

MARCH, 1936



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COMMUNIST

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B. K. GEBERT



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Review of the Month

Spreading Wage Movements—Green's Good Advice and Splitting Threats—Industrial Unionism and the Unity of the A. F. of L.—The "Great Humanitarian" Versus the Unemployed—More Relief or Less—Three Cheers for the Pekin Workers—A General Strike Can Win—Roosevelt Toying With Housing—For a Genuine Housing Program—The National Congress for Social and Labor Legislation—Mass Pressure Upon Present Session of Congress—A Frame-Up Investigation Against the Townsend Movement—The National Negro Congress and the People's Front for Negro Liberation—Japanese War Provocations and a Reactionary Theory of "War-Guilt"—Oily Arguments or Defense of Socialism?—Stop Shipment of War Supplies—Al Smith and the Twelve du Ponts—The Real Issues of the National Elections—Will Lewis Explain His Position on Local Labor Parties?—International Woman's Day and Mother Bloor—Spain and France Are Our Victories—The Bloody Vargas of Brazil and the Fight for the Release of the Anti-Imperialist Prisoners—Preparations for the Communist Party Convention—A National Gathering of Great Significance to the Masses.

WAGE movements are spreading into various industries. The relative increase in employment, which has taken place in past months, especially in steel, auto, foundries, machine shops and railroad car building, as well as in some of the light industries, is encouraging the workers to raise wage demands. To this they are especially forced by the growing cost of living, lengthened hours, and increasing speed-up. The struggle for wage increases is once more becoming a central phase in the fight against capitalist exploitation and for the improvement of the workers' conditions.

This does not affect to any serious degree the great unemployment that still prevails in the country; nor does it weaken the acute need for direct relief to the unemployed and for the passage of genuine legislation for unemployment insurance (Frazier-Lundeen Bill). The conservative figures of the American Federation of Labor business review show 11,400,000 unemployed. The same source continues to show that the gap between the rate of increase in production and the rate of increase in employment is widening instead

of closing. Says the American Federation of Labor review: "While business activity in December, 1935, was 21 per cent above December, 1934, employment was only 4 per cent higher." The struggle, therefore, for unemployment relief and insurance is as burning an issue as it ever was, if not more so. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that the fight for wage increases is becoming more favorable, due to increasing employment in certain industries, and that it is the task of the labor movement, especially of the Communists in the trade unions, to do all in their power to stimulate, organize and lead the struggles of the workers for higher wages.

The Executive Council of the A. F. of L. was asleep at the switch for a long time on this as on many other questions vital to the workers and the unions. For months past, not a sound came from the Executive Council on the question of wage increases. But as wage movements began to develop in various industries, as the workers themselves and the progressive forces in the unions began to promote struggles for wage increases, the Executive Council, too, became a bit articulate. But only to the extent of telling the workers that the responsibility for securing wage increases rests with themselves "through their collective bargaining agencies". For which the workers will, of course, be "duly grateful". But they will also ask: And how are you, gentlemen, proposing to help organize the struggle for wage increases in such industries as steel, auto, and rubber?

Talking about steel. It is highly significant that the strong wage movements in the steel industry, failing to find help or direction from the steel union of the A. F. of L., are forcing their way through the company unions. Leonard and Tighe have been so successful in keeping the steel union in cold storage that the steel workers have been forced to press their wage demands (and they are pressing quite hard) through the company unions, which is creating a veritable crisis of company unionism in steel. Green now began to talk about wage increases. But his lieutenants in the steel industry continue to stand in the way of organizing the steel workers on an industrial basis and are thus obstructing the efforts of the workers to secure such wage increases. And this is supposed to be the leadership of organized labor!

Do the workers need wage increases? Even Green cannot deny that the workers are badly in need of wage increases. His own annual business review shows that the employed workers had to work one and one-quarter hours more per week for the less than 6 per cent increase in average weekly wages in 1935, while the cost of living increased more than 5½ per cent. This takes no account of the terrific increase in speed-up which took place during the same period. From Green's own figures it follows that the conditions of the

employed have grown worse during 1935 (a year of Roosevelt recovery) and that capitalist exploitation has increased. Clearly, the need for strengthening the unions, the workers' agencies for collective bargaining, is most acute. And this means organizing the millions of unorganized in the basic industries. Yet, the Executive Council meeting in Miami had the audacity to issue an "ultimatum" to the Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.) to dissolve and give up its activities for industrial unionism, that is, to give up the fight for wage increases and for other improvements in the conditions of the workers.

The rank and file in the unions, and all truly progressive forces, will raise the slogan of fight for wage increases to a central place. They will proceed, not only in words but in practical deeds, to push forward the organization of the unorganized into industrial unions. They will present an iron front of resistance to any efforts of the reactionaries to split the A. F. of L. They will carry forth the slogan issued by the Communist Party (See Manifesto of its Central Committee)—For a powerful and united A. F. of L.—to the widest masses, and with it they will actually organize mass struggles to secure wage increases instead of merely advising the workers, as Green does, that wage increases are desirable.

* * *

THE "Great Humanitarian" (for his exact address, please consult John L. Lewis) is so busy trying to cut down federal relief expenditures that he has had no time to find out what is happening to the victims of his activities. Too bad. The Conference of the American Association of Social Workers (meeting in Washington, D. C., Feb. 15-17) has some interesting relief information for him.

Here is how a reporter of the *New York Times* summarizes the findings of that Conference:

"Conditions throughout the country, it was unanimously agreed, already constituted a national emergency, rapidly becoming tragic." (Feb. 15, 1936.)

And what contributed to making these conditions tragic? Why the Great Humanitarian's desire to placate the Liberty League and hence his policy of discontinuing federal relief aid to the states.

The Conference of Social Workers, failing apparently to grasp the deep humanitarianism of discontinuing federal relief aid, therefore continues to hold that

"Resumption and continuation of federal aid to the states to meet relief needs unprovided for in the Works Progress Administration and other divisions of the American Social Security Program were

represented as an imperative necessity by delegates from twenty-five states to the Conference of the American Association of Social Workers." (*Ibid.*)

We do not know what effect these findings and recommendations will have upon the Great Humanitarian. But we do know that the organized mass struggles of the unemployed (such as the latest action in New York City), supported by the employed, in all localities and nationally, will produce results. These struggles produced results in the past. They will do so now, too.

* * *

PEKIN, Illinois. This is the city of the latest general strike—the *general strike that won*.

The working class of Pekin, the toiling farmers and the sympathetic middle classes have inscribed a glorious page in the annals of struggle against capitalist exploitation and reaction. They waged a bitter fight and they won it. It was a victory not only for themselves but for the whole labor movement and all exploited. This victory must now be strengthened and solidified. And the chief thing to do (not the only one) is to build up a real people's Farmer-Labor Party in Pekin. This is the message given to the masses by the Communist Party of the Illinois District through its Organizer, Morris Childs.

The capitalist press of the East was somewhat too hasty in pronouncing the Pekin general strike a failure. It will be recalled that the great general strike in San Francisco was also proclaimed a failure by the capitalist press. A failure there was, to be sure; but not of the general strike. It was the failure of the shipowners, of Hearst, and all the other reactionaries to break the maritime unions as an opening wedge to the break-up of the whole organized labor movement. The general strike in San Francisco was a victory for the workers and their allies; this is today even more evident than two years ago. It was the general strike that helped the partial winning of the maritime strike and that strengthened labor everywhere on the Pacific Coast.

The general strike of Pekin achieved similar results. It helped the strikers of the American Distilling Co. to win their two-year-old battle for unionism and better conditions. It thus strengthened unionism in the whole city. It raised the class solidarity of the workers to a very high level. And because of that, the general strike achieved some additional results of great value. It drew to the support of the workers the toiling farmers, who supported the strikers with food and otherwise, and also the poor sections of the middle classes who participated in the general strike. *It was, in other words, a people's fight against the monopolies, led by the workers.* Neither tear gas, nor bul-

lets, nor the threat of bringing the National Guard could stop the progress of this fight. And it won!

In this strike, as in many others, the masses had to face the enmity of both capitalist parties—the Republican city administration and the “Great Humanitarian” Democratic state administration. Furthermore, for months upon months the striking workers of the American Distilling Co. were given the run-around by the Labor Relations Board. The latter, it is claimed, was sympathetic to the demands of the workers, yet did nothing to help the workers win. But the general strike did. We should therefore popularize the achievements of the Peking general strike far and wide. The American labor movement—Pekin has proved it once more—*has a powerful weapon in its hands*—the sympathy general strike.

The victory in Peking should now be solidified. The chief way of doing it is by building a strong Farmer-Labor Party.

* * *

ROOSEVELT is toying once more with various housing projects. To this he is no doubt moved at this time by a desire to win labor's vote (the building trades are no minor factor in the elections). Another motive is the old Roosevelt trick of putting forth some fraudulent measure in order to forestall the mass demands for something really genuine. It will be recalled that this was the way Roosevelt's “Security Bill” originated. And, finally, there may also be an attempt to cover up somewhat the miserable fraud and failure of Roosevelt's previous housing schemes. The latter, as is now universally recognized, gave plenty of money to mortgage companies, bankers, and rich construction companies, but produced no low-cost housing worth speaking of nor did it materially aid employment.

Organized labor, and the people generally, have been pressing for a genuine federal program of housing. The Building Trades Department of the A. F. of L. (two-thirds of the building trades workers are still unemployed) has proposed a plan calling for (a) permanent federal housing agencies, (b) long-term federal subsidies to provide housing for families with incomes less than \$1,200, and union wages on all projects directed or subsidized by the federal government. Senator Wagner, a “friend” of labor, was trying to promote legislation somewhat along these lines. So in steps Roosevelt to forestall and demoralize the growing movement for a genuine federal housing scheme by vague and indefinite promises of something of his own.

It will be a fatal error again to permit oneself to be tricked by Roosevelt. The demands of the masses on this question are reasonably clear and simple. In part, these demands have found expression

in the proposals of the Building Trades Department of the A. F. of L. These should be supplemented by the demand of *public control* (trade unions, unemployed organizations, small home owners' associations) over the execution of the federal housing program. Only thus can we guard against the graft and the bureaucratic abuses that will inevitably result if the thing is left entirely in the hands of the government and capitalist politicians. A further demand should be for adequate wages for the unskilled and semi-skilled workers (on the building projects), most of whom are still unorganized. Above all, we must oppose any so-called federal housing scheme that is built upon the Roosevelt principle of subsidizing the housing activities of private contractors, construction companies, banks and mortgage houses. No further plundering of the national treasury to enrich the wealthy! A federal housing program, executed by public organizations and under their control, union wages for all workers, and such projects as will provide adequate housing for families whose income is below \$1,200.

* * *

THE National Congress for Social and Labor Legislation, to be held in Washington, D. C., on April 4, 5 and 6, deserves the energetic support of all labor, farmer, Negro and middle class organizations. Its chief purpose, according to the announcement of the secretary of the National Joint Action Committee for Genuine Social Insurance, Herbert Benjamin, is to map out a nation-wide campaign in support of the Frazier-Lundeen Social Insurance Bill. All supporters of old-age, unemployment and social insurance are vitally interested in making this Congress a success. It goes without saying that the Townsend Clubs are especially interested in participating.

In passing, we must express our deep resentment and protest against the conspiracy of both capitalist parties—Democratic and Republican—to destroy the Townsend movement by some frame-up Congressional investigation. First the capitalist press tried to kill this movement by silence, then by ridicule, and when neither helped, it is now resorting to a so-called investigation. Whether or not there is any ground to the rumors of financial irregularities in the management of the Townsend movement, *the rank and file of this movement is the best judge*, and it should exercise its judgment by enforcing its democratic rights in the organization. But the proposals for a Congressional investigation do not flow from any desire of protecting the rank and file of the Townsend movement, nor are they prompted by a desire to protect the good name of the organization. On the contrary, it is clearly an effort by the capitalist politicians of both parties (champions of honesty!) to discredit the movement

for old-age pensions, to destroy it, or to terrorize some of its leaders into selling it out. In the face of this dastardly conspiracy, the Townsend Clubs should join all other supporters of old-age and social insurance in a common fight for the common objective. The forthcoming National Congress for Social and Labor Legislation offers that opportunity.

