared that the Administration intends to hold on to injunctive powers granted under the Taft-Hartley Law regarding strikes in major industries, and that the non-Communist affidavit provision of the Taft-Hartley Law will not be touched. Truman has also let it be known that he favors at least the injunctive powers. Administration sympathy toward both of these major provisions of the Taft-Hartley Law is being justified on the grounds of the "cold war." In addition, the Administration favors several other restrictive measures against labor, including the ban on secondary boycotts and on jurisdictional strikes.

The bureaucracies of the A. F. of L. and C.I.O., having placed themselves squarely behind the "cold war" program, are not likely to conduct any real struggle against Administration plans to keep some of the most oppressive features of the Taft-Hartley Law in whatever new bill is proposed. The battle will have to be waged by the workers in the shops and their allies in the communities, and by those union leaderships which have not sold themselves to the imperialists.

The fact that there will be a G.O.P.-Southern tory coalition of

considerable strength may be seized upon by the Truman forces as an excuse to "compromise" the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law through "agreement" on elimination of a couple of the features. Certainly, it would be disastrous for labor and its progressive allies to depend upon the Administration and Congressional Democratic leadership to do the job of removing the oppressive law from the backs of the workers.

The picture as regards civil rights legislation has not as yet been clearly defined. The Southern Tories appear fairly confident, however, that the situation is "well in hand." One reason may be knowledge that Truman's personal attitude as revealed recently by Representative Frank Boykin of Alabama, is one of opposition to legislation that will guarantee Negro rights. His advocacy of the civil rights program is strictly political opportunism. The Southern Tories, furthermore, figure they have the forces to stop any legislation through a filibuster in the Senate and control of the Rules Committee in the House. This can give both Republicans and Truman Democrats a chance to appear to be fighting for the civil rights program, while actually betraying it. A genuine struggle for civil rights legislation will require basic changes in Senate rules to eliminate the filibuster, and a drastic shake-up or expansion of the Rules Committee to assure a majority for those who favor or must go along with this legislation.

The Southern Tories have also indicated they plan to use a hold-up of

the "cold war" program as a weapon against the civil rights measures. They figure this will create further disunity among proponents of the civil rights program. Plainly, the most consistent battle for civil rights can, and will, be conducted by those groups that base themselves on an anti-imperialist program, not only because they will not be inhibited by "cold war" considerations, but also because fundamentally, discrimination and oppression of the Negro people in America are rooted in the same causes as imperialist oppression abroad.

The drive against witch-hunting must take the form of outright abolition of the Un-American Activities Committee, repeal of the unconstitutional Smith Act of 1940, reversal of the contempt citations against victims of the Un-American Committee, measures to end the deportation persecutions, and barring of funds for the Truman "loyalty" purge. It is essential that democratic elements take the offensive against the ever-widening fascist atmosphere. If the pro-fascists put them solely on the defensive, through introduction of new repressive legislation, as will be their tactic, they will be in a position to whoop up even more hysteria.

Foes of the Un-American Activities Committee have been counting on "getting the jump" in the struggle to abolish it by demanding changes in House Rules on the day Congress convenes. This could be done successfully only if the Democratic caucus, meeting a day earlier, voted such a change. Thus, the Demo-

cratic caucus meeting might well be a test of Administration and House leadership intentions regarding the Committee. If the Rules change should not be put through, Committee foes will have the much tougher job of steering a resolution through Congress.

Opponents of the Committee are divided in their proposals as to what to do about it. Rep. Chat Holifield (D., Cal.) has announced he plans to force it to change its procedure so as to protect witnesses. Plainly, this would only alter slightly the Committee's activities if it should pass. Rep. S. Walter Huber (D., Ohio) and Emanuel Celler (D., N.Y.) have announced they will propose replacement of the committee by a joint committee of Senate and House. Under political conditions existing today, any committee investigating "Un-American Activities" is bound to become a witch-hunt body. The trouble lies not so much with Committee procedures, disgraceful as they are, but with the very concept of a Congressional body empowered to investigate political ideas and activity. Committee foes should concentrate their attention on abolishing all such organs of political persecution.

