
XI

Results of the Elections

INTRODUCTION

Two features today typify the world situation and give point to all of the life and death issues facing the people of all lands. One is the situation in Spain, where the concentrated forces of world fascism wage their desperate and bloody war of extermination against democracy, against an embattled people heroically laying down their lives to defend the principles of self-government and progress. The other feature is the Congress of Soviets which has just had presented to it the new Stalinist Constitution representing the high mark of human progress throughout all history. We see Soviet democracy reaching into the daily life of 170,000,000 people, firmly buttressed in a socialist economy which for the first time translates the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness into terms of the guaranteed right to work, to education and to leisure for every citizen.

The world is divided more openly and consciously than at any previous time into two camps, with the prospect of a new world war more immediate and menacing than would ever have been thought possible before without general hostilities. This is universally recognized. Our reactionary capitalist newspapers are explaining to us that this is the division of the world between communism and fascism, and they call for a new camp, presumably to be composed of the Americas, opposed to the two sides that divide Europe and the other continents. But this slogan that the issue is communism or fascism, varied at times to socialism or fascism, or Marxism or fascism, hides the most essential fact. The fascist nations rally to

their active support the most reactionary circles within all the non-fascist countries and prepare civil war therein, while the Soviet Union, the land of socialism, led by the Communist Party, rallies all the anti-fascist, peace-loving nations and all progressive circles in all lands to the defense of democracy, progress and peace.

All countries outside the Soviet Union are fields of bitter struggle for dominance between the forces of democracy and fascism. In Germany, Italy, Japan and their satellites, reaction and fascism are ascendant and carry on civil war against the people through the government. They are rapidly extending their domestic aggression across frontiers to other lands: Italy in Ethiopia, Japan in China, Germany and Italy in Spain. They are driving toward a world war for imperialist conquest and against the democratic rights of the peoples of the world and their national independence.

In France the rise of the People's Front halted fascism at home and threw French governmental influence on the side of peace and progress, although the serious hesitations of the Blum government became constantly more dangerous. French fascism was stopped but not routed and threatens to make a new offensive.

In Britain a reactionary administration, playing with sympathy to the fascist offensive, is able to continue such policies through democratic forms, despite the anti-fascist tendencies of the British population, due to the ineptness of the Labor Party leadership and its failure to fight for a consistent peace policy. The first decisive struggles to determine the predominant position in the international line-up are now maturing. I must mention that great item of international news which every day occupies from five to ten pages in the daily newspapers, the constitutional crisis in Great Britain, I hope you will pardon me if I do not go into the details of the love affairs of King Edward. But it is of the utmost importance when we see the greatest empire of the world, on the territories of which the sun never sets, shaken by the affairs of the heart of two people. British imperialism boasted of its

solidity, its unshakableness and indeed had impressed all of us with the absence after long years of crisis of serious inner disturbances. British imperialism until a few years ago boasted that it did not even need to arm its police to keep its starving workers in perfect order. But today the British Empire is shaken by the love affair of its King. Of course all of this romantic nonsense which the masses are fed covers something very real, very significant and very dangerous for the world situation. All of this is the development to the rapidly approaching struggles in Britain to decide which side England is going to be on in the next world war. And the fact that the struggle around the King has become so sharp and shaken the whole empire should prove to us, if it doesn't to those who read the news stories, that this affair is not about the domestic arrangements of Edward VIII, but about the disposition of guns and ships and airplanes, and the destiny of the peoples of the British Empire.

Now let us turn to the conference of the American republics now going on in Buenos Aires. It shows how sharply the whole world now feels the coming war and begins to take up an attitude toward the basic issues. The speech made by Secretary of State Hull, at the Inter-American Peace Conference, is of great significance. It was a contribution to the mobilization of the anti-fascist forces of the world in the struggle against war, for the maintenance of peace, not only in the Americas, but everywhere. With the fascists on the offensive everywhere, with these fascist forces growing bolder and becoming very arrogant in some of the South American republics represented in Buenos Aires, it is no small thing when the bourgeois spokesman for the United States government makes an appeal to the peoples of the world to organize people's peace movements to control their governments.

On this first plank of Secretary Hull we can declare our complete agreement. And we can welcome such a call which will be heard and listened to by the peoples of every country where they are not absolutely cut off by fascist dictatorship. Even there it will penetrate and find a response. There are,

of course, points in Secretary Hull's program where we will have to register some differences of opinion, as when he puts forward the plank of American neutrality as the key to peace. We know the falseness of neutrality. We know how it has played into the hands of the war-makers in America and throughout the world. But even on this point we have to note some progress in the direction of a real peace policy in Hull's speech. The neutrality that he put forward is not the simple neutrality of the past, of withdrawal from world affairs, of isolation. It begins to have a new content, not clearly defined as yet, but containing within it the possibilities of developments toward an active peace policy for America which will strengthen the peace forces throughout the world.

The program as laid down by Secretary Hull is very tentative and is not yet crystallized. As it becomes crystallized, we will, of course, find many points in which we have to distinguish our position very sharply. But the main significance of this speech is that America is more and more emerging as the greatest power of the capitalist world on the side of peace, and against the fascist war-makers, and that in this position there is already an appeal to the masses of the people for organized support, not only governmental support, but mass support in every country to the struggle for peace.

The tremendous world significance of the present struggle in Spain arises from its position as focus point for the whole world struggle. Fascism had counted Spain as one of its conquests. The democratic victory of the establishment of a Spanish Republic was thought to have been smashed and subverted from within due to the disunity of the democratic forces. But the call for the People's Front to defeat fascism issued by the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International was greeted with mass response in Spain, second only, if not equal, to that in France. The fascists were overwhelmingly defeated in the Spanish elections of February, 1936. The People's Front was victorious and established itself in control of the government. Fascism had lost Spain. It launched the

murderous uprising against Spanish democracy in July, with the inspiration and support of Hitler and Mussolini, as a desperate attempt to recover its lost position. The international fascist intervention in Spain is the first point of the general world war being prepared by fascism against democracy everywhere.

The chief task of the day for all of progressive humanity is the support of Spanish democracy. In Spain, while we are meeting, we see new victories for the People's Front forces and at the same time we get the news of the landing of large-scale armies of invasion from Germany and Italy. I don't think I have to emphasize to this meeting the significance of this, what it means for our tasks in carrying out the campaign in support of Spain, everywhere in America. We cannot permit the invasion of fascist forces in Spain to throw the tide of battle against Spanish democracy. More than ever now, we must bring international assistance for the Spanish people in every form, and America is one of the places that has to stand in the front ranks of this solidarity action for Spain.