Moreover, the Congress will give much consideration to other legislative measures for which wide masses are fighting. The Congress will consider such measures as the "Federal Relief and Work Projects Standard Bill", introduced in Congress by Congressman Vito Marcantonio. This measure calls for the setting up of minimum standards for direct federal relief, including food, clothing, housing, health, sanitation, etc. The Congress will further consider the Workers' Rights Amendment to the Constitution to curb the powers of the Supreme Court, the American Youth Act sponsored by the American Youth Congress; and, finally, the Farmers' Relief Bill. Clearly, these are all measures of greatest importance to the masses.

On the other hand, it is also clear that the present session of Congress will peter out altogether, unless organized mass pressure is applied in the near future, in the coming month. To be sure, Congress and Roosevelt will not fail to provide the one billion dollars for war preparations. At this writing, the House of Representatives has already passed the War Department Appropriation Bill carrying \$545,146,506; the other half billion for the navy will no doubt be passed in short order. Congress and Roosevelt are making sure that there is enough money appropriated for war preparations and for strengthening the National Guard and Army for strike-breaking activities and the suppression of the struggles of the masses generally. But the "great humanitarians" are bothered very little by the acute need of helping the toilers and relieving their sufferings which have been caused by the crisis and depression.

The masses can depend only upon themselves and their organized strength. The struggle for the Farmer-Labor Party, especially in the localities and states, should therefore be pushed forth with the greatest determination. At the same time, full advantage should be taken of the opportunities offered by the forthcoming National Congress for Social and Labor Legislation to mobilize the widest support behind the Frazier-Lundeen Bill and the other vital measures that the Congress will consider and act upon.

* * *

BY the time this issue is off the press, the National Negro Congress, scheduled for February 14, in Chicago, will have been concluded and an important step will have been taken for the creation

of a powerful people's movement for the liberation of the Negroes.

The full significance of this event will be commented on in this review in the forthcoming issue. Here it is only possible to point out a few important elements in the situation. First, is the fact that the Negro people are moving today in ever increasing volume and with greater determination than before to the struggle for Negro rights. The Negro people are determined to fight and to win their rights. It is beyond dispute that the struggles of the Negro workers and farmers, especially the sharecroppers in the South, have played the major part in arousing the rest of the Negro people to organization and struggle. It is equally beyond dispute that the pioneering and trail-blazing work of the Communists has played a great part in opening the road towards the now developing broad people's movement. Our Party as a whole can justly take pride—not to rest in self satisfaction—in the role it played and is playing in awakening the Negro people, in helping to organize them, in bringing forth such Negro leaders as Ford and Herndon, and in promoting that united and people's front for Negro rights which resulted in the creation of the National Negro Congress.

And to the Scottsboro boys we can say: your suffering and the world-wide struggles for your liberation have played a great part in arousing the Negro people and all sincere fighters for Negro rights. With the coming together of the National Negro Congress a new force has come into existence to fight for your liberty and the saving of your lives, a force that will fight to right the age-old wrongs of the Negro people and in this way prepare the ground for wiping off the earth altogether that damnable system which makes possible Scottsboro, lynchings, and the still continuing stench of the slave market.

* * *

SEEING the increasing frequency of Japanese provocations during the last couple of weeks against the Mongolian People's Republic and against the Soviet Union, the war mongers and munition makers are rubbing their hands in glee in anticipation of a "good" war and plenty of profits. The *New York Herald Tribune* is already laying the basis for a most "profitable" use of the war against Outer Mongolia and the Soviet Union to which the fascist-military clique of Japan is driving. Should such a war break out, argues the *New York Herald Tribune*, it will be impossible to determine where the "war guilt" lies because (so the argument proceeds) the border lines between Manchuria and Outer Mongolia are "the least satisfactorily mapped", and hence it will be impossible to tell who was the aggressor, and hence American imperialism will be able "safely" to help Japan.

It is clear that the whole "argument" is false from beginning

to end. The Soviet Union has repeatedly proposed to Japan the setting up of an impartial investigation of the so-called border conflicts and of the Japanese provocations. Every informed person knows the aggressive designs of Japanese imperialism toward the Mongolian People's Republic and toward the Soviet Union. Every informed person also knows that the Soviet Union proposed to Japan long ago the conclusion of a non-aggression treaty and that Japan refused, thus clearly admitting that it is harboring aggressive designs. The *New York Herald Tribune*, Hearst & Co., will not succeed in placing before the American people the Soviet Union and Japanese militarism on the same level of "war guilt". It is the task of the Communists, the Socialists, and all opponents of war to expose this criminal swindle of the reactionaries.

The question of mobilizing the masses in defense of peace and in defense of the Soviet Union must again be brought to the forefront of our daily work. We cannot know exactly when Japan and Hitler, whose alliance cannot be denied, will strike. But it is evident that they are feverishly preparing for it. Hitler is admittedly not ready yet; but in the extremely unstable and strained international situation, any moment that seems favorable to the war-makers may be seized upon. To defend peace and the Soviet Union is a *daily task*.

The Socialist Party, especially the Left Socialists, are in duty bound to come forward and join in this struggle without vacillation. It is the defense of socialism that is at stake as well as the defense of the toilers of all countries against the barbarities of war and the offensive of reaction.

Someone in the *Socialist Call* had the impudence to demand of the *Daily Worker* an apology to Trotsky—the counter-revolutionary enemy of the Soviet Union. It did not enter the mind of the caller-for-apologies that he was besmirching the name of socialism. Nor was he aware that he owes the apology—to the genuine Socialists in the S.P. and to all friends of peace and of the Soviet Union.

And if apologies are to be called for, what about an apology from Norman Thomas to the dead soldiers killed on the fields of Ethiopia? Is it not clear now that the oil-argument of Norman Thomas against the Soviet Union was oily indeed? Norman Thomas is still very reluctant, if not opposed, to united front action by the workers to stop, by strikes and otherwise, the shipment of *American* oil to the Italian armies. He expressed a pious wish that this be done, but withholds united front action that might bring it about. This, at a time when it has been shown conclusively (a) that oil shipments from the United States to Italy are fast increasing whereas shipments from the Soviet Union are fast decreasing, and (b) that the imperialist powers in the League of Nations are using the U.S. shipments

as a pretext to defeat the insistence of the Soviet Union for an oil embargo. These are facts, Comrade Thomas, stubborn facts.

We will restate these facts once more for the special benefit of the doubting Thomases. We reprint the summary of the relevant figures as given by the *Nation* of February 19, 1936.

“For the first eleven months of 1935—the latest available figures—the total of Soviet exports to Italy were only 11,720,000 rubles as compared with 17,126,000 in the corresponding period of 1934, a decline of more than 30 per cent; while Soviet imports from Italy—which are more directly affected by existing sanctions—dropped more than 50 per cent. And what is more to the point, Soviet exports of oil for the eleven-month period were 199,381 tons in 1935 as against 569,453 tons in 1934, a decline of nearly 70 per cent.”

What do you say to that, Comrade Norman Thomas? Now compare this with the figures for the U.S., given in the same source.

“By way of contrast, American exports to Italy for the first eleven months of 1935 increased 8 per cent over 1934; our imports from Italy rose 5 per cent; and our sales of oil to Italian Africa jumped from \$4,587 to \$672,155, an increase of 14,600 per cent.”

These are the facts. And in the face of these facts, and in the face of the daily growing menace of war against the Soviet Union, Norman Thomas still finds it possible to devote his *main energies*, not to stopping the shipment of oil from the United States, but to attacking and slandering the Soviet Union. This is a fact also. From which follows that a genuine Socialist cannot play around with the question of defending socialism, the Soviet Union, and peace. A day may come, though no one knows the date, when the question will appear more plainly: which side are you on—not in speeches but in deeds—socialism or war-making capitalism? Continued vacillation now does not make for a correct answer later.

* * *

THE present phase of the heightened war danger clearly indicates the specific practical actions to be undertaken by the Communist and Socialist Parties on a united front basis. These are: (1) to stop the shipment of oil and all other supplies to fascist Italy and its armed forces in Africa; (2) to stop the shipment of all war materials to Japan. On these two specific tasks, Communists and Socialists can collaborate everywhere—in the shops, unions, etc. They can collaborate to bring about organized refusals of the workers to handle all such shipments and to mobilize the active support (demonstrations, etc.) of all friends of peace for such actions.

* * *

IN his now infamous speech at the billionaires' banquet, Al Smith tried to give the line to the steadily rising offensive of reaction against the standards and liberties of the American people. It is Moscow or Washington, he said; the Star-Spangled Banner or the Red Flag. The demagoguery of the thing is almost transparent, especially Smith's insinuations that Roosevelt and the New Deal stand for the principles of socialism and communism while he, the puppet of Morgan-du Pont, stands for Americanism and democracy. To which we would say: God save us from Roosevelt's "socialism". From the "Americanism and democracy" of the Twelve du Ponts, who inspired Smith's speech, the toiling masses of the United States save themselves.

Of course, we are not going to depend upon God to save us from Roosevelt's "socialism and communism". There is positively no assurance that He can do it. But the Farmer-Labor Party can. It can do both things: it can and will prevent Roosevelt from demobilizing the masses, from disorganizing their independent struggles; and, in this way, it can and will build up a mass power of the working class and its allies to check the offensive of the Liberty League and to defeat its reactionary plans.

Behind the clownish vituperations of Al Smith, there is, of course, the very serious effort of reaction to becloud and distort the issues that are really facing the American masses at the present time. If you believe Al Smith, the *immediate* choice facing the American people is bourgeois democracy or Soviet Power. Were that only so! And if that were the immediate choice, if that choice were inherent in the present relation of class forces in the United States, it would naturally mean that the bulk of the working class is ready to make a revolution to seize power and that the bulk of the toiling farmers, Negroes, and middle classes are at least sympathetically inclined to support such a revolution. Were that so, there would be very little force behind the clownish antics of the Smiths and Talmadges; their days of political influence would be counted. And if that were so, the Communist Party would boldly call upon the masses to make the revolution and organize it for victory.

Unfortunately, this is not so. Not yet. The issue that really confronts the American people at the present moment is how to check and defeat the offensive of capitalist reaction led by the Liberty League, which is opening the road to fascism. The issue is: work and relief for the unemployed; relief to the farmers, middle classes, and Negroes; protection of our civil liberties, and peace. The immediate choice is—the defense and preservation of the democratic liberties of the American people or the victory of capitalist reaction and the coming of fascism. This is the real choice and issue.

The Liberty League stands for the perpetuation of the poverty and insecurity of the toiling masses and for the destruction of their democratic liberties. Roosevelt and the New Deal seek to preserve capitalism, which is responsible for the miseries of the masses, by trying to eliminate some of the most glaring abuses of a few of the most hated representatives of the financial oligarchy (the crowd grouped around the Liberty League); but Roosevelt continually retreats before the attacks of his Right opponents and thus facilitates their advance. This is the line-up of the capitalists and of both capitalist parties—Republican and Democratic—on the real issues confronting the American people today.

Where should the people line up? John L. Lewis says: "Behind Roosevelt". The black reactionary and flunkey of the Civic Federation, Matthew Woll, says: "Line up behind the Liberty League and the Republican Party". The Communist Party says: "Build a Farmer-Labor Party". This and only this will enable you at this time to fight effectively the offensive of capitalist reaction, to improve your economic conditions, to preserve your democratic liberties, and to fight for peace. And more: a successful struggle by a mass Farmer-Labor Party against capitalist reaction will so weaken the monopolies and so strengthen the working class and all toilers that they will be in a position to undertake greater things—the overthrow of capitalist rule altogether and the establishment of socialism.