The Smith Act of 1940, like the Espionage Act of 1918 in the days following World War I, has become strictly a thought control measure giving the courts censorship power over dissident political opinion. The Act, among other things, forbids teaching or advocacy of overthrow of the government by force

and violence. The Espionage Act was never used against spies when America was at peace. It was used as the legal cover for the infamous Palmer Raids against radical workers and foreign born. In like manner, the Smith Act has not been used against the actual perpetrators of force and violence on the American people, but against the Communist leadership. It is a direct descendent of the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1799 and must go.

The fight on the Mundt-Nixon Bill last year shows it is possible to get wide unity for civil rights measures in Congress. Such unity needs to be developed in the shops, communities and organizations on a level reached last summer when the Mundt-Nixon measure was defeated.

UNITED ACTION CAN WIN

The Congressional session will be marked by shifting lineups on particular issues, both in Congress and among the people. The demand for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law, for instance, will bring together groups and individuals who will be on opposite sides of the fence with regard to foreign policy. In this situation, progressives will have to seek the widest possible unity in behalf of their program on specific measures as they arise. The key will be united action in the shops, communities and mass organizations, directed at local Congressmen, Congressional leaders and President Truman. In this situation, too, the Social-Democrats and opportunist labor leaders will un-

doubtedly attempt to use foreign policy differences and Red-baiting to split mass movements behind any progressive measures.

The Progressive Party's position will be decisive, both in providing a national center for the stimulation of mass activity around various phases of its program for peace, social welfare and democracy, and in developing community and shop movements. Progressive Party leaders have already made it clear they plan to work with, and involve, all groups who see eye-to-eye with them on particular aspects of their program.

The Progressive Party's role becomes especially important in view of the likelihood that both C.I.O. and A. F. of L. leaderships will do what they can to bar mass actions. The Progressive Party can rally the rank-and-file of the unions, as well as progressive national and local leaders, behind an active, aggressive drive to force Congress and Truman to come across with election promises, and to fight for a reversal of the "cold war" policy.

It is possible, through the proper type of struggle, to compel the bourgeoisie to grant concessions to the people during this session of Congress. The conditions are present for such a struggle. Workers are getting restive as unemployment begins to grow and many industries go on part-time production, while the speedup drive becomes more intense and the Taft-Hartley Law becomes

ever more clearly a strait-jacket. The Negro people expressed their determination in the election to fight for civil rights legislation, and will not be put off. The farmers are alert to the danger that a fraudulent "flexible" price-support program is being discussed by both major parties. There is growing awareness of the bankruptcy of our foreign policy and of the danger of fascism here. A proper kind of struggle, however, requires:

1. That all illusions that Truman and his Social-Democratic allies can be depended upon to "deliver" on election promises be dispelled.

2. That all progressive forces unify their ranks, both nationally and in the shops and communities, around a militant program of mass activity, including mass lobbies, local demonstrations, delegations to Congressmen, etc.

3. That all workers in the shops and in the communities, irrespective of union, be rallied behind this program and that all other sections of the population be organized in the communities for it.

In this organizing activity, the Communist Party has an important role to play. It is dedicated to the task of stimulating unity of the anti-monopoly and anti-war forces, advancing the influence of labor as the leading force in the developing popular coalition, and assisting in the promotion of mass actions of the people in behalf of peace, progress and democratic rights.

The People Win With Marcantonio

by George Blake and Al Terestman

THE REELECTION of Marcantonio to Congress in the 18th Congressional District of New York has been universally singled out as the outstanding progressive victory in the 1948 elections. The fact that this is the seventh time he has been elected Congressman cannot dim the significance of *this* victory; rather, his reelection serves to highlight the historically unique circumstances that determined the course of this campaign and its outcome. Local, national, and international influences operated in this campaign, giving it a character all its own, separate and distinct from the Congressional contests throughout the country.

MARCANTONIO A MAJOR TARGET OF REACTION

The Marcantonio election struggle developed an interest and importance that virtually abstracted it from the framework of the Presidential campaign at the same time that it was fully integrated with it. Thus, *The New York Times* could say in its editorial of October 18, entitled "Marcantonio and the USA": "Because of world conditions, the nation will watch with special interest this year the results of the election in the Eighteenth Congressional District in which Vito Marcantonio is running for the seventh term in the House of

Representatives." The *Daily Mirror* put it even more dramatically in its editorial of October 19:

Marcantonio is a world figure. If that gives him an importance he never earned by American standards, we must still risk the statement. . . . It is not stretching any point to say that the results of the election in the 18th Congressional District, East Harlem, New York, will be major news in London, in Paris—and Moscow."