There are a few Americans who are now in the fighting lines in and around Madrid and in the air forces there, and in the machine shops that are keeping the machinery of war going for the People's Front. Many more are eager to go and they should be encouraged and assisted. We must understand that in the struggle for support of Spain we can now reach out into the ranks of every circle in America which has any firm democratic convictions. There are many people ready to fight for democracy and to go to Spain today. As Communists we urge them to do so and fight for the cause of all humanity.

It is on this world stage, the setting of which is characterized chiefly by Spain, with the Soviet Union completing its own democratic achievements while leading the world forces in support of Spanish democracy, with the fascist governments ever more openly subsidizing and supporting fascist intervention, with all the world forced to align itself on one side or the other openly or tacitly; it is on this world stage that

we must evaluate the recently concluded elections and must mark out the next steps in the struggle for democracy, progress and peace in the United States.

1. THE DEFEAT OF REACTION IN THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS

At the Ninth Convention of our Party * in June, in charting our course for the elections, we established that, first, the Republican Party represented nationally the point of concentration of the most reactionary forces in America, moving toward fascism and war. The task was to defeat this threat at all costs. Secondly, Roosevelt, heading the Democratic Party, stood for a middle of the road course. The support of the organized labor and progressive movement went to Roosevelt, as the practical alternative to aggressive reaction. It became our task to teach this progressive and labor movement not to rely upon Roosevelt, to secure independent political organization and action, to win all possible concessions from Roosevelt while using this campaign to prepare its future complete independence in a Farmer-Labor Party. Thirdly, the Communist Party, necessarily conducting an independent campaign, was the most active, loyal and clearheaded leader of the whole camp of labor, progress and peace. Its special task, while influencing the broadest masses and the practical electoral decisions, was to maintain its role independent of the capitalist parties, and extend widely its roots of sympathetic connection with the masses of workers, farmers and lower middle classes and their organizations.

These three objectives represent a specific American application of the strategy of the People's Front, formulated on a world scale at the Seventh World Congress. You will recall that we in America also helped prepare that Congress decision by our movement for the Labor Party in 1935. I want to recall to you a statement of Comrade Dimitroff in his report to the Seventh World Congress, where he said:

* See "Democracy or Fascism," in this volume, pp. 19-64.—*Ed.*

And what would the success of fascism in the United States entail? For the toiling masses it would, of course, entail the unrestrained strengthening of the regime of exploitation and the destruction of the working class movement. And what would be the international significance of this success of fascism? As we know, the United States is not Hungary, or Finland, or Bulgaria, or Latvia. The success of fascism in the United States would change the whole international situation quite materially.

Comrade Dimitroff, after thus evaluating what fascism in the United States would mean to the entire world, in another place went on to expose the source of incipient fascism in the United States:

One must be indeed a confirmed addict of the use of hackneyed schemes not to see that the most reactionary circles of American finance capital, which are attacking Roosevelt, represent first and foremost the very force which is stimulating and organizing the fascist movement in the United States. Not to see the beginnings of real fascism in the United States behind the hypocritical outpouring of these circles "in defense of the democratic rights of the American citizen" is tantamount to misleading the working class in the struggle against its worst enemy.

This warning was directed against such people as the leaders of the Socialist Party and their policies. They failed to realize the significance of this fascist danger, and, hence, in the elections, found themselves cut off from the masses and headed for a harmful sectarian isolation.

We learned in this election campaign what deep truth there was in these statements by Comrade Dimitroff. After the Seventh Congress we said that the far-reaching and world-shaping consequences in the People's Front strategy would become clear only as they unfolded in the life of the people of the world. We called for a continued and sustained study of the Seventh Congress decisions and their consequences. The victories of the People's Front in France and Spain confirmed this estimate. Now we must add that the elections in the United States in their own and different way also confirmed the correctness of the Seventh Congress decisions.

The best possible confirmation of the correctness of a strat-

egy is its successful execution, and the realization of the expected results. To what degree did the masses of the people achieve the objectives we set for the election?

The first objective was the defeat of Landon. This was accomplished to a degree far surpassing all expectations. There was a crushing rebuke to the Republican Party such as no major party had experienced in generations. It must be clear that the more overwhelming the defeat of the Landon camp, the more did we achieve our political objective which was more than merely keeping Landon out of office. It was to discredit and drive out of public life all who stood on such a platform before the American people. This aim we shared with the largest number of people, which proved to be the great majority of the population. Without exaggerating our role in bringing about this result, we can safely say that the weight of each individual Communist in the struggle was far higher, manifold, than that of the members of any other political group in America.

The second objective was to make the campaign and the re-election of Roosevelt serve also to prepare and strengthen the forces of the Farmer-Labor Party and the People's Front. This aim was achieved in varying degree in the various parts of the country, with some advance almost everywhere. We Communists, by our policy and activity, helped bring about these advances in every case, in many instances in a most significant degree. Outstanding examples of these are: (a) the smashing victory of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party not only over the Republicans, but also over the Democrats where their candidates stayed in the race; (b) the victory of the Wisconsin Progressive Party, and, more important, the strengthened position with it of the Farmer-Labor Progressive Association, with the appearance of Communists and definite Left-wingers among the elected officials; (c) the electoral successes of the Washington Commonwealth Federation, a People's Front movement just emerging out of the Democratic Party, moving toward a Farmer-Labor Party; (d) the united political action movement in California which united

the EPIC movement with labor and Left-wing organizations, and which maintained the positions in State Legislature and Congress originally won in 1934; (e) the American Labor Party in New York, which, notwithstanding serious weaknesses and shortcomings, advanced the People's Front and gathered more than one-quarter million votes under its own banner, giving its support to Roosevelt not through the Democratic party; (f) Labor's Non-Partisan League, although only a beginning and very timid step forward to independent political action, represented distinct progress over the traditional A. F. of L. attitude, and was a step in the direction of a Farmer-Labor Party. In these examples and in other mass movements of perhaps less significance we find some indication of the general advance that was achieved in the election campaign toward building the foundation of a People's Front.

We have no reason to exaggerate these achievements, beyond their true proportions. They are limited and full of weaknesses. Yet they are of enormous importance as representative of those movements toward the People's Front, the further development of which gives the only hope of preventing reaction and fascism from seizing America. The problem of further extending, developing, and uniting this movement on a national scale is the central problem of the day.

On the third objective, that of building the Party, we should note that even by the narrowest standard of measurement, the vote for the Communist ticket, which circumstances this year removed from all direct relation to the scope of our influence, shows considerable growth except on the Presidential ticket, which will probably show a slight decline. An example of this is the growth of the vote in New York City to 65,000 for the general ticket, topping the Socialist vote of 60,000 for the first time. That there was a distinct advance of Communist Party influence has been generally admitted.