* * *

JOHAN L. LEWIS has still to explain why he opposes the organization of *local and state* Labor Parties. On supporting Roosevelt nationally, there is clearly a serious difference of policy. Lewis' policy is, in our opinion, harmful and dangerous. And we propose to work hard and patiently to convince the miners and all workers that Lewis' policy of blank-checking Roosevelt will cost the workers dearly. But aside from that serious difference, what objection is there to the building of local labor parties in the mining and steel towns, in the textile towns, rubber and auto towns, labor parties that could fight and actually win control of the local governments? What objections are there to that? Would the local governments of the Farmer-Labor Party be less friendly to labor than the Democratic and Republican? Will John Lewis say that? Will trade unionists and toiling farmers in control of local governments be of less help to the miners, steel workers, auto workers, etc., in their struggle against the companies, *in the struggle to organize the unorganized*, in the fight *for higher wages*, in the fight *for civil liberties*? Let Lewis try to explain this. And let him also explain how the election of 30 or 40 Farmer-Labor Congressmen will affect the position of

the workers. Will their position get stronger or weaker? And why should not a Farmer-Labor Party capture a couple of States—as in Minnesota? What's wrong with that?

Why doesn't Lewis explain his opposition to all these proposals? Surely he cannot assume that the American labor movement should take him at his word and follow blindly wherever he leads. We want discussion and explanation.

* * *

MARCH 8 is International Woman's Day. This important day should serve to center our attention more directly on the great task of winning the women for the struggle against reaction, fascism, and war. Women's work is one of our most neglected fields of activity. But the enemy is not neglecting it. We shall begin making real advances in this field only when the Party as a whole makes women's work its concern.

It is fitting and appropriate that we should mark this year's International Woman's Day by celebrating the 45 years of devoted and useful work of Comrade Ella Reeve Bloor, Mother Bloor, as she is best known. Bolshevik greetings to her, and best wishes. May she continue for many more years to fight in our front ranks, to inspire and evoke emulation from the ever-growing ranks of men and women fighters in behalf of the toiling masses.

* * *

FROM Spain and France comes great and important news.

The victory of the People's Front in Spain marks a new stage in the development of the Spanish revolution. This victory in the parliamentary elections will further mobilize the masses and will strengthen them for struggle against reaction and fascism. It will further solidify the camp of the revolution and bring nearer the day of its victory. It is clearly a victory for the united front between the Communists and Socialists and a brilliant confirmation of the correctness of the policies of the Seventh Congress of the C.I.

The dastardly attack on Leon Blum in Paris, the effects of which Comrade Blum is fortunately overcoming, has already served further to solidify the People's Front in France. The monarchists and fascists responsible for this attack will yet see the day when they will bitterly regret that they ever committed that black act. The Communist Party of France has already advised the masses to draw the immediate practical conclusion from the attack on Blum. It proposed the setting up of mass Republican Defense Organizations. This is one of the answers to meet assassination and terror from reaction and fascism.

All in all, these events in Spain and in France have further shifted the relation of class forces on the international arena favorably to the camp of anti-fascism and peace.

* * *

THE bloody Vargas dictatorship in Brazil is planning summary action against 200 brave fighters of the National Liberation Alliance. This is the People's Anti-Imperialist Front of Brazil which seeks to achieve the national and social liberation of the Brazilian people. It is the organization which has challenged the oppressive and bloody rule of Vargas—the rule of the big landholders and flunkies of foreign imperialism.

Wall Street and the American government are flirting with and supporting the Vargas tyranny over the Brazilian masses. Wall Street is seeking in Brazil what it has accomplished in Cuba.

The toiling masses of the United States are vitally interested in the victory of the anti-imperialist forces in Brazil. And at this time it is especially urgent to come to the help of the 200 brave anti-imperialist captives of Vargas. Fight for their safety and release. Protest to the Brazilian consulates and embassy as well as to the United States Department of State, demanding the release of all victims of Vargas terror—the release of the 200 anti-imperialist fighters. A Joint Committee for Brazil is being set up at 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

* * *

PREPARATIONS for the Ninth National Convention of the Communist Party are under way. A national convention has always been a great event in the life of the Party. It is there that the Central Committee gives final account of its stewardship, and the members of the Party, through democratically elected delegates, pass judgment upon the work done, outline policy for the future, and elect a national leadership for the next term. These are decisive and significant actions under any circumstances; but they are bound to prove especially so at the present time. This is due to the peculiarities of the objective situation and to the *new role* which the Party is beginning to play in the life of the American working class.

The decisions of the Ninth Convention will mean infinitely more to the toiling masses of this country than did the decisions of any previous Convention of our Party. This is bound to be so for a number of reasons. The Party is closer to the masses, and the masses are closer to the Party. There is still no ground for any sort of self-satisfaction. We must continue to wage the sharpest struggle against any tendency to become self-satisfied. At the same time, it

can be said that our contacts with the masses have become wider, more intimate, and more firm. Hence the decisions of our National Convention will not only reach and be accepted by wider masses, but will also directly affect the daily struggles of these masses against the offensive of reaction and capitalist exploitation.

Above all, it is our struggle for the united front and the growing favorable response of the masses to it that will determine the larger significance of the decisions of the Ninth Party Convention. With the new tactical orientation that issued from the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, an orientation that we are just beginning to apply, and not without serious weaknesses, although with certain successes, the Communist Parties have been set on the road of playing an effective and decisive role in the life of their countries and of the world. Life has already demonstrated that the Communists are able, with their new way of fighting for the united front and the people's front, to mobilize the widest masses of workers and toilers effectively to combat capitalist reaction, to fight the spread of fascism, and to carry on an effective struggle for peace.

The Ninth National Convention will self-critically review our experiences and will formulate our policies for the coming period. The pivotal point of these policies is, of course, the historic task of accelerating the separation of the American working class from the political parties of the capitalists and of building up the Farmer-Labor Party as a coalition of the working class and its allies, as the only effective barrier at the present time to the offensive of capitalist reaction, fascism, and war. From this Convention will come out a program of action that will enable the American working class to achieve its political independence from the bourgeoisie in the shortest possible time, to rally to its side the toiling farmers, the Negroes, and the middle classes into a powerful people's front, and in this way to undertake to frustrate the offensive of capitalist reaction and to defeat the plans of the Liberty League.

The Convention will naturally take note of the fact that the Lewis policy of opposition to the Farmer-Labor Party and of lining up labor behind Roosevelt is at present one of the chief obstacles to the rapid growth of the Farmer-Labor Party. The Convention will devise ways and means of convincing the masses, especially the organized labor movement, that Lewis' political policy perpetuates the political disunity of labor and its political subjection to the capitalist parties, prevents the coming together of labor and its allies, weakens the resistance of the masses to reaction and to the Liberty League offensive, puts the toiling masses at the mercy of Roosevelt, and seriously militates against the organization of the unorganized in the basic industries. In this way the Party will be equipped for a more

successful struggle for the political independence of the American proletariat and for the Farmer-Labor Party. In this connection, the Convention will formulate the Party's policies and tactics for the national elections of 1936.

The Convention will further take note of the splitting threats made by the reactionaries in the A. F. of L. (the ultimatum of the Executive Council meeting in Miami) to prevent the organization of the unorganized in the basic industries into industrial unions. The Convention will give new impetus to the struggle for a powerful and united A. F. of L., for the organization of the unorganized into industrial unions not only in words but in deeds, and for genuine trade union democracy in all unions, including those that are backing the C.I.O. Out of the Convention will issue policies that will enable the unions to carry on the fight for higher wages, shorter hours, the 30-hour week without reduction in pay, against speed-up, and for the other economic and political demands of the workers.

Work among the toiling farmers, the Negro people, the unemployed, the women and youth—all these will be gone into by the Convention. It will examine thoroughly our experiences in the fight for the united front with the Socialist Party; it will point out shortcomings as well as progress, stressing the need for paying particular attention to the united front as a weapon for the daily defense of the immediate economic and political interests of the masses. It will stress the independent work of the Party in realizing this aim.

The struggle for peace and for the defense of the Soviet Union will unquestionably occupy a central place in the deliberations of the Convention. Progress will be registered, no doubt, but the stress will continue to be on the vital need of broadening the struggle, especially on developing the independent actions of the masses actually to enforce the stoppage of all shipments to fascist Italy and its armed forces in Ethiopia, and also the stoppage of shipments of all war materials to Japan. The fight against the war preparations of American imperialism, against its imperialist policies in Latin America and China, and for a policy of peace, will constitute the pivotal point of all decisions on this question.

And last, but not least, the building of the Communist Party. Systematic and correct recruiting, the promotion and training of new cadres, reorganization of the street nuclei with a view to having their membership concentrate on the existing mass organizations and on building shop nuclei, the building of our press (especially the *Daily Worker* and the *Sunday Worker*), the struggle against deviations, and for the correct Stalinist application of Marxism-Leninism—these will crown the work of the Convention and will thus make the Party a better and stronger force for the united and people's front against reaction, fascism, and capitalism.

A. B.

The United Mine Workers' Union Convention

By B. K. GEBERT

THE American trade union movement is at the crossroads. The traditional craft union policy was challenged at the 55th Convention of the American Federation of Labor by the progressive forces demanding a modern form of organization of the mass production industries—industrial unionism. Presidents of eight unions affiliated to the A. F. of L. constituted themselves a “Committee for Industrial Organization”. The unions are: the United Mine Workers of America; the International Typographical Union; the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America; the International Ladies Garment Workers’ Union; the United Textile Workers of America; the Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers of America; the Cap and Millinery Department, United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers International Union, and the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers. These eight unions embrace 1,100,000 organized workers. The strength of the industrial bloc in the A. F. of L. is far beyond this number. At the convention of the Federation 40 per cent of the delegates voted for a resolution endorsing industrial unionism. Without fear of contradiction we can declare that the majority of the membership is for industrial unionism. The question of industrial unionism involves, above all, the struggle to organize the unorganized in the mass production industries, primarily in the basic industries—steel, auto, aluminum, rubber, cement, radio, etc. Of the 40,000,000 industrial workers in the country but little more than four million are organized.

Experience has proved conclusively that workers in highly mechanized mass production industries, controlled as they are by powerful monopoly capital, cannot successfully carry on struggle unless they present a solid front against employers. All experience with craft unionism in these industries has proved it to be a failure. The fact remains that workers in these basic industries are not in the trade unions and are being forced into company unions. Organization can be accomplished only through the industrial union, which will embrace skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers in any one industry. In many of these industries workers have undertaken to organize themselves, as is indicated by the growth of the federal local unions and the growth two years ago of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers, as well as

by the attempts of the auto workers, rubber workers, etc. If these organizational efforts on the part of the workers have not been successful, the responsibility lies fully with the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. For the Executive Council has not only given no assistance to these workers, but has even hampered their organization drive and prevented their consolidation in these industries, since the respective craft unions have insisted upon slicing federal into craft locals. In the case of the steel workers, the Mike Tighe machine expelled the progressive forces from the union precisely because they were a driving force toward unionizing the industry.

The most powerful union affiliated to the A. F. of L. is the United Mine Workers of America, with 540,000 members in 28 states, embracing between 85 and 90 per cent of the coal miners in the country. In the past year and a half the miners' union has grown immensely. To cite but one example: in June, 1933, according to Van Bittner, President of District 17, there were only 7 dues-paying members in southern West Virginia. By November, 1935, there were 85,764. We cite West Virginia as an example because it has always been an open-shop state and the miners have for decades put up a heroic struggle to organize themselves. If the miners' union has grown during this very recent period, it is not, as some try to explain, because of Paragraph 7(a) of the N.R.A., but because of the real determination of the miners to be organized and because the industrial form of organization was helpful in achieving this end. If the argument that the miners' union has grown because of Paragraph 7(a) is valid, then we must ask why it is that it has not been equally good for the steel workers and workers in other industries. No! Paragraph 7(a) did not organize the miners. It was the industrial form of organization, coupled with the militancy and determination on the part of the miners, that is responsible for the growth of the U.M.W.A.

THE MINERS' ANSWER TO THE LABOR TORIES

When the 34th Constitutional Convention of the U.M.W.A. met, it drew the attention, not only of the miners, but of the entire labor movement and of the country as a whole. At the same time, the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. was meeting at Miami, Florida, and was handing down this decision:

"It is the opinion of the Executive Council that the Committee for Industrial Organization should be immediately dissolved, that it should cease to function as assembled reports, facts, and information indicate, and that the officers of the several organizations which constitute the committee cooperate fully with the Executive Council in the application and execution of the organization policies adopted by the overwhelming majority of the duly accredited delegates who

were in attendance at the convention of the Federation held in Atlantic City from October 7 to 19, 1935."