The whole reactionary camp, bolstered considerably since 1946, made this campaign their major target in New York and gave it the character of a sacred, patriotic mission. It was suddenly discovered that the very "security" of the U.S.A. imperatively demanded the defeat of Marcantonio. Virtually every newspaper joined in the hue and cry and began at an early date to unloose an editorial barrage that thundered day in and day out throughout the nation, the city, and the district. The *Daily News* in New York published its first editorial as early as May 21, 1948. The press offensive took on a many-sided character, though it voiced but one prevailing and dominant theme. This reached the point where one of the columnists speculated as to how many Republican or Democratic Congressmen should be

sacrificed in order to guarantee Marcantonio's defeat.

This was the year in which the enemy had every hope of finally unseating Marcantonio. The fighting representative of the people no longer had, nor could he remotely expect, the support of the Republicans. He no longer could bank on coalition support from the Democrats. The Wilson-Pakula Act, passed by the New York State Legislature in 1947 with the united support of the Republicans and Democrats, cut off any opportunity to make a direct challenge in the primaries of the major parties. In fact, this law was designed with this very objective in mind, with pointed reference to the campaign to unseat Marcantonio in 1948.

The vote for Marcantonio on the American Labor Party line in 1946 was only 14,888. The district registered more than 100,000 voters. Bryan, the Republican candidate in 1946, polled more than 35,000 votes. It was generally estimated that the A.L.P. would have to perform a miracle to switch 20 to 25 thousand votes from the Democratic and Republican columns in order to make a contest of it, no less to win. It was a sober calculation, and the most stalwart progressive could not be sanguine.

The campaign was initiated in 1947 under the aggressive leadership of Frank J. Sampson, until recently head of Tammany Hall, and was subsequently taken up in more formidable fashion by Mayor O'Dwyer, who declared that the first

objective of the Democratic Party was to liquidate what remained of the Democratic-A.L.P. coalition of the past, to smash the A.L.P., and to defeat Marcantonio.

NEW POLITICAL ALIGNMENT

This unprecedented, vindictive blast dramatically epitomized the changes that had occurred in the relationship of political and class forces since 1946. The old New Deal, Roosevelt-Labor coalition, which still retained some substance in the Mayoralty election of 1945 and in the gubernatorial election of 1946, had now virtually run its course. The new alignments that emerged in the postwar period had for a time merged with, and overlapped, the old alliances that brought the progressive forces to support O'Dwyer, Mead, and Lehman, and which, in the labor movement, was embodied in the Left-center coalition. This overlapping consisted of an alignment that based itself increasingly on mobilizing the working class and its allies in an independent struggle against the imperialist orientation of the Administration and the bourgeoisie as a whole, while simultaneously working within the framework of the old coalition to achieve a maximum differentiation based on the new developments and issues. The acute sharpening of the struggle in 1947 and 1948, with the unfolding by American imperialism of a program of war preparations directed against the Soviet Union and the world democratic camp, could not but result in sharp fissures and cleav-

ages within the old coalitions, thus rendering them virtually obsolete.

These basic regroupings, reflecting on the domestic scene the worldwide realignment of forces into imperialist and anti-imperialist camps, provided the main background for a series of events which gave rise to a major realignment within the labor movement. The dominant reformist leadership of the C.I.O. under Murray, in concert with Social-Democracy, shifted to active support of Wall Street imperialism, and the old Left-center coalition fell apart. This gave rise to a regrouping of the liberal forces previously identified with Roosevelt and the New Deal. Most important, it provided the impetus for the organization of the new national Progressive Party led by Henry Wallace, which expressed the historic urge to achieve working-class political independence and also reflected the fact that the deep-going, fundamental antagonism between the people's forces and the monopolists could not be given expression within the framework of the old relationships and alliances.

In New York, these developments contributed to the split and realignment within the A.L.P. occasioned by the withdrawal of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union early in 1948. It became increasingly clear that relations with O'Dwyer were inextricably connected with these events, and that support of O'Dwyer demanded fundamental review as he increasingly adopted a program directed against the interests of the people and moved into

active association with the Liberal Party, renegades like Quill, and the Right-wing forces in the trade unions.