We must come to the conclusion, therefore, that life itself, and the results of the struggle, have given proof of the full correctness of our Party's strategy, a strategy which brought us fully into the main stream of American political life and

made our small Party a significant factor not merely for ourselves but for the whole country.

Our Party's significant role was made possible by our understanding of the deep class currents in American politics. When we speak of our Party's achievements, we by no means conceive of them as exploits of wonder-workers who sucked these results out of their own thumbs. Our Party's role was important because we knew the currents among the masses. We placed ourselves in a position, not merely to ride these currents, but to co-operate with them and increasingly to guide them. It was the movement of the masses which was the force that changed the whole face of American politics.

Let us try to get a closer idea of the nature of the change in the political structure of the parties that took place, making the Republican and Democratic parties something different from what they were before. For generations the two-party system of American capitalism was based upon a regionalism that roughly corresponded to basic economic groups. These were the industrial banking North, the cotton-tobacco South, the wheat-dairy-livestock-mining West. The party struggle was largely between the bourgeoisie of these three regions for their special interests. They brought forward such issues in addition as were considered necessary to undermine the mass following of the rival group, or to whip up their own supporters to greater enthusiasm. With Republicans as the party of Northern capitalism, and Democrats that of the special agrarianism of the South, the basic problem of their conflict was always which of them would win the allegiance of the West. This regionalism was accentuated by the federal system of governmental structure, with its 48 sovereign states. The basic class antagonisms rarely broke through this superstructure to find any clear expression in the parties and issues in national politics.

If this traditional structure of the two-party system had remained intact, there is little doubt that the *Literary Digest* straw ballot would have been as prophetic in 1936 as it had been in four previous Presidential elections. The *Literary*

Digest came to disaster because it overlooked one little fact; the dominant line of political groupings was no longer the vertical one of regionalism, but the horizontal one of class stratification. Because their sample votes were taken overwhelmingly among the upper classes—automobile owners and telephone subscribers—they reflected the general current of these classes toward Landon and the Republicans, but overlooked the contrary current among the poorer strata in the opposite direction.

Class groupings came forward as the decisive factor in the 1936 elections, sweeping over and submerging the old regional traditions and interests. That is one of the chief reasons for Roosevelt's sweeping majority. The speed with which this took place, its extent which left out only Maine and Vermont (the stagnant extreme Northeast), its volume with a majority of 11,000,000—all these indicate that this change is not accidental or temporary, but a permanent new direction of American political life.

This regrouping on class lines came to the fore on the initiative taken by the big monopolists, in the organization of the notorious Liberty League, and the subsequent mobilization of the American Bankers' Association, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Manufacturers' Association, and all similar bodies under the direct control of Wall Street. Their policy was directed toward shelving Roosevelt and his policies in favor of the Republican candidate—any Republican, they thought, could be elected by them. They were even agreed, as their reactionary literary servant, Mencken, expressed it, that a Chinaman could beat Roosevelt with all that money-power behind him. But the masses, although stirring with discontent against Roosevelt's policies, took fright at this unprecedented concentration of all their most pitiless exploiters, and rallied around Roosevelt to defeat Wall Street. When the fascist Hearst added his voice to that hymn of hate the issue became quite definite for the masses. Roosevelt's victory was won for him in the first place by the character of his enemies. Their campaign of hatred was his

greatest political asset, as he himself recognized in his Madison Square Garden speech.

Equally significant was the negative influence of the daily newspapers in the elections. The big majority of them actively supported Landon, estimates running from 65 per cent to 85 per cent. The remainder, with few exceptions, were lukewarm in their support and full of reservations. The more the newspapers turned against Roosevelt, the more the masses turned toward him. They had learned that newspapers represented and spoke for their worst enemies and oppressors.

The unprecedented "Red scare" that was staged against Roosevelt also strengthened the sentiment of the masses in his favor. Of course, no one could seriously credit the cries of "Communist," "revolution," "Moscow," "red flag," and so on, that filled the air for weeks. When for a full week the newspapers debated whether it was really true that the Communists asked their followers to vote for Roosevelt, they succeeded in doing more than diverting a few hundred thousand votes away from us in his direction. They also convinced millions, already alarmed, that this typical Hitler-Hearst trick stamped the dominant features of the Landon camp as fascist. Thus the great mass of anti-fascist sentiment was directed to Roosevelt. The defeat of almost every Red-baiting candidate in the election was one of its major features. Red-baiters lost out no matter what group they operated within. Another typical trait of the Landon campaign which confirmed mass opinion of its fascist direction was its demagogic and contradictory promises of all things to all men.

Roosevelt also gathered to his support the mass peace sentiments prevalent among the people. Without putting forward any definite peace program, he could still shine in comparison with Landon, whose jingoist tendencies were emphasized by the support of the munition lords and warmongers generally for his candidacy.

Another boomerang for Landon was the Republican attack upon the weaknesses of the Social Security Act, and the attempt to enter into competition with Roosevelt in promises.

The result was to press Roosevelt into making his Madison Square Garden speech with his pledge for shorter hours, higher wages, an end to sweatshops and child labor, collective bargaining through trade unions, and his slogan that "for all these things we have only just begun to fight." These promises aroused the enthusiasm and support of the workers, where Roosevelt's record during his first term had left them cold or indifferent. Again the Roosevelt majority was swelled and given even more the character of a class line-up, of a crusade against Wall Street and reaction.

The election results discredited and drove from public life, at least temporarily, the fascist radio priest, Father Coughlin. For a time the Union Party looked formidable, when it promised to unite the agrarian following of Lemke, the old-age pension movement of Dr. Townsend, the followers of the radio priest, Father Coughlin, and the remnants of the Huey Long Share-the-Wealth movement under Rev. Gerald K. Smith. For a short while it succeeded in penetrating state-wide Farmer-Labor Parties in Iowa and Michigan, and even seriously threatened to influence the successful Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota.

Only the determined and relentless campaign of exposure and opposition, led and organized in the first place by the Communists, smashed the influence of Lemke and Coughlin in one after another of their strongholds and finally brought them to an inglorious collapse, completely isolating them from the Farmer-Labor movement. They received only a fraction of their expected vote. The Union Party fully justified our judgment of it, as the vanguard for the reactionary campaign, laying the ground for more reactionary slogans, as when Father Coughlin raised the issue of bullets to overthrow a possible "dictatorship" of Roosevelt. Its collapse was of the same general political significance as that of the Republican Party, of which it was an auxiliary.

Negative proof of the correctness of the course of the Communist Party is given by the debacle of the Socialist Party.