This decree of the labor Tories headed by Woll, Wharton, Hutcheson, and Green, was met with a proper answer by the United Mine Workers' convention. The convention repudiated the policy of the labor Tories and refused to disband the C.I.O. Speaking on this question, John L. Lewis declared:

"The craft organizations have served a great purpose. None need deny that. But they have proven to be incapable of serving some thirty-odd million workers in this country who are now denied the privileges of organization and collective bargaining, and the proponents of the industrial idea in the American Federation of Labor have only asked that in those places and in those industries where the craft form of organization has not succeeded in organizing the workers, they yield their jurisdiction and that the American Federation of Labor welcome into its folds those millions of workers which they need and must have if they are to successfully combat their adversaries in the form of those great corporations of this land which have been and are now denying the right of the workers to organize and bargain collectively. That is all there is to the question."

Later during the convention William Green, President of the A. F. of L., spoke for an hour and a half in defense of the policies of the Executive Council, and he was successful in winning exactly two delegates for his policies. Mr. Green centered his attack upon industrial unionism which, according to him, "Like Banquo's ghost has ever been with us". A ghost is haunting William Green; but the ghost he really sees is the thirty million industrial workers who are demanding to be organized. Mr. Green even tried to explain how generous the A. F. of L. Council is. He said that the Council is willing to issue a charter to the auto workers which would embrace all of them with the exception of the tool and die workers and workers in contract shops manufacturing auto parts—in short, instead of one union for auto workers he wants at least half a dozen. That is one of the reasons that the auto industry, particularly in Detroit, is not organized.

The miners' convention was unanimous on the question of the industrial form of organization. One can say that the 1,800 delegates assembled in the Constitutional Hall, in Washington, were inspired by their confidence that the miners can be a force to organize steel and other workers; there was a crusaders' spirit to build a progressive labor movement. The reactionary leaders of the craft unions answered this militant spirit of the miners by shouting: *Split!* They were not considering the welfare of the American proletariat; they were clinging to the ancient form of organization and to ancient ideas. They refuse to take into consideration the need of a

modern form of labor organization; and against those who stand and fight for it they are declaring war and threatening to split the American labor movement. Our policy is clear. We are for a united labor movement, and we are for the most suitable form of organization—industrial unionism. The miners' convention applauded the words of John L. Lewis when he said to Green, ". . . and you may carry back to your organization the answer of the United Mine Workers of America that has just been given by this convention".

The decisions of the miners' convention for industrial unionism, for organizing the unorganized, and for struggle against company unionism shall not remain on paper. Nor can we depend fully on Lewis' Committee for carrying out these decisions. The decisions of the convention must be translated into life! In the Central Labor Unions, in the State Federation of Labor Conventions, in every labor hall, the miners must rally around themselves the progressive forces that are willing and ready to undertake to organize the unorganized. The U.M.W.A. convention gave additional courage and inspiration to the steel workers, auto workers, rubber workers, and others to proceed in their struggle to build their unions.

THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE UNION

For many years the struggle for union democracy in the U.M. W.A. has been a battle cry of the membership. Nearly three hundred resolutions were sent to the convention demanding autonomy as against the appointive power in the union. A typical expression of this is the resolution of Local Union 5584 of Princeton, Indiana:

"Whereas, Organized labor bases its strength on the interest, intelligence, and courage of its members, and

"Whereas, We believe the appointment of officers for districts kills the interest of the rank-and-file and renders them inefficient to fight their battles on the industrial field, and . . .

"Whereas, Appointed officers are not responsible to the rank-and-file, but to the appointers, and

"Whereas, This forms a schism between rank-and-file and officers, . . . and

"Whereas, We believe these things are harmful to our organization, therefore,

"Be it Resolved, That all districts, sub-districts and local unions, elect and pay their own officials so long as they can pay them who are employed full time the average earnings of a low-paid coal miner."

John L. Lewis spoke bitterly against union democracy. He told the convention, "learn to walk before you run and learn to wait while you train some of these young men who came upon this platform today to be the successors of Van Bittner and President Mark and the men from these other districts". He added, "So, my friends,

I think you will surely mar the record of your organization, I think you will commit a very grave mistake—and I am talking with the utmost candor in this matter—if you fail to endorse the report of your committee and the recommendations of your International Executive Board”.

The arguments of John L. Lewis against union democracy are dangerous. The strength of the union rests in the hands of the miners. They are the ones that wage the battles; they are the ones who are the best judges of who their officers shall be. They demand this right. They do not want to be declared unfit to elect their own officers in the local sub-districts and districts. And so, despite the efforts of Lewis and his associates, a heavy vote was registered for autonomy: 1,134 for, and 3,148 against. Six districts voted by majority for autonomy. They are District 2 (Central Pennsylvania), District 6 (Ohio), District 10 (Washington), District 11 (Indiana), District 13 (Iowa), and District 22 (Wyoming). Significant is the vote of the West Virginia delegates (District 17): 209 for autonomy and 567 against. The districts which really defeated autonomy are 1, 7, and 9 (in the Anthracite region). Next to these were District 5 (Pittsburgh), where only 73 voted for autonomy and 320 against; and District 12 (Illinois), with 48 for and 243 against.

Connected with the question of democracy in the U.M.W.A. is a clause in the agreement between the U.M.W.A. and the coal operators that provides for a dollar fine for every day that miners go on strike during the duration of a contract. Many resolutions were introduced demanding the elimination of the anti-strike clause.

The convention went on record against war, Nazism, and fascism. It registered opposition to the Tydings-McCormack Military Disaffection Bill. It condemned the American Liberty League, the Manufacturers' Association, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and registered opposition to the Hearst papers. It adopted a resolution protesting the execution of Rudolf Claus, German Communist leader and head of the International Labor Defense in Germany. It registered a demand for the freedom of Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings. It condemned jim-crow and segregation, and went on record as favoring full rights for the Negro people. It protested deportations of foreign-born workers.

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE ANTI-COMMUNIST CLAUSE

In a joint report submitted to the convention by John L. Lewis, Philip Murray, and Thomas Kennedy, we read: “Organized labor furnishes the shock troops in the struggle against the fascist and Communist elements that seek to subvert our cherished form of government”. Lewis' inconsistency is here exposed to the full. Com-

rade William Z. Foster gave an effective reply to Lewis and the Lewises on this question:

"Lewis speaks of fascism and communism in the same breath. He lumps together fascism, the murderous, open, violent dictatorship of the employers which suppressed all workers' democratic rights in order to maintain a profit system, and communism, which means democracy for all who toil and the rule of the broadest millions of toilers in the interests, not of profits, but of benefiting all toilers." (*Daily Worker*, Nov. 28, 1935.)

A number of local unions sent resolutions to the convention demanding the elimination from the constitution of the clause prohibiting members of the union from becoming members of the Communist Party. Some local unions demanded that the word "Communist" be replaced by "fascist". It is also significant that there was only one resolution insisting that the anti-Communist clause remain in the constitution, the resolution that came from Local No. 6382 of Swastika, New Mexico. There can be no compromise on the struggle for union democracy, against the anti-strike clause in the agreement, or for the right of the members of the union to belong to the Communist or Socialist Parties. The resolution of Local 2230 of West Brownsville, Pa., states the case well in declaring that in order "to blacklist the best fighters in our union . . . the company sometimes calls them names like Bolsheviks, Communists, Socialists, agitators and other names to hide the reason that these men are being fired for union activities".

The Communists in the U.M.W.A. as well as in the trade union movement as a whole are the best fighters, builders, and defenders of the interests of the workers and of the trade unions. By the still remaining clause in the constitution, the officials of the U.M.W.A. are injuring the best interests of the union and, moreover, by placing Communists and fascists on the same level, they are weakening the struggle against fascism. Likewise, by denying inner union democracy Lewis weakens the struggle for industrial unionism and for organizing the unorganized. The Communists will continue their struggle against such policies of Lewis and will rally the members of the U.M.W.A. to change these policies in the organization.

FOR WAGE INCREASES AND BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS

The wage agreement obtained by the miners' union through a national strike in 1935 won a seven-hour day, a five-day week, and a 10 per cent increase in wages. In many open-shop mines which were unionized during 1934 and 1935, the wage increase was much higher; yet the wages and working conditions in the mines are extremely unsatisfactory. The miners presented 523 resolutions dealing with wages and describing the working conditions as unbear-

able. Many resolutions demanded increased wages to meet the high cost of living as a result of inflation.

A number of resolutions were introduced demanding "to pay the rate of \$1.00 an hour, to pay for machine coal \$.84 per ton, pick coal \$1.05 per ton, to pay for machine cutting \$.14 per ton". A number of local unions from Alabama demanded the end of differentiation, declaring that Alabama coal miners, performing the same kind of work done in other districts at a much higher wage level, are demanding equalization of wages throughout the bituminous coal fields. The convention spent very little time discussing the 523 resolutions before it. The scale committee introduced a resolution recommending "to establish a uniform six-hour day, five-day week" and "to secure a national wage scale". It also endorsed the anthracite mine workers' scale demands.

The present contract expires in anthracite on April 1; in the bituminous field, a year later. The task confronting the miners in every mine is that of undertaking the struggle for defending their economic demands and against any attempt on the part of the coal operators further to degrade conditions. The task confronting the miners is the waging of a struggle for improved conditions and better payment for work—to prepare for the coming strike struggles. The militant miners particularly must take the lead in this struggle. The wage increase and the 30-hour week can be won only by struggle and not by depending on the Guffey Act.

A MOST SERIOUS MISTAKE ON THE PART OF THE CONVENTION

The convention endorsed Roosevelt as presidential candidate in the 1936 elections. There were 44 resolutions introduced which urged endorsement of Roosevelt and 27 favoring the formation of a Farmer-Labor Party. To obtain the endorsement of Roosevelt, Lewis brought to the convention Democratic Senators, Congressmen, members of Roosevelt's cabinet who praised Roosevelt, the "humanitarian". Lewis, who in the past supported the Republican Party, is wrong today in supporting Roosevelt, as he was wrong when he supported Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. The blank endorsement given to Roosevelt weakens the labor front, weakens the miners' union, and divides the forces of labor. On the question of the Farmer-Labor Party, the convention declared that "the time is inadvisable" to organize such a party. It means that the convention did not reject the idea of a Farmer-Labor Party. On the basis of this decision the locals of the miners' union should undertake the task of building local Farmer-Labor Parties. In the resolution dealing with the Farmer-Labor Party the convention declared:

"The United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of the Manufacturers, the Liberty League, and all the reac-

tionaries in both parties are opposed to and will fight against the re-election of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The organization of a Farmer-Labor Party would divide the forces of labor and liberalism and would play into the hands of the enemies of President Roosevelt and the New Deal. This we cannot afford to do. The forces of Labor cannot be divided in this coming struggle between the oppressed and the oppressors."

When the convention decided that it is a struggle between "oppressed and oppressors", they were right, but surely Roosevelt is not the champion of the oppressed and not a leader in the struggle against the oppressors: Roosevelt is a leader of the oppressors. Mr. Roosevelt is the leader of a capitalist strikebreaking Democratic Party, a party which has a long record of terror against American labor, and the miners have suffered and suffer now under that terror in a number of states. A number of resolutions introduced into the convention analyzed clearly the anti-labor, strikebreaking policies and practices of the Democratic Party. The task of the local unions is not to build "Roosevelt Clubs", as Lewis advised the miners, but to organize "Farmer-Labor Clubs" or "labor political clubs" which shall actively carry on a campaign for independent labor candidates in 1936 elections. It was a most serious mistake on the part of the miners' convention to give Roosevelt its blank endorsement. Organized labor, which condemns company unionism, must likewise repudiate political company unionism—the Republican and Democratic Parties. The basic reason for the endorsement of Roosevelt is the fact that Gompersism is still a guide to many leaders in the trade unions and that they accept the capitalist system as such and attempt only to correct some specifically objectionable features of it.