STRATEGY OF REACTION

On the basis of these sweeping changes, and as a result of the failure to isolate the Left-progressive forces and undermine the A.L.P., an effort was made by O'Dwyer and his new Right-wing "liberal" associates to convert the Democratic-A.L.P. coalition of the past into its opposite. The Democratic Party, under O'Dwyer and Flynn, boss of the Bronx, turned the sharpest edge of its policy against the Wallace movement, the A.L.P., the Left-progressives in the unions, and Marcantonio. Their aim was to dynamite the A.L.P., eliminate it as a factor in the political life of New York, and at the same time to deal a crushing blow to the nascent Progressive Party in its main base of New York.

This grouping based its strategy on sapping the strength of the A.L.P. from within. In effect, in contrast to the open reactionary position of the G.O.P., what was projected was the closest American equivalent yet achieved of the "Third Force" as the "best alternative" to the Third Party.

The Republican Party directed its attack from the outside. Its strength and prospect of victory was derived primarily from national currents, and was based on the anticipation that the people would choose the representatives of the "Right" as the best alternative to the A.L.P., Mar-

cantonio, and the Left-progressives.

What emerged, therefore, was a kind of pincers movement against Marcantonio. This maneuver was fully consummated under Flynn's leadership in the Bronx, where a tripartisan alliance was established against Congressman Leo Isacson. A similar combination was formed in Brooklyn against Lee Pressman. If the same strategy was not successful in the 18th Congressional District, it was not due to any lack of effort.

Certain bipartisan contradictions, however, arose around the struggle for the Surrogate's post, the juiciest patronage plum in New York politics. The G.O.P., confident of a Dewey sweep, and Tammany, determined to hold this post at all costs, were both somewhat hesitant to break all ties with the A.L.P.

Another factor was the insistent pressure of certain middle-of-the-road Democrats who feared that a complete rupture with the A.L.P. would result in widespread and serious losses in the elections. Further, both the Democrats and the Republicans eyed the 18th Congressional District as their own individual preserve, and each was unwilling to yield in fixing on a joint candidate. All these factors—underlying which was the basic strength of the A.L.P., which extended to considerable sections of the rank-and-file of the Democratic and Republican parties, particularly in East Harlem—prevented the consummation of the alliance which the anti-progressive forces sought to achieve.

A united tripartisan campaign was

developed in many important respects, however. The Liberal Party endorsed Ellis, candidate of the G.O.P., and favored to win according to the press. Marcantonio drew the main fire of all the parties and of the press. As if by agreement, the line pursued by the Republican, Democratic, and Liberal parties, above partisan appeals, emphasized the need to vote against Marcantonio.

In addition to these developments at home, many observers estimated that Marcantonio's strength in the Italian-American community of East Harlem would be sapped as a result of the struggles in Italy, and particularly the De Gasperi victory in the election of April 18th. A number of reactionary Italian-American leaders who were active in the infamous campaign of intervention at that time now became active in stimulating a reverse process to undermine Marcantonio's support here. The campaign on this issue was intense and insidious. The April elections in Italy were widely construed as a mandate for the Marshall Plan. Marcantonio, it was argued in the press, over the radio, and on the streets, was against American foreign policy. Ergo, he was against relief for Italy. In fact, the view was peddled that he was against Italy itself. This issue, plus a combination of old and new varieties of Red-baiting, were the major propaganda weapons against Marcantonio.

Similarly, it was hoped that events in Czechoslovakia and Hungary would affect the large national-group communities in Yorkville to the det-

rimment of the progressive movement, the A.L.P., and Marcantonio. To a lesser degree, though no less stubbornly, the anti-Marcantonio camp relied on the popularity of Luis Munoz-Marin, leader of the dominant Popular Democratic Party and newly elected Governor of Puerto Rico, and that party's ties with the Administration, to reduce to some extent the overwhelming support in lower Harlem for Wallace, Marcantonio, and the progressive, anti-imperialist movement.

The foregoing indicates some of the new factors at work in this campaign that sharply differentiated it from the campaigns of the New Deal and war periods. The bitterness with which the anti-Marcantonio forces waged their campaign would be very difficult to imagine.