The Socialist Party took a diametrically opposite course to our line on every tactic. Demoralized by the bankruptcy of opportunist Social-Democracy in Europe, the Socialist Party still rejected the proposals of the Communist Party for a united front, came out in principle against the People's Front in America and advocated its liquidation in France and Spain. It tried to find a new course, by submitting to the poisonous influence of Trotskyism and by amalgamating with the Trotskyites. The Socialist Party opposed and tried to disrupt the Farmer-Labor Parties in the various states, it denounced Labor's Non-Partisan League, it declared that the only issue of importance was the immediate transition to socialism, but for this Left-sounding slogan gave a most reformist interpretation. By this course the Socialist Party played into the hands of its Right-wing elements and came to an unprincipled split with its local organizations, which had somewhat of a mass base in Connecticut and Pennsylvania; it split with the New York Old Guard which had trade union connections; and only saved a split in Wisconsin by making that state an "exception" which resulted in the practical liquidation of the Socialist Party into the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation. Its course brought about the public resignation from the Socialist Party of many members prominent in trade union work and the withdrawal of others from practical politics, both of Right and Left tendencies. Its whole campaign was a frantic grasping for votes for itself at all costs, but it failed of this aim more completely than ever in its history. The total vote will be only 20 per cent of that of four years ago and less than half of the Socialist Party vote in 1900, when it made its first national campaign.

The Socialist Party is, as a result of its sectarian course, its opportunist and inept campaign, now in a deep crisis, with its lower organizations ravaged by the bitter factional struggle for complete control being waged by the Trotskyites. We must offer to all sincere Socialists our sympathetic help in solving their difficult problems.

2. WHAT FOLLOWS AFTER THE ROOSEVELT VICTORY

Now, let us pass on to a consideration of what follows after the Roosevelt victory. The balloting on November 3 could be called "the great repudiation." The large majority of people were first of all voting against Hearst, against the Liberty League, against Wall Street, against Landon, against reaction, fascism and jingoism. That is the first and most important significance of the elections. It was a smashing defeat for reaction. But, though defeated, the forces of reaction were not routed. They are reforming their lines for new attacks, preparing new methods to gain the same ends they sought in the election. Forced to drop their plans to challenge the validity of the election, which they clearly had in mind in expectation of a close vote, the reactionaries, faced with a tremendous majority for Roosevelt, suddenly turned an about face and began to make love to Roosevelt. Hearst, who the day before election denounced him in the same terms as he does the Communists, against whom he incites lynch law, suddenly found in Roosevelt the qualities of an Andrew Jackson of the twentieth century.

If Roosevelt wants support from them, the reactionaries tell the world, he can get all he wants, for a "sane" policy that will curb the "wild men" who got into Congress in the landslide, in far too large numbers for reactionary comfort. The defeated reactionaries hoped to recoup their fortunes through the Democratic Right wing, through influencing Roosevelt, through splitting the Democratic Party, and through the Supreme Court.

The Communist Party sees in the overwhelming defeat of reaction in the elections a great opportunity for the forces of the People's Front to move forward, for labor to achieve some of its demands, for all of the oppressed to win improvements in their situation. But this cannot be done if we sit and wait for someone to bring things to us on a platter. It will not happen if the masses rely upon Roosevelt. Progress can only come if

we use the opportunity for organization and struggle on a broader and more determined line than ever before.

Evidence that millions of workers understand this point is to be seen in the rising movement in various industries, in marine, steel, clothing, textile and others. These workers know that now is the favorable time to gain demands, but that without organization and struggle nothing will happen. There is a mounting mood of confidence and readiness to struggle. This is the mood that must be roused, stimulated and organized to drive the whole movement forward for the People's Front.

Of course, the Democratic Party leaders and Roosevelt want nothing of the kind. They want everyone to be quiet and wait for whatever the new Congress will bring them. The Democratic Party wants to restore good relations with its extreme Right wing and with the reactionaries generally and still continue to absorb all Farmer-Labor Party sentiment and prevent its crystallization.

The A. F. of L. Executive Council, instead of leading the labor movement forward, pulls back and condemns even such hesitant efforts as Labor's Non-Partisan League and the C.I.O.'s steel drive. It is ready to split the whole labor movement rather than permit progress.

The C.I.O. unions, while moving forward for industrial organization, are marking time politically, waiting for new developments instead of helping bring them about. The statement of Labor's Non-Partisan League after the elections sounded only the call to be alert and to be ready for a possible realignment in 1940, but there was not a word about helping create this realignment. We can by no means agree with this passive attitude but must point out that it is an obstacle to progress.

The employing class is naturally aware of the mounting spirit for struggle of the masses and they are trying to head it off. That is the significance of the large number of voluntary pay increases that have been announced since the elections.

Only the organization and struggle of the masses, independent of capitalist parties and politicians, will realize their

demands and expectations, through Congress and outside of Congress, and prepare the way for greater concessions later on.

True, the masses have "great expectations," as the *New York Times* expressed it, as a result of the defeat of reaction. They believed in the promises made to them. They expect higher wages and lower hours, with protection of the right of collective bargaining and trade union organization. They expect adequate relief and public works to care for the eleven million unemployed; and they are in the mood for sharp struggle to achieve these. They expect the improvement of the old-age pensions and social security law, and their extension to the whole population. They expect the wiping out of sweat-shops and child labor. The Negroes expect some of the equality that Ickes talked to them about. The farmers expect more relief from their burdeas. The young people expect further help from the government. The masses expect a curb to be placed on the usurped powers of the Supreme Court. They expect the United States to take an active part in preserving peace in the world. They expect greater civil liberties.

All of these great expectations constitute the mandate given to Roosevelt by the overwhelming majority of his 27,000,000 supporters. It is these great expectations which must be transformed into the moving force for the creation of the People's Front and the independent struggle and organization to realize these things.

The crushing defeat of the Republicans hastened the disintegration of the old two-party system. It brought closer the growing split of the Democratic Party, the party which united progressive and reactionary elements in the election, elements which cannot long continue in the same party. It strengthened all the progressive tendencies among the voting population. All these things improve and broaden the prospects for the building of the People's Front. We can say that these prospects are much better than ever before.

But at the same time, while improving and broadening the prospects for a national Farmer-Labor Party, this very progress brings about a temporary delay in the organizational

unity of all these forces in a definite national organization. Now more than ever there is a fear among many progressives of prematurely forming such a party and thereby narrowing it down, leaving behind and outside serious forces which can be brought in a little later or in a different form.