OUR PARTY MUST BE STRENGTHENED IN THE MINING FIELDS

In this connection we must also say that the fact that only one delegate to the convention spoke for a Farmer-Labor Party registers *the weakness of the work of the Communist Party in the mining fields* where the issue of the Farmer-Labor Party has not been brought to the miners. Political struggle has been neglected, if not entirely forgotten; and this has been accompanied by *dependence on Lewis and the feeling that there is no need for a clear-cut class program in the miners' unions because Lewis is in favor of industrial unionism*. This is combined with extremely weak organization of the Communist Party in the mining fields, particularly in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and in the South.

It is well to remember also how Engels polemized against the tendency in the trade unions to feel that their main function is to obtain "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work". He raised the revolutionary watchword, "The abolition of the wage system". He wrote:

"Thus, there are two points which the organized trades would do well to consider: First, that the time is rapidly approaching when the working class will have to understand that the struggle for high wages and short hours, and the whole action of the trade unions as now carried on, is not an end in itself, but a means, a very necessary and effective means, but only one of several means towards a higher end—the abolition of the wages system altogether." (*Labor Standard*, June 4, 1881—Organ of the English trade union movement.)

To carry out the decisions of the convention, to undertake the tasks of organizing the unorganized in mass production industries, the Farmer-Labor Party is an indispensable weapon in the struggle. Anyone who disregards this weapon weakens the fight. And here is where we differ with the policies pursued by Lewis and his associates. The immediate task of the American working class is to assert its political independence from capital and to form, in conjunction with all other toilers of country and city, its own independent political party. The militant element in the U.M.W.A., above all the Communists and Socialists, have the task of seeing to it that all the progressive resolutions adopted by the convention shall be put into practice—above all, the resolutions against fascism and Nazism, against war, against Hearst and the Liberty League, and for Negro rights. In the coming June local elections, Communists, Socialists and all militant elements must combine their forces to secure the election. We must advance class conscious miners to leadership in every local union, so as to lay the basis for effective district and international elections in the U.M.W.A.

Finally, we declare that the convention of the miners could have registered a much stronger vote for a Farmer-Labor Party and for union democracy if the Communist Party had been really a factor in the life and struggle of the miners. Neglect and dependence upon spontaneity are very costly to the miners. To unify the tens of thousands of militant and progressive miners and local leaders around the immediate program and tasks confronting the miners as they have been outlined in this article, we shall have to improve considerably our methods of work. We certainly cannot allow situations of the kind we have in one of the mines in Western Pennsylvania, where we have about fifteen Party members in the mine *but no Party unit*, and where the leading member of the Party reports that he has not attended a Party unit meeting "for months". Let it be noted that the local union was among those which sent a resolution to the convention calling for the endorsement of Roosevelt. There is no substitute for the daily work of the Party organization in the mines through systematic, persistent work among the miners. Only if we undertake a struggle for the Party line among the miners will the progress which has been begun go forward,

The Fight of the Seamen for Militant Unionism

By R. B. HUDSON

AT a time when sixty-eight ships' crews were locked out on the Pacific Coast, when the Eastern shipowners were refusing any changes in the expired Eastern and Gulf agreement, when open threats were being made to wipe out the Western unions with vigilante committees, the Convention of the International Seamen's Union ordered the withdrawal of the Sailors' Unions from the Maritime Federation of the Pacific; expelled thousands of members by revoking the charters of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific; endorsed the proposed National Maritime Board, a scheme for compulsory government arbitration; and approved bills before Congress calling for the establishment of Government Discharge Books and hiring halls. Only people who are acting as agents of the shipowners, who completely disregard the sentiments and demands of the seamen, would accept the responsibility for the adoption of these decisions of the Convention. The seamen, the union membership from coast to coast, true to their traditions of heroic strike struggles and of militant opposition to the policies of the bureaucrats, are taking determined steps to repudiate these reactionary decisions which endanger the very existence of the trade unions in the marine industry.

The basic issue, of industrial action, repudiated and condemned by the hand-picked reactionary clique controlling the I.S.U. Convention, was unanimously endorsed by the Convention of the United Mine Workers of America, which took place in Washington at the same time. What a contrast the two meetings present! Holding its sessions behind closed doors, attended by 35 delegates, 25 of whom were appointed by a bureaucracy which has maintained its rule through the destruction of democracy, by expulsion, by constitutions which establish eleven-men dictatorships in their District Unions, the I.S.U. Convention is a picture of a reactionary officialdom trying to maintain itself in power in the face of a growing militant progressive movement of the I.S.U. membership. The miners' convention—1,700 delegates, most of them working miners elected directly by the local unions—had every session open to the public. The defiant rejection of the ultimatum of the American Federation of Labor Executive Committee by the miners' convention and their decisions to continue their support for the industrial union movement are an inspiration to the progressive forces in the entire labor movement.

These two conventions held in Washington both indicate the progress of the American trade union movement toward progressive policies. In both conventions the central issue was the one that is agitating the whole trade union movement—the issue, in one form or another, of industrial unionism. And because this issue is not abstract, because it arises out of the daily life and struggles of the unions and is being fought out in a period where the forces of reaction are daily attempting to restrict the rights of the trade unions, the forces lining up on one side or another of this issue also tend to shape up on other questions as progressives or reactionaries.

If one were merely to judge superficially, one would fail to see the same developments in the I.S.U. as in the U.M.W.A. But in both cases it was the wide support of masses of workers that forced consideration of progressive issues by the conventions. And if the decisions of the I.S.U. Convention, because of the stage of the fight, were against progressive measures, this will only lead to more conscious and organized efforts on the part of ever broader masses of union seamen to secure trade union democracy, to obtain uniform agreements, and to achieve unity with the unions of the longshoremen, teamsters, officers, and radio operators. What is true of the seamen is also true of other A. F. of L. unions whose officials fight progressive measures and oppose industrial unionism, such as the painters', carpenters', longshoremen's, and other craft unions.

No other actions of the top leaders of the I.S.U. ever provoked such a storm of indignation from the men on the ships and beach as have the decisions of the 34th Convention of the I.S.U.

The bitterest pill for the seamen to swallow is the decision of the convention ordering the withdrawal of the Pacific Districts of the I.S.U. from the Maritime Federation of the Pacific. They know that the solidarity of all unions alone helped win the 1934 strike. They know today the unity of all crafts in the East, Gulf, and West is necessary if the individual unions are to continue to exist. Therefore, it is certainly impossible for them to approve the furious hatred of the Olanders, Browns, Carlsons, and Granges for the Maritime Federation and their savage insistence upon the withdrawal of the Pacific I.S.U. unions.

Thousands of West Coast seamen, by referendum vote, endorsed the expulsion of Paul Scharrenberg, editor of the *Seamen's Journal*. Their refusal to reconsider the expulsion of this faker, as ordered by the International Executive Committee, is used as one of the reasons for the Convention's expelling the entire membership by revoking the charter of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific. Is it any wonder that sailors spit with scorn when the "decisions" of the Convention are mentioned!

The seamen of the East and Gulf become even hotter under the collar at the failure of the Convention to consider what should be done to defend the union in the East and Gulf where the shipowners have arbitrarily refused to grant any concessions and are demanding the renewal of the old scale of wages and working conditions, far lower than that prevailing upon the Pacific, for another year. Nero fiddled while Rome burned, and the East Coast officials chant their hymns of hate against the Pacific Unions at a time when the very existence of the Eastern unions is also endangered!

To add insult to injury, these decisions are supposed to represent the will of the membership of the Eastern and Gulf Districts! Yet the delegates who voted for these decisions, and who had the controlling vote in the Convention, were not elected by the membership, but were, with the exception of the Eastern and Gulf Sailors' Union, appointed by the District Committees!

If ever a "rule and ruin" policy was pursued, it was followed by the conservative elements in the convention of the I.S.U. in securing the adoption of the above-stated decisions through steamroller methods. And the Convention, let us remember, takes place at a time when the shipowners are ganging up on the marine unions.

Why the offensive against the marine unions, and who are the forces lined up against them? In many respects the marine workers have been the vanguard of the American labor movement in its march forward in recent years. The industry is approaching nearly 100 per cent unionism, great victorious strikes have taken place, the establishment of unity on the Pacific Coast has stimulated the movement for unity throughout the industry, step by step old conservative elements clinging stubbornly to their bankrupt policies are being beaten back by the advance of progressive elements whose class struggle program is winning the support of ever wider masses. The growing class consciousness of the marine workers is reflected especially in a number of actions against German fascism and in strikes against the shipment of war materials. All this, not only at the expense of profits, but in a basic industry, a war industry, at a time when the whole world considers the invasion of Ethiopia by fascist Italy but the prelude to another great world war. For months the shipowners have unsuccessfully attempted to check this movement and gain control of the situation. They continue to jockey for a position where they can force a showdown. In demanding a federal investigation of the Pacific situation, the Maritime Federation of the Pacific clearly exposed the united front of the Eastern and Western shipowners, supported by industrial associations, chambers of commerce, and American Liberty League elements, in their plans to crush the maritime unions. On the floor of Congress it

was recently charged that 6,000 pistol permits had been issued to fascist elements in California.

What is the role of the Roosevelt Administration in this situation? The shipowners are demanding a head-on attack and the full support of the government whose policy has been to try and compromise *on methods* and to avert a major crisis at this time which might embarrass Roosevelt politically. The fact that Roosevelt has not *openly lined up* with the shipowners has led to some incorrect ideas, expressed, for instance, in the following from an otherwise excellent statement of the San Francisco Maritime Federation:

"It should be remembered that presidential elections take place this year; consequently a major dispute in any basic industry, especially marine, will be an enormous factor in helping to defeat the present administration and to replace it with more reactionary elements that will exert a much greater pressure on the maritime workers than the New Deal policies of the Roosevelt Administration permit it do so."

Such ideas are dangerous and will disarm the workers, because they create illusions about the role of Roosevelt in combating the growing fascist offensive of the shipowners, the Liberty Leaguers, and all the forces of reaction. It is true that the smashing of the marine unions at this time might also strengthen the political position of the Liberty Leaguers; it is true that Roosevelt has apparently not given complete support to the demands of the shipowners. *But, at the same time, he has done nothing to hinder the plans of the shipowners and Liberty Leaguers for war on the marine unions.* Further, it is the mass unions, their unity and militant leadership, and not the New Deal policies of Roosevelt, that have prevented the forces of reaction from bringing greater pressure to bear upon the marine unions. Further, a major strike or lockout, accompanied by vigilante terror, "might embarrass Roosevelt politically", but not to the extent where the federal government and troops would be found on the side of labor helping defend the marine unions against the vigilantes who have been organized during Roosevelt's regime! No, it is not Roosevelt who can be relied upon to defend the marine unions or to check the growth of fascist forces in the United States. The organized power of the workers, the united front of the marine unions with the support of the trade union movement, can avert the threatened attack or defeat it if it takes place. Not consideration for Roosevelt's political interests and support of him in the coming election campaign, but the trade union movement, the millions of farmers and poor people of this country, united behind a Farmer-Labor Party, will be the force that can be an effective barrier to the advance of the forces of reaction.

* * *

What are the policies of the majority that control the Convention, and to what extent do their policies reflect wide support amongst the seamen? Although the Convention is entering its fifth week as this is being written, it is still engaged in discussing the report of Victor Olander, the International Secretary-Treasurer, and has not yet got around to the many important resolutions that are before it. Aside from a number of minor routine problems, Olander's report is a systematic and savage attack on the West Coast unions, their leadership, and the policies which have been supported by the rank and file. For the sake of brevity the general line of these attacks can be indicated by quoting the motion adopted for revoking the charter of the Sailors' Union:

"1. For violation of Article 1, section 2, which prohibits membership to men who are members of or advocating principles and policies of any dual organization hostile to the International Seamens Union, its aims and purpose. [This refers to the admittance of thousands of former members of the Marine Workers Industrial Union.]

"2. For refusing to live up to the awards and agreement underwritten by the International Seamens Union. [This is in reference to solidarity actions with other unions out on strike.]

"3. For refusing to reinstate Paul Scharrenberg, a member of said Sailors' Union of the Pacific, whose expulsion was appealed to the Executive Board as provided in Article XVIII and was held to be illegal and therefore null and void."

This indicates not only the bankrupt program of Olander and the bloc of officials that controlled the Convention, but their frenzied efforts to continue their rule by the most reactionary decisions.