The turning point in the campaign was the registration outcome in the district. The results indicated that the Italian, Puerto Rican, and Negro people of East and Lower Harlem sensed the danger that Marcantonio could be defeated and responded as never before. The total registration was 105,291. In the Yorkville area, where the progressive movement is weakest, the registration reached 55 percent of the total. In Harlem it was 45 percent. The unusual ratio in the past approximated: Yorkville—60, to 40 for Harlem. Thus, the favorable registration results, featured by the spectacular, never-to-be-forgotten upsurge of the Puerto Rican people of the district, who fought through every obstacle to register and vote,

confirmed the fact that Marcantonio could win, though it would require an extraordinary mobilization of the progressive movement to achieve this.

THE ELECTION RESULTS

The official tabulation of the vote gave:

Marcantonio, A.L.P.	36,278
Morrissey, Democrat	31,211
Ellis, Republican-Liberal	30,899

Marcantonio's plurality over Morrissey was 5067. In 1946, when Marcantonio ran with the combined support of the A.L.P. and the Democratic Party, his plurality was 6536. The fact that the margin of victory in this election approximated that in 1946 is in itself an indication of the remarkable shift which took place in the course of the campaign. This fact is even more strikingly illustrated in the following table, which shows the percentage vote of the A.L.P. for Marcantonio in the last three campaigns.

<i>A.L.P. Percentage of Total Vote in 18th C. D.</i>			
	1944	1946	1948
8 A.D.	12.9	12.0	22.3
9 A.D.	13.7	11.5	18.3
10 A.D. So. {	15.3	10.4	21.6
10 A.D. No. {		27.5	49.1
14 A.D.	40.9	47.1	55.9
16 A.D.	14.8	23.1	57.6
Total	17.6	17.9	36.6

In three assembly districts, constituting about 45 percent of the total vote, the A.L.P. achieved a clear

majority. The vote this year was 87 percent of the combined A.L.P.-Democratic vote in 1946!

FACTORS IN THE VICTORY

There is no doubt that Marcantonio's strength derives in large part from the deep roots he has established in the community over many years. This support and devotion extended to the point where in the present test, it cut across party lines in a spectacular and unprecedented manner. Thus, in the 16th Assembly District (the main area of Italian-American population), the Truman vote on the Democratic line was 12,759. Morrissey's vote in the same district dropped to 5,735. Practically the entire difference in this Democratic vote, plus two-thirds of the Republican votes for Dewey, were transferred to Marcantonio! And where this shift encompassed a majority of the voters in Harlem, in this election it began for the first time to embrace a significant minority among the various national groups and working-class strata of Yorkville.

Though this phenomenon is the product of the extraordinary status that Marcantonio has achieved in the community, it cannot be divorced from, nor placed in contradiction to, his leadership in the progressive movement, the A.L.P., and the national Progressive Party. Thus, the fight for Wallace and the program of the Progressive Party were an integral part of the fight. The victory would not have been won without the struggle that was conducted by

Marcantonio, the A.L.P., and the progressive movement on the vital issues confronting the people. In fact, the outstanding feature of the campaign was the militant, brilliantly developed offensive around the struggle for peace, the merciless exposure of the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, and the bipartisan program, and the relationship of these factors to the burning issues at home as well as to the forthright challenge to Red-baiting.

The concrete, vividly unfolded attack on the Marshall Plan in East Harlem succeeded in blunting all the efforts described earlier in this article to divide and split the Italian-American community on this issue. On one occasion, Ellis triumphantly produced a poster put out by the Popular Democratic coalition in Italy during the April elections that displayed a picture of Marcantonio and Wallace with Garibaldi. This was to be the "coup de grace" that would help Ellis conjure up a De Gasperi-Christian Democratic majority against Marcantonio in East Harlem. There is no doubt that the vote of 14,476, or 57.6 percent, in the 16th Assembly District of East Harlem, could not have been won without the clarity achieved on this issue, without the effective exposure of the role of Wall Street in its attempts to reduce Italy to the status of an American colony. Similarly with regard to the outstanding role played by Marcantonio in the struggle for Puerto Rican liberation. The overall vote also reflected the identification of Marcantonio with the struggle for Negro

rights which, among other things, merited a strong endorsement from the N.A.A.C.P. and Congressman Adam Clayton Powell. It reflected the record of Marcantonio and the A.L.P. in the fight against Taft-Hartley that wrung an endorsement from the political action committee of the A. F. of L. Thus, throughout the complex unfolding of this campaign, the past merged with the present—that is, the accumulated positions established over the years were further strengthened by the fresh impulses of the people's movement of today. Marcantonio, the heir of the LaGuardia tradition, went beyond that position.