We want to hasten the formation of a national Farmer-Labor Party as much as possible. It was the absence of such a party in the last elections which seriously held back the growth of labor's power. Even the national application of the tactic of the American Labor Party in New York would have been a great advance. The closest thing we got to a national concentration of the Farmer-Labor Party forces was the valuable but very limited Chicago Conference of May 30. This produced no effective organization but only a platform. The Chicago platform alone, however, by its stimulating effect on all local movements, proved the tremendous role that can and will be played by a really effective national united front of all the progressive movements and organizations. That is what we have in mind when we call for a national Farmer-Labor Party.

We must soberly estimate, however, the moods and trends among the broad progressive ranks. We must find the way to unite the movements already outside of and independent of the Democratic Party and Progressive Republicans together with those that are still maturing within the old parties, and not yet ready for full independence. This means that we must conceive of the People's Front on a broader scale than merely the existing Farmer-Labor Party organizations. We must conceive of it on a scale that will unite the forces in the Farmer-Labor Party and other progressives together with those forces crystallized in some form or other but not yet independent of the old parties.

Our experience in Washington and California confirms the correctness of this judgment. There is not the slightest doubt that we were correct in establishing the united front of these movements which were not yet independent of the Democratic Party. The struggle to realize the mandate of the elections

will still further broaden and crystallize those progressive movements. We cannot, like Norman Thomas, wash our hands of these growing movements and demand that they spring forth overnight fully grown and mature, before we will recognize and work with them. We must be ready to help them through birth pangs and nurture them through all the difficulties of infancy.

There cannot be a blue-print which will answer by formula how the People's Front is to develop uniformly throughout the country. We must study the real forces at work among the people and their relations concretely, and find a way acceptable to these progressive forces which will unite them on a state scale, and later nationally. This broader unity will have to, for a time, at least, include in most places forces outside and inside of the two old parties. This is a necessity at present for the development of the Farmer-Labor Party on a broad mass basis.

More than ever now, we must emphasize that in the People's Front, and in the existing Farmer-Labor Parties which already realize in part the People's Front, we are not trying to obtain a camouflage for the Socialist and Communist Parties. In the People's Front we must at all costs include non-socialist progressives who will for a longer or shorter time be the overwhelming majority. Our aim in the People's Front is to organize the majority of the people in the shortest possible time, against the worst reactionaries and exploiters, and get the maximum possible control of the government in the hands of this progressive majority. And we must say that the results of the election showed, more than we ever saw before, the possibility of achieving this.

Roosevelt and his close supporters, of course, want to create the impression that the people already have achieved this goal through his re-election. This illusion if not fought against can become an obstacle to the further growth of the People's Front. It will be fully dispersed only in the course of struggle, in independent struggle on the economic and political field to realize the great expectations of the workers; first of all in

the industries, in the fight for wages, hours and unionization, and, second, in the legislative assemblies of the states and the national congress in the fight for social and labor legislation.

We do not need to waste time, as some people do, in speculations as to whether Roosevelt will turn Right or Left, although our prediction of a Right turn by Roosevelt as expressed before election is being realized in the administration's relief policy today. From past experience we know that his course will be determined in its major aspects entirely by the course of the road. Roosevelt always tries to find the middle of the road. If the road turns right he turns right. If the road turns left, he will turn left. The road of national life will be determined not by Roosevelt's mind or tendency, but by the relationship of forces, by the independent struggle of the masses in the economic and political fields. A strong and successful movement to organize the mass production industries will change the course of government and of Roosevelt to the Left more than all the persuasive arguments in the world.

Likewise, we need not be afraid that the workers and farmers will win too much through Roosevelt and will thus dull their appetite for more and make them conservative. We must encourage the masses to win everything possible through the election victory of Roosevelt, showing them that this can only be done through organization and struggle, and through political independence from Roosevelt. We can be quite sure that every gain under these conditions will only sharpen their appetite for more, while having increased their knowledge and their power to gain more.

Neither do we need to speculate on the question as to whether on a national scale the People's Front will be realized only in the form of a Farmer-Labor Party, or through its combination with other forms of organization and struggle of the masses. It is sufficient at this moment to take note of the necessity in many states to work for a time at least also through broader and less definitely crystallized forms than the Farmer-Labor Party. What will finally come out on a national scale will to a large degree be determined by the relation of forces

within the Roosevelt following, between reactionary and progressive trends and forces. A split in that following is sure to come, but its form on a national scale is still impossible to predict with certainty. In this struggle we will also participate, and we will have many difficult, complicated, and dangerous problems to solve in organizing and influencing the masses in the struggles that take place within the Democratic Party and in some progressive sections of the Republican Party.

Just a word about the economic prospects after the election. We do not need to take time for any extended economic analysis. It is clear that production and economic activity in almost every industry are definitely continuing upward. Production is approaching pre-crisis levels. But the most important fact is that this still leaves a mass of unemployed in America, variously estimated from 9 to 14 million. This, together with the forces always preparing a new collapse, guarantees that this so-called prosperity will not reach even that relative mass of people that it has in previous periods, and that it will be even shorter in duration, independent of the changes that may be brought about by world political developments such as world war.

The election results strengthened the fight for the unity of the working class and of the trade union movement. This is of central importance, for without the firm leadership and hegemony of the working class which can be exercised only through its unity, the broader People's Front cannot be realized.

The fight for working class unity which for us still means the historic task of the organization of the tens of millions of the unorganized workers, and especially the workers in the basic and mass production industries, today confronts us with the special and immediate task of fighting against the spreading of the division in the organized labor movement, of fighting for the re-unification of the American Federation of Labor.

Our Party has throughout the whole of this critical period in the trade union movement thrown its full weight in the

fight to maintain the unity of the American Federation of Labor and against the splitting policies of the reactionary leaders of the Executive Council. Now the 56th Convention of the A. F. of L., by its endorsement of the suspensions, has taken a step which increases the threat of a long-time split in the trade union movement. We shall redouble our efforts in the fight for trade union unity, for the unity of the American Federation of Labor. The statement of the Central Committee condemning the split, issued immediately after the Tampa Convention had confirmed the suspension of the C.I.O. unions, furnishes the guide for our tasks in this fight.

We must examine in detail the application of this statement to the specific situation and find very carefully the correct line in the complicated problems that will exist in the many industries and in many trade unions. Again we have to say that there is no formula which automatically gives us an answer to these problems. Only careful study of the concrete situation will enable us to find the correct, the most effective, answer in the fight for unity.