The resolutions before the Convention, however, and the role played by the West Coast delegates, as well as a number of important actions in the East and Gulf, show the growth of a mass movement opposed to these policies. There were forty-eight resolutions before the Convention. Eleven were introduced by Eastern and International delegates. None of these has been discussed and endorsed by local meetings of the union in these districts. Seven of them deal with minor grievances; but the four most important resolutions are devoted to attacks on the Pacific districts. The remaining official resolutions come from the West, having been discussed and adopted in all cases by the membership there. The main points dealt with in those resolutions are for constitutional changes to guarantee greater democracy, for industrial unionism, and against war and fascism. Two are on the Labor Party, four on class war prisoners, and a number on other important questions. In the Pacific, where the membership had an opportunity to elect delegates by referendum vote, they chose representatives representing many

tendencies, but all of them standing for a progressive program. The stand and work of the West Coast delegates in the Convention deserve the widest admiration. Some were old members of the I.S.U. with years of experience as trade union leaders; then there were the new forces, eager and militant, who have come forward into leadership during the course of the great strike and the struggle to maintain the union and Maritime Federation. This progressive bloc, while vigorously defending the basic policies pursued by the Western unions did not attempt to hide shortcomings and mistakes which had developed. On every issue they consistently made clear that they came to the Convention, instructed by their membership, to meet half way on all questions that would help unite the forces of the union to win and maintain conditions, secure agreements, and build the union. In the face of bitter and unjustified attacks these delegates stood firm and loyal to the instructions of their membership and the interests of the seamen. To sit behind closed doors for weeks with people who seem hell bent on stifling all democracy and progressive measures, without either weakening or being provoked is an achievement in itself. Perhaps the work of these delegates would have been more effective and their defense of the West Coast strengthened, if greater emphasis had been given to the needs and desires of the I.S.U. membership, not only in their own districts, but in the East and Gulf as well. Concentration upon uniform agreements, upon a program of action to meet the East Coast agreement situation, for extending the Maritime Federation movement to the East and Gulf, would have been a more effective counter-offensive to Olander's attacks. In this connection it is important to note that while a number of progressive resolutions came from the Pacific Districts, there was none on the question of uniform agreements, nor for the formation of Federations in all districts, two of the most important issues confronting the seamen.

In the Eastern and Gulf districts the membership had no chance to elect convention delegates and little opportunity to secure the adoption of resolutions in union meetings that expressed their desires. This reflects, not indifference to, or support of, the policy of the leadership, but that the resentment and opposition have not been organized into an effective progressive movement. The enforcement of reactionary constitutions in these districts, followed by expulsions of militants and a reign of terror, coupled with sectarian ideas which found their main expression in minimizing the importance and possibility of work inside the union, led to some confusion and weakening of the progressive movement in these districts.

The recent partial overcoming of these shortcomings made possible the development of an increasingly growing movement, which

has as its basis the discontent with the shipowners' refusal to grant an agreement on December 1 that would bring wages and working conditions up to a level prevailing on the West Coast, and the resentment against the reactionary decisions in the Convention. Even prior to the Convention thousands of seamen in various ports had endorsed resolutions protesting Scharrenberg's public demand for "war on the West Coast unions". Similar resolutions were adopted in a number of important locals. In two days a thousand members of the I.S.U. in New York mailed postal cards urging the Convention to go on record for uniform national agreements and unity with the West Coast and for a national Maritime Federation. Telegrams stressing these points arrived at the Convention from ships' crews in all ports, sixty-five from ships' crews in New York alone.

The crews of three important ships in New York sent a committee to Washington to protest the decisions splitting the Western Maritime Federation. Revocation of the sailors' charter resulted in the adoption of a number of protest resolutions. Although they were not seated at the Convention, the election of fraternal delegates by the Boston Branch of the Firemen's Union reflects a growing refusal to abide by the undemocratic methods pursued by the top leadership. Finally, in the coastwide referendum the union membership was voting overwhelmingly against renewing the old agreement for another year as demanded by the shipowners.

In this manner the seamen of the East brought their sentiments before the Convention. The Convention shows that the union membership in all districts, whether given the opportunity to express their opinions or not, are making clear their support of a number of progressive issues. The Convention shows that in spite of all efforts to restrict the rights of the membership and disrupt their forces, the movement in support of these issues grows and becomes broader in character. In adopting decisions contrary to the sentiment of the membership, the International and Eastern officials forget that the union membership is determined to continue the struggle for realizing the demands it put forward at the Convention.

* * *

The two conventions place important problems and tasks before the American labor movement. If these conventions reflect the growth of a progressive labor movement, they also indicate weaknesses which threaten to hinder the effective development of the movement. The attacks against the Maritime Federation are but the application of the same policies to the seamen that Green and the A. F. of L. Executive Council are trying to enforce upon the

miners. Why is it then that Lewis, the miners' union, and the Committee for Industrial Organization have remained silent on the question of splitting the Maritime Federation and the revocation of the sailors' charter? The Maritime Federation is an outstanding expression of the movement for industrial unionism, also showing that the membership of existing craft unions can be won for full support of industrial unionism; but this unity of the marine unions was achieved first of all in the course of the struggle for democracy in the marine unions. Protesting the attacks against this movement will also mean taking a stand on the question of democracy; and Lewis, while breaking with reactionary policies of the craft unionists in relation to the industrial union question, has opposed the movement for autonomy in his own convention and has hesitated to champion *the fight for democracy in the American Federation of Labor as part of the struggle for industrial unionism*. Further, the Maritime Federation symbolizes the move of masses away from class collaboration and towards class struggle policies.

The reactionary stand of the A. F. of L. Executive Council and the I.S.U. bureaucrats shows the need for the broadest possible movement to unite all progressive forces and unions, with a clear-cut policy, if the "labor bourbons" are to be defeated and the progressive movement is to march forward. To confine the movement to industrial unionism will at the best limit the movement, if not doom it to defeat. The fight for trade union democracy is a mighty weapon in the struggle for industrial unionism. The struggle for class struggle policies will bring new life blood into all unions, making them effective weapons and stimulating the organization of the unorganized. Not endorsement of Roosevelt—but winning the trade union movement for independent political action, for the formation of a Farmer-Labor Party, is the way to advance the cause of progressive unionism and unite all possible forces for the defeat of the growing menace of fascism.

* * *

Along what line will the progressive movement in the seamen's union advance? By rallying the strongest possible support for unity of all districts of the I.S.U., for uniform agreements, for united action of all marine unions in the East and Gulf, and for democracy in the unions. A wide sentiment for these issues already exists, and the need to organize this sentiment into a broad movement is a central task that requires clarity on a number of questions.

How will the fight for unity and against the revocation of the charter of the Sailor's Union of the Pacific be conducted? Will it

lead to the establishment of a new union? Can the seamen in the East and Gulf defeat the splitters and rid themselves of bureaucrats and reactionary constitutions by leaving the I.S.U. and organizing a new union with the support of the expelled Sailors' Union of the Pacific and possibly the Maritime Federation? These questions exist in the minds of seamen. The correct answer to this question was given by the Congress of the Communist International:

"If the reformist leaders resort to the policy of expelling revolutionary workers or entire branches of unions, or adopt other forms of repression, the Communists must rally the entire union membership against the splitting activities, at the same time establishing contact between the expelled members and the bulk of the members in the union and engaging in a joint struggle for their reinstatement, for the restoration of the disrupted trade union unity."

Such a line was adopted by the membership of the Sailor's Union, who have adopted resolutions declaring:

"It is of the utmost importance to maintain the unity of the seamen of all coasts and the unity of all marine workers on the Pacific, which requires that the West Coast Seamen's Union fight to remain a part of the I.S.U. We appeal to all locals of the I.S.U. to support our fight to maintain the unity of the seamen."

By refusing to submit to "reorganization" and by keeping its organization intact, the sailors' union, with the support of the labor movement, is conducting a determined struggle for the return of its charter. Resolutions protesting the revocation of the charter and demanding its return have been adopted by many ships' crews, by locals of the I.S.U. in New York, Boston, and Mobile, as well as by the Central Labor Councils in Seattle and Portland. As this is being written the Convention of the I.S.U. is considering re-issuing the charter, showing that the pressure is being felt.

At this stage the struggle for uniform agreements means securing an agreement in the East that will bring wages and working conditions up to the level called for by the West Coast agreement. The referendum vote just concluded shows the membership is overwhelmingly opposed to renewing the old agreement which expired on December 31 and has been extended for two months. The reopening of negotiations, if backed up by energetic strike preparations, may force the shipowners to come to terms in the negotiations, and will enable the seamen to take strike action if this becomes necessary. The unanimous adoption of resolutions in a number of locals calling for such a policy indicates that a wide movement is already developing along these lines.

What are the concrete tasks in connection with the Maritime Federation movement? The decision of the I.S.U. Convention for the formation of a National Marine Council is at least a recognition of, and concession to, the need for greater cooperation among the marine unions. However, it becomes just a gesture to disarm the rank and file, inasmuch as the Council's proposed constitution makes no provision for the cooperation of the unions in negotiating agreements and in the event of strikes. The union membership should make this decision really mean something by insisting upon a concrete plan to be arrived at through democratic discussions in the locals, and by the calling of delegated conferences of all marine unions in the various districts.

The Western Federation has already proposed joint discussions with representatives of the A. F. of L. and the I.S.U. in order to determine what constitutional changes are necessary to eliminate all friction with the I.S.U. and A. F. of L. constitutions without weakening the cooperation of the marine unions through the federation. These steps show the willingness of the progressives to try and arrive at a program acceptable to all as well as their determination to resist attempts to split their unity. Similar steps should also be considered by the forces that have already been rallied by the preliminary conferences that have been held in the Gulf to discuss the formation of a federation in this district; at the same time, a wide campaign should be conducted to win support of every union in the Gulf for the calling of another conference, with representatives of the locals and of the respective Internationals present. In the East, committees representing local unions which have already endorsed the Maritime Federation or prominent trade union officials, should be formed in each port, to conduct a wide educational campaign on the Maritime Federation issue, thereby helping secure the adoption of resolutions in the local unions urging the calling of conferences to discuss the formation of an Eastern federation.

The Convention of the I.S.U. has dramatized the need for a break with reactionary policies and the leadership that advocates them. "War against the radicals", cooperation with the shipowners, support of the Government's war policy, are not helping the union get a satisfactory agreement in the East, are not arming the union to defend itself in the face of the attacks of the shipowners.

The union membership, many of them formerly labeled conservatives, as well as minor officials appointed by the top leadership and dependent upon them for office, are openly expressing strong opposition to the Convention decisions. Possibilities for winning the support of masses of seamen, as well as of many minor officials, for support of a progressive program, are now greater than ever.

The United States Supreme Court and the Specter of Fascism

By HARRY GANNES

"The Court is an organ of power. The liberals sometimes forget this. It is a sin for a Marxist to forget it." (Lenin.)

AS IN the turbulent days before the Civil War, the United States Supreme Court is now becoming a great center of political agitation. Far more than is generally realized, the effects of the Court's decisions today intimately concern the lives of the people.

Again as in the period of the Dred Scott Case we are confronted with glaring examples of corrupt judicial manipulations which emphasize the fact that in the most critical periods of American history the United States Supreme Court is the accelerator of reaction.

Today all roads of reaction, no matter how devious, lead in the direction of fascism. The rushing business of the Court at present complies with the needs of the most reactionary section of American finance capital.

The Court is becoming more than a weapon for drastically curbing the limited expression of the people's rights and the power of Congress which the economic crisis forces to echo the popular demand for social legislation. The Court's avalanche of reactionary decisions is beginning to encourage the development of fascist trends.

The time is approaching when the class interests for which the Supreme Court acts as chief counsel and legislative censor will seek to conjure up the living mass instruments of reaction under the slogan of "defense of the Constitution" as interpreted and "protected" by the Supreme Judicial Despots.

As Marxists-Leninists we observe the present feverish activity of the highest Court as a prime factor in the class struggle in relation to the American capitalist state apparatus.

We utilize the bitter political battles evoked around this issue of the Court's obvious tyranny to broaden the fight against the danger of fascism, for democratic rights, for social legislation, for the most elementary needs of the people. The building of a mass Farmer-Labor Party will be greatly speeded up if we harness the indignation and resentment aroused by the Court's increased dictatorial action.