THE MAIN LESSON

The relation of the Marcantonio vote to the vote for Wallace and the general A.L.P. vote has an important bearing on the main lessons and conclusions to be drawn from the campaign. The vote for Wallace in the Congressional District totalled 18,770. This represented a considerable increase in the A.L.P. vote over 1944 and 1946, and was, in fact, the largest increase registered anywhere in the city. Wallace's vote reached about 20 percent of the total vote in the Congressional District, as compared to the county average of 14.5 percent. (The vote for other local A.L.P. candidates in the area covered by the Congressional District exceeded 20,000.) The Wallace vote was 52 percent of the Marcantonio vote. This proportion varied from a low of 40 percent in the 16th Assembly District to a high of 75 percent in the 14th

Assembly District, depending on the basic strength of the progressive movement in each area. The discrepancy between the Presidential and Congressional vote of the A.L.P. in the district is explained by: (1) the "lesser evil" factor that cut substantially into the Wallace vote here as throughout the nation, and (2) the exceptional factors discussed above in relation to the Marcantonio campaign that found expression in a much broader coalition than was, or could be, achieved in the Presidential campaign.

It will be remembered that the general policy in the campaign was predicated on a two-fold approach—that is, of a consistent fight around the program and candidates of the Progressive Party, while simultaneously advancing every effort to win support for Marcantonio from those sections of the electorate who could not be carried for the entire ticket. This approach involved no essential contradiction. In fact, any other approach, by which support for the entire ticket would be made the precondition for support of the Congressional candidate, or such as conducting one uniform, undifferentiated campaign, would have contributed no substantially greater total to the general ticket, and it would have spelled disaster for Marcantonio. It is clear that in the actual process of voting, it was the Truman vote that was lost to Morrissey, and not the Marcantonio vote that was gained for Truman. There were incorrect tendencies to pose one phase against the other, but, in the main, a principled

and balanced struggle was conducted throughout, thereby advancing all the objectives of the campaign.

The fact that this campaign in the 18th Congressional District drew strength from the progressive movement, and in turn contributed to it, is indicated by the fact that the A.L.P. enrollment in this district—a sound index of political trends—rose from about 4 percent in 1944 to over 14 percent in 1947. (1948 figures have not yet been published.) In the county as a whole, the enrollment increased in the same period from 5 percent to only 9 percent. Moreover, in the 14th Assembly District, the enrollment rose from 8.9 percent to 23.1 percent, despite the fact that only one-third of the district is in the 18th Congressional District. Similarly, in the 16th Assembly District, enrollment reached 20.2 percent from only 6 percent.

The increase in the A.L.P.'s permanent, long-term strength in the district is indicated also by comparisons of the actual vote. In the 16th Assembly District, for instance, the A.L.P. vote for Roosevelt in 1944 was 11 percent. In 1948, the A.L.P. vote for Wallace was 22 percent. The A.L.P. vote for State Assemblymen in the 16th Assembly District reached 26.7 percent of the vote. This increase is far higher than that on a county or city-wide basis. In the Puerto Rican community of the 14th Assembly District, the Wallace vote exceeded the vote for Truman and Dewey on a straight party basis, and the A.L.P. consolidated its position as the first party in the area.

Hence, what stands out in the overall picture is that Marcantonio's reelection was accompanied by a qualitative strengthening of the A.L.P.'s position throughout the Congressional District. This will have a decisive bearing on the future struggle.