But let it be clearly understood that we are not going to be fooled by empty talk about unity. We will always expose, as we have in the past, those who play with the word unity and use it to cover up their reactionary and splitting policies and tactics. There are those who, in the name of unity, would surrender to the reactionaries and compromise or abandon the basic struggle to unite the workers in steel, auto, rubber, chemical, and other mass production industries. Against this false cry of unity, which William Green used so demagogically to demand surrender to reaction at the Tampa Convention, we must unite all progressives in firm solidarity. Practical compromises to adjust the particular claims of particular craft unions to this basic program are, of course, allowable, and no one would think of rejecting them in principle beforehand. But such practical compromises are possible only when the reactionary Executive Council has opened the door for them by abandoning its demand for unconditional surrender of the progressives in their fight for working class unity.

Recently Comrade Dimitroff, in his article on Spain, recalled to our memory the clear, firm words of Lenin on unity which are of great value in connection with this problem to the American trade union movement:

The workers really need unity. And the thing that must be understood above all else is that apart from the workers themselves, no one will "give" them unity, no one is able to help their unity. Unity must not be "promised"—this will be an empty boast, self-deception. Unity must not be "made" out of "agreement" between the little groups of intellectuals—this is an error of the saddest, most naive and ignorant type. Unity must be won, and only by the workers themselves. The conscious workers themselves are capable of achieving this—by stubborn and insistent work.

Nothing is easier than to write the word "unity" in letters a yard high, to promise unity, to "proclaim" ourselves as adherents of unity. But, in reality, unity can only be advanced by work and the organization of the progressive workers, of all conscious workers. . . .

This is not so easy. It requires work, insistence, the rallying together of all conscious workers. But without work, the unity of the workers is out of the question.

So Lenin spoke some twenty years ago about unity, on the eve of the World War. And it is in this spirit that we today fight for working class unity, for the unity of the American Federation of Labor. The fight for genuine trade union unity is a fight for the triumph within the labor movement of the principles enunciated and supported in action by the Committee for Industrial Organization. The establishment of this principle is an absolute necessity for the further growth, for the very existence, finally, of the trade union movement. It is a necessary condition for the preservation of democracy in the United States, for the salvation of our country from reaction, fascism and war. That is why we must say, without the slightest equivocation, that the struggle to realize the principles of the C.I.O. is the first demand upon every progressive as well as every revolutionary worker. It is the struggle for the unity of the working class.

There can be no real working class unity so long as some 25,000,000 workers, of whom some 10,000,000 are in the mass

production industries, are unorganized. This does not in the least mean that we underestimate the importance and significance of the four million organized workers, the most decisive sections of which are in the unions affiliated to the C.I.O. and in the independent railroad brotherhoods.

Can you imagine if we succeeded in the future, and that is our aim, to help organize the entire working class, its decisive sections, in genuine industrial unions, under real progressive labor leadership, how that would change the entire picture of the class relations within the country? What impetus that would give to the independent role of the working class in shaping, formulating and influencing the policies and life of all the people in our great country? That certainly would be a guarantee that the mandate to Roosevelt in the elections would be fulfilled.

3. THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

We have already evaluated the main accomplishments of the Party in the previous section of the report. We have seen how our Party strategy proved correct by the results, and by the immensely improved position of the Party in relation to all the progressive forces in the country. We are in conflict only with those forces which are holding back the movement; we have increasingly close co-operation with all forces helping to drive the labor movement forward to new strength and achievements; above all we have deepened and broadened our ties with the masses.

Some comrades are still influenced by the idea that the Party vote is the only correct measure of our achievements. To the degree that they are influenced by this idea they are somewhat pessimistic because our vote did not show any great jump forward. These comrades look upon our refusal to go into head-on collision with the progressive labor movement, in sharp competition for votes, as Norman Thomas did, as a sacrifice necessary to assure that Landon would not be elected. Therefore,

they ask us why we did not change our position in the last days before election, when it was becoming clear that Roosevelt would be elected. They wonder why we did not swing over to the Thomas tactic of grabbing the utmost possible votes for ourselves at the last minute (even though this failed so signally to win votes for Thomas).

To pose such a question reveals a shallow understanding of our whole strategy and a wrong evaluation of our accomplishments. Let us throw light on this question from another angle. Suppose that our proposals last summer for a National Farmer-Labor Party had been adopted by the progressive movement. Then we would have withdrawn our national ticket entirely. But we would have made an equally energetic campaign without getting any separate Communist Party vote at all as a result. Would our doubting comrades still have kept their eyes fixed on the C.P. vote, this time zero, and feared that we had disappeared entirely from the political scene? Of course not. Clearly, it would have been recognized as a much greater victory. However, the urgent need for a united front, which everyone felt, was realized in another and less satisfactory way under such circumstances that we could not fight against it—the united front of the labor and progressive forces around Roosevelt.

We foresaw, before the campaign opened, that our separate vote would register only our irreducible minimum and not our maximum influence. This was inherent in the situation and our strategy. There is nothing to weep about. We do not have to explain away our vote by special local circumstances or special weaknesses on our part. Weaknesses there were aplenty in our campaign but they must not be sought in this question of the relation of our influence and our vote. There is no direct relation between them at all. Not to understand this is to have a very narrow understanding of the whole strategy of the People's Front, which is not a mere election tactic but a strategy for a whole period.

Where our strategy was realized in its most satisfactory form—as in Minnesota—we had no state ticket at all, but

were among the most effective campaigners for the Farmer-Labor ticket. Does that mean that we were weakened in that state? On the contrary, we made the greatest advance of Communist influence among the masses, precisely there. Equally significant were our advances in Wisconsin which again can in nowise be measured by our separate vote. Even in the very unsatisfactory American Labor Party in New York, with its crude organization from the top alone, there were greater advances of our influence than would have accompanied a situation where the American Labor Party was absent, even though that had meant a higher Communist Party vote. We made greater advances with the lower vote in New York with the American Labor Party in the field than we could have made with a higher vote and the American Labor Party not in existence.

Then, too, we should point out one possible development which was not realized but which might have occurred if the progressive leaders had taken only a part of our advice. Suppose these leaders and their organizations had adopted our proposal for a National Farmer-Labor Party convention, including the Socialists and the Communists. Suppose that this convention had come together and formed a national Farmer-Labor Party with all of us in it, and then decided to place Roosevelt at the head of the ticket nationally, as the American Labor Party did in New York, but followed it up with state Farmer-Labor Party tickets wherever possible. Under such circumstances would the Socialist Party and the Communist Party have accepted the discipline of such a broad national united front of all progressives? Would we have refrained from putting forward our own independent tickets and supported the Farmer-Labor Party ticket even with Roosevelt at the head? I venture to say that under such conditions we would almost surely have done so. The united People's Front and the cause of socialism as well would have been advanced much more than by what actually happened in the election campaign.