The need for such a party is more clearly demonstrated by the action of the court which at every turn blocks the people's struggle for the improvement of their miserable lot, for every civil and legislative right, for relief, for social insurance, against taxation of the poor and middle class, and for placing the cost of the crisis on the fat pocketbooks of the rich.

The brazen deeds of the Court not only will help us to lead the toilers to strike harder blows at the most exposed links of the capitalist state chains, but will give us shining examples by which to teach the masses penetrating lessons about what the capitalist state power really means.

Many of the major questions of the next presidential election will be fought around the usurpation of power by the Supreme Court. Constitution and Court! will be the big cry.

In discussing the special features of the United States Supreme Court, a judicial body unique to this capitalist land, we must point out that its action affects not only the proletariat and poorest farmers, but also the petty bourgeoisie and small industrialists. For within the ranks of the property-owning classes there is manifested the struggle of the petty bourgeoisie and the small industrialists against finance capital and the giant trusts which are crushing the very life out of their smaller brethren and competitors.

In the long series of decisions which enhances the growth of monopoly capitalism, from the era of railroad construction to that of the rise of Standard Oil and the U. S. Steel Corp., as well as in the New Deal judgments, the conflict within the various strata of the propertied classes has deepened. Especially in the New Deal decisions do we observe the bitter struggle of the poor, tenant and middle farmer against the rich farmer and landowner, and the fight of all these against the bankers, industrialists, and food trusts.

During the profound general crisis of the capitalist system, this struggle assumes sharper political forms. For, as Marx tells us, when the capitalist class as a whole has to divide losses as well as profits, its contradictions increase. The extension of these conflicts within the ruling strata is one of the important factors in the development of a revolutionary crisis of capitalism.

Does, then, the exaggerated increase of usurped power of the judiciary at present play a significant part in advancing the crisis within the capitalist class and, thereby, the general crisis of capitalism itself? There is not the slightest doubt about this. It reflects itself in the contradictions within the capitalist state, showing the advance of the period of the inability of the capitalists to rule in the old way. In fighting for the most elementary demands against the usurpation of the Courts, and for amending the Constitution to curb the Court,

we advance the popular struggle against capitalism and its state.

II.

In the 148 years of its existence, the United States Supreme Court nullified 67 Congressional acts. But in the past two years alone it has wiped out eight acts of Congress. Five of these concern the future of social legislation and the whole problem of who shall bear the burden of the crisis. In fact the major function of the Supreme Court is becoming more and more to void social legislation that has even the slightest hint of expense to the bourgeoisie and benefit to the masses.

The five decisions cover: (1) The railroad retirement act, where the Court knocked out a statute requiring a compulsory pension system; (2) the Frazier-Lemke act, also known as the farm mortgage act, voiding government aid to mortgage-ridden farmers; (3) voiding an order under the N.R.A. concerning "hot oil" as unconstitutional, thereby benefiting chiefly the oil trusts; (4) destroying the N.R.A., when it had served capitalism's purpose; (5) A.A.A. decision declared unconstitutional, attacking the principle of levying taxes for farm relief purposes.

A series of similar decisions, carrying out the practices already laid down by the court, are expected.* The court, thereby, is attaining an all-time rapid-fire record for voiding acts of Congress.

But we are confronted today not only with an augmentation of the legislative nullification power of the Supreme Court in the

* Since the above was written, the Supreme Court, on February 17, handed down its crafty decision on the T.V.A. (Tennessee Valley Authority). The Court's refusal to deal with the "constitutionality" of the T.V.A. is, in a sense, a concession to the growing indignation of the masses against the Court's tyranny, without at the same time granting the people anything real. The Roosevelt administration assisted the court in sidestepping the question of "constitutionality". It joined issues on minor questions instead of on fundamental issues, giving the Court an egress, and permitting it to pose as a respecter of "judicial balance". The real effect of the decision, however, is mainly to strengthen the government's war preparation. It allows the sale of electric power as a by-product of nitrate and water-power development as a war measure. At the same time, the Court attempts beforehand to block legislation on questions of government ownership and especially on the question of control and opening of closed factories, a demand bound to grow with the continuance of unemployment and the cutting down of relief in all forms. Clearly, the decision is a compromise between the Liberty League majority of the Supreme Court and the Roosevelt legal spokesmen for the T.V.A. with the President's connivance. The truce thus arrived at provides for a means of trying to screen the real significance of the Court's avalanche of anti-social legislation decisions. It aims to take the Court out of popular agitation and attention and to dislodge it from the prime position it bids fair to occupy in the forthcoming election discussions.

period of the present difficulties of capitalism. As is well recognized by members of the Court itself, the whole nature of judicial usurpation is changing in character. It is taking on a more brutally and cynically reactionary cloak.

III.

The first important assumption of legislative power by the Court was in 1803 in the famous case of *Marbury vs. Madison*, though the Court had nibbled at the idea earlier. Chief Justice Marshall's decision in the *Marbury* case was expressive of the desire of the rising mercantile, trading bourgeoisie to centralize the newly established federal state power. As Engels and Lenin pointed out, the American capitalist state in its beginnings was extremely weak, loose, and decentralized. Marshall sought to help remedy this looseness and especially to grant the judiciary centralizing power as against the executive and legislative branches, which he, Hamilton, and other leading representatives of his class considered amenable to popular attack and to the "imprudence of democracy". This was outlined in Marshall's crafty decision giving the Court final word on all legislation on the ground of testing constitutionality.

But the power thus granted to the Court by itself did not have to be used or extended until a great crisis developed in the struggle for hegemony between the rising industrial bourgeoisie of the North and the slavocracy of the South in 1857. Then, this power, which the Liberty League so ardently praises, was used with a vengeance for the purpose of bolstering and expanding Negro slavery in the United States. This Supreme Court decision, reeking of the slave market, is the foundation stone of all future United States Supreme Court decisions usurping power to void legislation. By upholding slavery the United States Supreme Court for the first time used its self-granted authority to annul legislation by judicial decree.

The real issue in the *Dred Scott* decision of 1857 was the constitutionality of the Compromise Act, dealing with a compromise on the extension of slavery to new territories. The slaveholders directly intervened behind the scenes of the Court, making use of the Court as an instrument in their contest with the representatives of the Northern industrial bourgeoisie in Congress. The Supreme Court wiped out the compromise of the vacillating section of the industrial bourgeoisie and the slaveholders. By a vote of 7 to 2, the Court declared that a slave had no legal existence as a person, as he was property in the eyes of the law. Chief Justice Taney affirmed that a Negro had no rights which a white man was bound to respect, and that the Negro might justly and legally be reduced to slavery. The great Justice Marshall, protector of the Constitution

and "American liberties", had previously pronounced slavery "legitimate" and "lawful". In the *Antelope* slave trader case, this theoretician of the right of usurpation said:

"Slavery, then, has its origin in force; but as the world has agreed that it is a legitimate result of force, the state of things which is thus produced by general consent, cannot be pronounced unlawful."

Reminiscent of the joy among the Southern slave-holding circles over the Dred Scott decision is the enthusiasm of the Liberty Leaguers, the Chambers of Commerce, the Manufacturers Association, and other such forces, when the N.R.A. and A.A.A. Supreme Court decisions were handed down.

Thus, in its first and fundamental application of this usurped power, the Court advanced reaction and pro-slavery counter-revolution.

After the Civil War, when the industrial bourgeoisie held sway over all three branches of the state, the Supreme Court allowed its nullification powers to lie more or less dormant. In fact, they were not revived in full force until the early development of monopoly capital, when the big trusts required that the dictatorial powers of the Court be again asserted to safeguard the interests of the trusts.

" . . . The decade beginning in 1880 may be regarded as the dividing line between the earlier stage when judicial review of legislative enactments was of relatively minor significance and the latter stage in which this practice becomes one of the central and controlling features of the American system of government,"

writes an authority on the Constitution (Charles Groves Haines, *A Government of Laws or a Government of Men; Judicial or Legislative Supremacy*).

The generation beginning with 1880 coincides with the development of the big trusts in railroad and oil, and the growth of the huge corporations in utilities and steel. It was the era of the rapid growth of the monopoly, parasitic, decadent phase of capitalism. The legislative review of decisions of the United States Supreme Court thus flowers to its most poisonous growth at that period described by Lenin as follows:

"Imperialism in particular—the era of banking capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, the era of the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly-capitalism—shows an unprecedented strengthening of the 'state machinery' and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus, side by side with the increase of repressive measures against the proletariat, alike in the monarchical and the freest republican countries."

And this bureaucratic strengthening of the state machinery of

imperialism is being advanced to a higher and more reactionary stage by the Supreme Court today.

The next great phase is 1935, when the growing pro-fascist elements in the United States again required the assistance of the United States Supreme Court's dictatorial power. This time the Court acts against the aspirations of the masses, still bound down by parliamentary illusions, for relief and against the capitalists' attempts to unload the burden of the crisis on the backs of the toilers.

Thus, we find that the United States Supreme Court developed and extended its usurped power of nullification mainly as follows: (1) For slavery, 1857; (2) For imperialism, 1880 and after; and (3) For further advance of reaction along incipient fascist lines, 1935.

In the intermediate periods, when they were not dealing directly with constitutionality of legislation, the Supreme Court Justices did not, however, waste their time. In the regular procedure of judicial review the great majority of them were worthy of their hire as former corporation lawyers, deciding individual cases to the advantage of their most favored corporations, helping the trusts get the best construction of the "constitutional" laws, beating back the civil rights won in 1776, and hampering the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments against Negro slavery. The liberal judges who were concessions to democratic pretenses on the Supreme Bench were the exceptions who left a trail of indignant but impotent dissent.

IV.

Strenuous efforts are made to blur the significance of the Supreme Court power in voiding legislation. One popular means is to quote statistics. Look, say the defenders of the Supreme Court's tyrannical powers, out of 24,016 Congressional acts passed since Congress first began business 150 years ago, only 67 have been declared unconstitutional. Laws, however, we answer, cannot be compared statistically like apples. One Dred Scott decision and one A.A.A. ruling affirm fundamental reactionary policy, to which thousands of other oppressive laws conform. An examination of the type of laws nullified gives us a good key to how, when, and why the Supreme Court uses its usurped power. We can group the chief decisions declaring the 67 acts unconstitutional as follows:

1. Establishment of the precedent of nullification of legislation by the Supreme Court (1803).

2. Affirming the legality of slavery and the right of its extension, Dred Scott decision, 1857; the first real use of the usurped power and the legal foundation for it to the present day.

3. A series of decisions beginning with 1870 encouraging rapid concentration of capital, voiding income taxes against the rich, and

big corporations; attacking the civil rights of the masses; declaring laws cannot be passed to enforce equal treatment of Negroes (1883), thereby practically voiding the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution. "The subject of Negro rights constitutes the most disgraceful chapter in the judicial history of this country; and this quite apart from the *Dred Scott Case*." (*Government by Judiciary*, Louis B. Boudin, p. 126.)

4. Though upholding the Sherman Anti-Trust Act as constitutional, the Court remedied this defect at first by its record of assistance to the development of monopoly capitalism; by its construing individual cases in the interests of the trusts; and by using the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, not as a law against monopolies, but against labor organization. For example, Samuel Gompers, no enemy of the American capitalist state, a man who died with the words on his lips: "God save our American institutions," wrote in 1910 as follows on the United States Supreme Court's use of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act against labor: "The event we have feared has come to pass. The [Sherman Anti-Trust] law has long been admitted to be of no value in restraining or really punishing trusts. Useless as an instrument of good, perverted from its original intent, it has now been made an instrument of positive mischief."

5. Declaring social legislation "unconstitutional", as in the Federal Liability Act, providing workmen's compensation in accidents (1908); voiding the Child Labor Act (1918); and again, in 1922, under the form of voiding a tax act on child-labor produced products, declaring Congress cannot make it a criminal offense for an employer to engage in interstate commerce and dismiss an employee because he belongs to a labor union (1908); and voiding a law for minimum wage standards (1923).