WEAKNESSES REVEALED BY CAMPAIGN

The campaign, though highly successful, nevertheless revealed a number of weaknesses. Outstanding among these was the indication of some weakening of the ties between the Negro people and the progressive coalition around the A.L.P., despite the fact that the majority of the Negro voters of the district support Marcantonio. This situation manifested itself nationally, reflecting the failure of the progressive forces to carry through a consistent, day-to-day struggle for the rights of the Negro people. This failure to lay a proper foundation for the campaign among the Negro people, and to work systematically to cement the closest unity between the Negro and Puerto Rican peoples, adversely affected the campaign of Manuel Medina, Puerto Rican leader and candidate for State Assemblyman in the 14th Assembly District. The candidacy of Medina did not emerge sufficiently as the product of joint struggles and movements against the oppression and discrimination that victimize the whole Harlem community. It is imperative in the work of the progressive movement, particularly in this district, that these weaknesses in the fight for Negro rights be given the

most urgent attention, and that in the district itself, with its rich traditions, a new initiative be demonstrated in developing a program of unity based on such burning issues as unemployment, housing, police brutality, etc.

Another task of great importance that the campaign highlighted is the need to build a powerful youth movement in the area. While large numbers of youth were attracted to the program of Wallace, to the A.L.P., and to Marcantonio, and while the forces of progressive youth performed outstandingly in the campaign, nevertheless, only the beginnings of a large-scale, organized, permanent expression was generated out of this sentiment. This sector of the progressive coalition, it should be remembered, will become increasingly decisive.

It must also be said that there was a serious underestimation of the Liberal Party, its role in the campaign, and the need to struggle against it. There was a general tendency to view the Liberal Party solely in terms of its voting strength, and a failure to appreciate its ideological influence. It was the Liberal Party that reaction utilized to provide a "liberal" pseudo-working-class front for the Wall Street candidacy of Ellis, and it was this party which spearheaded the Red-baiting offensive. The fact is that in the 16th Assembly District the Liberal Party vote rose from 1.9 percent in 1944 to 4.2 percent in 1948, in the face of a city-wide decline. The struggle for progressive unity in the district demands a new appreciation of the need to fight against, and iso-

late, the influence of the Liberal Party and of Social-Democracy generally.

ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party gave wholehearted support to the campaign. As early as 1947, our Party recognized the imperative need to bring to the labor and progressive movements an awareness of the exceptional difficulties that would have to be met in the 1948 campaign. At the same time, notwithstanding all of the existing problems and fears, the Party helped from the outset to project a perspective of victory. It rejected all fatalistic, defeatist moods that permeated certain sections of the progressive camp. This positive approach contributed in an important way toward achieving the maximum fighting strength and concentration that developed in the course of the campaign as an indispensable requirement for victory.

Thus, the Party was a vital part of the coalition in the campaign. This reflected itself in the contribution made in developing a dynamic and balanced approach on a combination of problems; in the political content of the campaign as a whole; in the new quality achieved in the struggle against Red-baiting. The role of Marcantonio and the Progressive Party in the fight against the Mundt-Nixon Bill and the present indictments against the Communist leaders has helped to contribute a deeper understanding of the role of the Party in the fight for peace and democracy and of its relation to the

unfolding anti-imperialist coalition in the United States.

The Party, despite the persistence of certain weaknesses, did develop, as part of its general participation, a program of activity in its own name. It managed, among other things, to achieve during the most hectic week of the campaign the largest sale and distribution of the *Worker* ever attempted in the district. In the two climactic, final days of the heroic struggle of the Puerto Rican people in the registration campaign, our Party recruited 40 workers in this area. The Party has gained generally a new measure of influence and prestige which must be extended and consolidated.

The Party shared the general weaknesses of the campaign as noted above. In addition, the work of the Party has developed unevenly in the three rather distinct areas of the Congressional District; this manifests itself in East Harlem and Yorkville, where the Party has not sufficiently participated in, and given leadership to, movements of struggle, and conversely in lower Harlem, where from time to time the line between

the Party and mass movement is blurred to the detriment of both.

CONCLUSION

The progressive movement is now in an extremely favorable position to organize its newly acquired strength. By virtue of this signal victory, the A.L.P. has the opportunity to expand its ties in the community, to root itself in all areas, and to work to become the first party in the district, thereby transforming the substantial plurality of 1948 into an unbeatable majority in 1950.

This victory has had powerful repercussions throughout the country. It has reinforced the determination of the progressive forces to strengthen the new people's movement, the Progressive Party, as a powerful and growing center of resistance to the threat of reaction and war. This victory embodies the outlines of the future; it demonstrates that the combination of a militant, unflinching struggle on issues with the long-term development of intimate ties with the people in the locality must be the pattern for similar victories everywhere.

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