One of the greatest accomplishments of our Party in this

campaign was that it began to learn how, even with small forces, to find its road in the midst of the most complicated political situation—we drove in the center of a national political storm toward a definite goal, without ever losing sight of it, and without allowing our forces to be broken up, dispersed or demoralized, but rather gaining strength and clarity out of it all. This ability is the hall mark of Bolshevism and to the degree that our Party demonstrated this ability, we can say that we are in the process of becoming a real Bolshevik Party.

Can anyone, even our worst enemies, deny that the Communist Party played an important role in the campaign; that millions of people thought that what the Communist Party had to say was of serious importance, that millions were influenced in their thinking and their actions by the Communist Party? No one can deny this undisputed fact. Can anyone say that we lost our heads at any moment, that we hesitated, or doubted at any point, that our strategical or tactical line was ever blurred or unclear or had to be changed? It is possible to differ with us but it is not possible to say that. Everyone recognized that the Communist Party was an exceptionally effective striking force precisely because of its conviction and clarity, its drive and unity. That is another of the hall-marks of Bolshevism.

Can anyone deny that in this campaign the Communist Party broke through and smashed the legend of our enemies that our Party is something foreign, imported from abroad, not organically a part of the American political scene? No one can deny that we thoroughly established our Party as an American Party, that our slogan—"Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism"—registered deeply with the American people. This was a great achievement. This is also a sign of Bolshevism.

Can anyone deny that in this campaign the Communist Party smashed the conspiracy to outlaw it, to rouse a pogrom spirit in America against the Communists, to drive us out of politics? We forced our Party on the ballot in states that had passed laws designed especially to keep it off. Where, as in

Illinois, we were kept off the ballot it was by arbitrary violation of the letter and spirit of the election laws, unreasonable as they were, or as in Florida, where the law now even excludes the Republican Party. When in Terre Haute and Tampa, and against Comrade Ford in Durham and Toledo, mob action was resorted to, this did not rouse the country against us, as the reactionaries hoped, but we turned the attacks into the most effective boomerang whereby we rallied even large sections of the capitalist press to speak in our defense, and won new sympathy from millions who were formerly indifferent to us. Here also is a great achievement.

Turning to the more technical aspects of the campaign, one can list among our achievements the effective use, for the first time, of the radio. We reached millions with our message nationally, and in many districts also on a local scale. This must by all means be followed up and made a permanent part of our technique.

Our campaign literature was upon a higher political level, more effective and was distributed in far greater quantities than ever before in the history of our Party. While much more could have been done with this task and literature distribution was seriously neglected in many places, yet this still remains one of the strong points of the campaign.

The political rallies organized in the most important cities on a national plan were taken up most seriously by the district organizers and as a rule were models of effective political and organizational work, in which thousands of people participated in a responsible way. Unfortunately these models were not energetically followed everywhere in handling the thousands of lesser meetings, which left much to be desired.

Contrast the growth of the influence of our Party with the catastrophic decline of the Socialist Party, its growing inner crisis, and one will at once get the different results of two different policies. The S.P. policy flowed from reformism, sectarianism, influenced by counter-revolutionary Trotskyism; our policy was built on Leninism correctly applied to the present situation.

Let us now turn attention to some of the most serious weaknesses and shortcomings of the campaign. First of all we must speak of the entirely unsatisfactory state of the recruitment of new members. Our membership grew but there was not an increase in tempo to keep pace with our heightened activity and broadened contacts. Our units, sections and districts were not able to keep this task in the center of their attention. It constantly slipped into the background and was forgotten in favor of the more exciting and spectacular sides of the campaign. Concentrated attention to important industries and localities was also too often forgotten and the Party slipped back too much into the old diffused general approach against which we have struggled for years.

This means that our lower units showed a tendency to drift and become the playthings of spontaneous development instead of taking charge of this development and directing it to a conscious goal. That such a thing could happen proves that the units and sections did not conduct planned work, that they were not the organizational center which directed the activities of the membership toward predetermined goals. This is precisely the condition that we find upon direct examination of the work of the units and sections. Their work remained too much a matter of routine handed down from above. Their initiative was low, their inner life unattractive and uninteresting; as a result they did not become the centers of radiating energy, the dynamos of the Party. The decisive centers of Party activity down below were too much divorced from the units and sections, and did not find in them their basis and support. In fact, they forgot the central task of making the units and sections concentration points and radiating media of all phases of the campaign.

Closely connected with this and flowing out of it is the unsatisfactory quality of much of the local and neighborhood campaigning. There was mechanical repetition of the speeches and formulations of the national spokesmen and national literature, without any effort at independent local application and tying up of national issues with concrete local problems.

Further, when local concrete applications were attempted there was too often a lack of care and precision, a sloppiness and carelessness and sometimes even a vulgarization of our policies which was very harmful. Such things could pass uncorrected only because the units and sections were not alert, and were not checking up on the conduct of the campaign, not conducting it as a collective undertaking but as isolated individual efforts. The struggle for a higher quality in all our work from top to bottom is the only answer to these problems.

In facing and solving the complicated problems of intensive work among the masses, and simultaneously building and strengthening the Party organizations and their role, a clear understanding of the characteristic Bolshevik approach and conception of the Party is required. A large part of our membership is new and unschooled in these problems. It requires constant educational work to transform these members into conscious Bolsheviks—a task still most seriously neglected. Another part of the membership, longer in the Party, has become fixed in old careless bad habits, which have not been weeded out. Some of the local organizations have become careless and loose in their approach to Party organization and its regular functioning on the false grounds that this was what we meant when we warned against overloading the members with work beyond their powers.

Out of a loose and careless approach to the organizational building of the Party, there arise all sorts of political weaknesses and even deviations. There arise again examples of the old discredited theories of "mass work first" at the expense of neglecting the Party, and then the opposite and equally wrong theories of "Party work first" at the expense of neglecting the mass work.

Lenin taught us that true revolutionists never for a moment allow such artificial separation of "Party" and "mass." Mass work without the simultaneous growth and strengthening of the Party is in danger of opportunist liquidation, while Party work divorced from direct and immediate connection with the masses will tend in the direction of sectarian barrenness and

degeneration. The constant connection and interrelation between Party and mass work must become the dominant feature of our Party life, in units, sections and districts, if our Party is to exert its maximum influence in directing the millions of American workers and their allies onto the road of the People's Front and eventually to socialism.

That these problems still exist for us is proven by the weakness and shortcomings of the election campaign. It will be necessary to pay critical attention to all these features of our Party life, making use of our election experiences to drive out all looseness and carelessness, and to replace these characteristics by those of responsibility and vigilance throughout the Party.

Summing up this examination of the Party's role in the election campaign, we can say that despite serious weaknesses and shortcomings which must receive sustained and detailed attention at this Central Committee meeting and after, the Party followed a correct and consistent line which improved its position in every respect. Our Party demonstrated a growing political maturity and emerged as an important force in national life. We gained the sympathetic attention of millions and influenced them, and our Party now stands in an excellent situation to face the next tasks, much greater tasks, toward which we must now direct our attention.*

4. THE RELATION OF THE PEOPLE'S FRONT TO THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

There are still some of our friends (perhaps even still a few Party members) who are worried about the possibility that the struggle for the People's Front and its demands (which are compatible with the continuance of capitalism) may lead us to neglect or forget about our final goal of socialism. Some months ago, for example, our friend Scott Nearing wrote me

* A section on "The Tasks of the Party and the Mass Struggles Ahead" is omitted here. The complete report is published in pamphlet form by Workers Library Publishers, New York, under the title *The Results of the Elections and the People's Front.*—Ed.

a letter in which he developed the theory that, while the People's Front was necessary, it could not be built by the same party which fights for socialism. There must be a division of labor, so to speak, between two parties of the working class, one of which should struggle for the People's Front and its demands and the other should struggle for socialism. He seemed to think that the Socialist Party formerly had the first role and the Communist Party the second, and that now the roles are being reversed, with the C.P. taking the "reformist" road of the People's Front and the S.P. becoming the "revolutionary" party. Although Nearing is by no means a Trotskyist, it is clear that in this he was influenced by the Trotskyite tendency of thought, which has wrought such havoc in Socialist ranks lately. Whether he would be of the same opinion now, after the campaign, is questionable; but still the problem requires continuous clarification for many people. This is our task, which we undertake without complaint. Every vital problem requires constant re-examination and restatement, so also the problem of the relation of the People's Front to the struggle for socialism.

Our country, in common with the rest of the capitalist world, is threatened with reaction, fascism and war. The reactionary forces are strong and menacing. On the other hand, those standing for socialism, which is the only final solution, are relatively weak—in the U.S.A., especially weak. Must we therefore become pessimists, and concede in advance that reaction and fascism must surely win, and that only through the bitter sufferings of fascism can the great majority be won to socialism? No, that would be absolutely wrong, it would be criminal, it would amount to a silent partnership with reaction. Although the great toiling majority of the population are not ready to struggle for socialism, they *are* ready to defend their democratic rights and living standards against the attacks of reaction and fascism, and they are more and more anxious to struggle for the maintenance of peace. Organized and roused to struggle, on a platform for which they are now prepared, they can and will prevent fascism from coming to power. We

can organize and rouse them—provided we do not demand of them that they agree with our socialist program, but unite with them on the basis of their program which we make also our own.

They are not socialists yet for many reasons: among these are that they have many prejudices and misconceptions about socialism and communism; that they think the problems can be worked out under a corrected and purified capitalism, and so forth. They believe that further experience will prove they are right. We disagree with them, we think that only socialism will finally solve our problems, and we believe that experience will prove that we are right. In the meantime, both those who want socialism and the much larger number who do not can still agree on the necessity to defeat reaction, fascism and war. Why not, then, unite all such people for their common purpose? That is the proposal of the People's Front.

The non-socialist progressives may ask, why should we unite with those who want socialism, and who say openly they think the People's Front will ultimately give way to socialism? Our answer is: we grant you non-socialists the right to believe that the ultimate outcome will not be socialism, but in the meantime only our unity and common front will prevent fascism from being the *immediate* outcome; therefore it is better if we continue our debate on this question behind the common line of defense we set up against fascism which would stop all our discussions. To our allies in the fight against fascism, we pledge the use of democratic methods as the sole means of resolving questions in dispute between us. Whichever of us is correct in the last instance, the interests of both will be served by unity and a common front.

To the advocate of socialism, who fears the People's Front as an obstacle to achieving the new socialist society, we say: Do you really think that socialism can come without the active support of these great masses of toiling people who are not adherents of socialism yet? Of course you don't. Do you think you can win them over, if in face of the danger of reaction, fascism and war, you stand aside from them and refuse

co-operation except upon the terms of their agreement to socialism? If you really think that, then you are poor socialists indeed, for you have failed to learn the elementary lessons of the great founders of modern socialism, Marx and Engels, and of their most worthy pupils who founded and built the first socialist society, Lenin and Stalin.

The problem for practical builders of socialism and fighters for socialism is everywhere and at all times to find the connecting link which ties up the life problems of the masses of the toiling people *at the present moment* with their largest historical interests that are represented in the future socialist society. They, the tens of millions who provide the moving force of history, must be convinced *upon the basis of their own experience in struggle* of the necessity and inevitability of each successive step of their movement toward socialism. The more they are organized and roused in struggle against the evils of capitalism the quicker they can understand and assimilate the teachings of socialism, and consciously take the path to the new society.

Now, when capitalism in decay, capitalism rotting and collapsing, is turning more and more to fascism and war, blindly and brutally destroying everything good which had been created in the period of its upward development, it is possible and necessary for us to do everything to get *tens of millions* into organized struggle against these most reactionary manifestations of capitalism. That is the quickest and most direct road to socialism—if the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin are correct. For those, non-socialists, who do not accept these teachings, this argument has no validity; to them we say, therefore, if the argument is not valid, you should not be afraid of it. This is an argument for socialists, not for non-socialists.

Everything that organizes and activizes the working class and its allies is progress toward socialism; likewise, everything that weakens and discourages the forces of reaction goes in the same direction. This is the fundamental conception that under-

lies the revolutionists' understanding of the fight for the People's Front.

What nonsense it is to think that socialism will come out of the work of an isolated sect to which socialism is a dogma and not a guide to action here and now in the daily struggle against capitalism's worst oppressions! That is a repetition of the sterile dogmatism of the Socialist-Labor Party, and will bring the same results. Only the party of the mass struggle for immediate issues today will become the party of actual socialist construction tomorrow.

What is true within our country, is true on the largest international stage. Today it is the Soviet Union, the land of socialism, the land where is realized the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, which rallies all progressive and peace forces of the whole world in the struggle for democracy and peace—while at the same time it gives the most inspiring examples of the final victory of socialism, of its immeasurable superiority over capitalism, of its fruition in a democracy beyond the dreams of bourgeois democrats.

The struggle for the People's Front, for democracy and peace, is at the same time the most effective struggle for socialism. Just because our Party has become the outstanding fighter for the all-inclusive unity of the progressive forces of America, with a non-socialist platform on which they can be united now, for that very reason we have a confidence that is unshakable that our Party, and no other, will lead the toiling masses of the United States to the realization of socialism.

Report to the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, U.S.A., December 4, 1936.