6. Protecting the rich and big trusts from income tax, through voiding the income tax law (1895), saving the bosses thereby huge profits for a period of 20 years.

7. A continuation of all of these voiding decisions in sharper and more provocative form in reviewing New Deal legislation, especially in the A.A.A. ruling.

In the persistent fight to attain its judicial supremacy, the Supreme Court necessarily followed a contradictory course. This arose out of the conflicting nature of the needs of the most reactionary section of capitalism for centralized state power and the decentralizing nature of the Constitution.

The Court's decisions on "unconstitutionality" are most frequently based on the theory of "protecting" the Constitution in its dual character, that is, as between the rights of the states and the rights of the federal government. Thus, by arguing that Congress

did not have the power to arrogate to itself rights belonging exclusively to the various states and not delegated in the Constitution to the federal government, the Court has actually strengthened the centralized grip of the capitalist state power though it has insisted it has always been limiting the power of the federal government.

The decisions of the courts on the issues of the civil rights rank with the most reactionary of all its legal exhibitions, such as in the long battle on Negro rights, right down to the Herndon case, and the justification of fascist terror through upholding the Criminal Syndicalist and Criminal Anarchy Acts. At times the courts did throw a very meager bone to appellants on civil rights, but these are the rare exceptions that emphasize the reactionary rules.

In this respect a number of seemingly puzzling questions are often asked. They fall into two categories.

1. If the Communists fought against the N.R.A. and the A.A.A., or other such New Deal legislation as assisting chiefly finance capital, then why do they now so energetically fight against their nullification by the Supreme Court?

2. If we are against the right of the Supreme Court to declare laws unconstitutional, then why do we, in legal appeals to the Court, make use of the argument that certain laws (Sedition Act in Herndon case, the Criminal Syndicalist Acts) are unconstitutional?

To both questions at the outset the general answer must be made that in fighting against the usurped power of legislative nullification of the Supreme Court we fight against one of the strongest symptoms of developing reaction, benefiting equally the fight for social legislation and civil rights.

So far as the first question is concerned: The Communists correctly criticized and fought against the N.R.A. and A.A.A. because both these acts served as emergency measures to assist capitalism in the worst phase of the crisis. They greatly increased the profits of the big trusts. They helped their monopoly development at the expense of the smaller corporations. The rich farmers gained vastly more than the poor and tenant farmers from A.A.A. disbursements. These measures were garnished with only the most insignificant aid to the workers and farmers. When these acts had served their emergency purpose, the Court utilized its nullifying power, not only to wipe out these particular laws, but to lay the basis for legal justification of ruling out *all* subsequent real social legislation. With the Court's nullifying decrees standing as precedents, even against bad or inadequate laws, it would be impossible to put through and to uphold those laws desired by the masses, without a fight to the finish to end the Court's power of declaring *any* law unconstitutional. The very fight to curb the power of the Court would arouse and

organize the forces to continue the struggle on a higher plane and for greater conquests.

The answer to the second question is: Though we fight against the principle of the Court to declare laws unconstitutional, as long as this procedure remains a part of American capitalist legal practice, we will utilize it in individual cases, along with all other legal arguments, buttressed by mass pressure, to get a most favorable decision for the working class defendants in each instance. This is not in the slightest a contradiction. Workers are forced to use capitalist laws and legal methods of which they do not approve in principle to get the maximum out of legal defense under capitalism.

In the case of the fight for civil rights, the Supreme Court, in order to conceal its utter reactionary character, as well as due to various contradictions of previous decisions and so-called liberal members of the Court, has been forced, but only in a few instances, to rule favorably for working class defendants.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, from the Civil Rights cases in the period after Reconstruction, the Court has overruled appeals on the ground of unconstitutionality of the Georgia "insurrection" law, but turned Herndon back to the Southern Courts. In the Scottsboro case, only the fear of rising Negro discontent, and united, growing mass pressure of Negro and white, forced lip-service recognition of a certain judicial right for the Negro in the South. Furthermore, in the Scottsboro case, the Supreme Court refused to declare the nine boys innocent on a court record clearly and beyond doubt proving them to be innocent.

By mass pressure and its own reluctance to expose its reactionary nature too openly, the Supreme Court was forced to grant some legal concessions on the technical rights of Negroes to sit in Southern juries. Despite the so-called favorable decision of the Supreme Court, the Scottsboro defendants are still in prison and are facing a living death for the rest of their lives or burning in the electric chair.

Workers, in their *legal* defense, utilize an established precedent of American capitalist law, that is, the usurped and condemned power of nullification by the Supreme Court. While doing so in individual cases, we do not for a moment fail to expose the real class nature of this Court to which we must appeal. We expose and castigate the injustices of the Court to the people in their fight for social legislation and civil rights.

V.

The most important single decision of the Supreme Court in extending its usurped power is that voiding the A.A.A.

Dr. Howard Lee McBain, Ruggles Professor of Constitutional law at Columbia University, wrote on this issue:

"The Hoosac Mills case will live to torment the defenders of judicial supremacy long after the issue of farmer relief has become an historical episode. It may ultimately have a more profound effect upon American institutional development than all of the New Deal experiments rolled into one." ("The Issue: The Court or Congress," *New York Times Magazine*, Jan. 19, 1936.)

Professor McBain, apparently of that school of juridical experts which believes that the Court has the right of constitutional review, expresses fear that the judges had too shamelessly undraped the ugly structure of the dictatorship of finance capital in the A.A.A. decision.

"It [the A.A.A. opinion]," he complains, "will not only be grist for the mill of the liberals and the radicals who have long opposed the institutions of judicial supremacy as such; it will weaken or shatter the faith of many who, though they sometimes greatly deplore specific results of the Court's power to declare laws void, have, nevertheless, believed in the general beneficence and wisdom of judicial review as an institution."

The issues involved were much deeper than the A.A.A. itself, though the Court saw to it that the \$200,000,000 collected in processing taxes were immediately refunded to the capitalists who had paid them. Even Secretary of Agriculture Wallace was forced to exclaim that this \$200,000,000 present to the food trusts was "the biggest steal in the history of the country".

The principle presented to the Supreme Court, as the Communist Party pointed out, was the right of Congress to levy taxes for relief and to pass any other measure the people might demand.

"The Communist Party criticized the A.A.A.," said a statement of the Central Committee of the Party, signed by William Z. Foster, Chairman, and Earl Browder, Secretary, "because it helped to raise the cost of living, because it did not substantially help the poor farmers of the country, because it helped *mainly* the rich." The decision, it was pointed out, above all, "forbids Congress to help distressed sections of the population".

It should be remarked, though it is not of major importance, that Justice Owen D. Roberts who read the majority A.A.A. opinion was proved in May 1933 by the Senate Banking and Currency Committee to be on the House of Morgan's "favored" list for stocks certain to reap early profits.

Overruling the right of Congress to levy such taxes, or distribute such relief, the Court's decision starts off with a defense of its power to nullify legislation. "It is sometimes said," apprehensively assert the judges, "that the Court assumes a power to overrule and control

action of the people's representatives. This is a misconception. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land, ordained and established by the people. All legislation must conform to the principles it lays down."

Was it not Chief Justice Hughes himself who declared, before he became chief justice: "*We are under a Constitution, but the Constitution is what the judges say it is*"? If the Constitution is a "limit" to what the people may do, it is also a guide to what the judges may not do. Nowhere does the Constitution give the nine judicial dictators the right to annul legislation. But capitalism in its bloody march to wealth and to domination never hesitated over the niceties of its own laws or Constitution. When the growing reactionary demands of the ruling aristocracy demanded the quashing of every semblance of social legislation that would either benefit the masses or establish a precedent for an increase of such legislation, the retired corporation lawyers begowned in the sacred garb of chief justice of finance capital were faithful to their judicial trusts and to the trusts. The juridical needs of capitalism flow directly from its economic and political exigencies. But the gap between the politico-economic needs and the juridical superstructure is being narrowed by the general crisis of capitalism, exposing both as reverse sides of the same decaying and corrupt organism.

The opinion of Justices Cardozo, Stone, and Brandeis, the three dissenters, from the first, takes issue with the majority of the Court, not on the A.A.A., but on the usurpation of power by the judiciary. Maintaining the right of the Court to judge the constitutionality of acts, it however says: "The courts are concerned only with the power to enact statutes, not with their wisdom." Intimating that the Court was setting itself up as an instrument against the rights of the people, the dissenters assert: "For the removal of unwise laws from the statute books appeal lies not to the courts but to the ballot and the processes of democratic government." Clearly, then, the A.A.A. decision, even in the words of three judges, is undemocratic, and therefore dictatorial and reactionary.

The Tory London *Times* was abashed at the dictatorial step of the United States Supreme Court in repealing the A.A.A. An editorial on Jan. 9 (quoted by the *New York Times* of Jan. 10) charged the American business leaders with forgetting that President Roosevelt "rescued them from disaster", less than three years ago. This editorial, remarked the London correspondent of the *New York Times*, "is typical of others in the British newspapers, even the most conservative expressing amazement at the Supreme Court's decision and sympathy for the president".

The land of one king is amazed at the action of the country with Nine Judicial Monarchs.

VI.

There can be many motives and many aims in exposing the undeniable advancing reactionary trends of the United States Supreme Court. The motive of the minority of the Court itself is to preserve the prestige of the Court and its judicial dignity as an instrument for capitalism as a whole in view of the growing scepticism and distrust of the masses.

Liberals and other such want reforms for a more "equitable balance", as they put it, between the three branches of government, in an effort to attain some semblance of democratic pretense in the judiciary, and for a gradual reform of capitalism.

Communists, by exposing and fighting against the reactionary role of the Supreme Court and its encouragement to incipient fascist forces in the United States, revealing the Court as the most dictatorial organ of the capitalist state power at this time, do not contrast thereby the "democratic" and "good" qualities of the other branches of the capitalist state.

But Communists are the most persistent in drawing the attention of the masses to the real nature of the entire state by the example of this most reactionary, exposed and attacked organ, rallying the masses for an assault against this hated enemy of the people. They utilize the rapidly rising anger and indignation against the Court as a fulcrum of revolutionary struggle to replace the whole, corrupt, bureaucratic, oppressive dictatorial capitalist state power by the power of the toilers.

In the fight to put through social legislation, to fight for democratic rights, to curb the power of the judges, arousing the resentment of the masses against the judicial monarchs, we strengthen the immediate struggle for the formation of a mass Farmer-Labor Party around the concrete issues of the most burning importance to the widest strata of the population. In the center of this fight now looms a battle against the Supreme Court.

VII.

Despite his evident disturbance over the N.R.A. decision, President Roosevelt was silent on the more important and fundamental judicial move in the case of the A.A.A. Roosevelt has discouraged a broad movement to curb the usurped power of the Supreme Court by constitutional amendment. He knows too well that such a movement would carry in its train class forces he does not wish stirred up.

Such a demand, fought for on a united front basis, should spur the creation of an independent people's front.

But the struggle for an amendment to the Constitution to force through social legislation is gaining momentum, and, with the inevitable future developments, must gain even greater force. Here three main distinct programs have been presented:

1. *The proposals of the A. F. of L. and U.M.W.A. last conventions in the form of a threat to struggle for a constitutional amendment, in the event the Supreme Court continues to void social legislation, particularly the Guffey Coal and the Wagner Labor acts.* The purpose of such a fight for a constitutional amendment would be to protect the trade union and economic rights of the workers particularly, without risking, if at all possible, the hornet's nest of an independent workingclass struggle behind it.

2. *The Socialist Party Old Guard proposal for an amendment to the Constitution.* At first, the Hillquit amendment provided for no different policy than that of the U.M.W.A. or American Federation of Labor threats. It does not propose to curb the power of the Court, but takes from them the excuse of declaring social legislation unconstitutional. But this was later revised by Louis Waldman to appear as a proposal to achieve socialism in the United States through the utopia of constitutional amendment.

Neither the Hillquit, Waldman, A. F. of L. or U.M.W.A. amendments have provisions to help the farmers, or involve them in a struggle against the Supreme Court.

When the N.R.A. was voided, Louis Waldman, in an article in the *New Leader* (June 1, 1935), tried, as a Socialist legal expert, to show that the Supreme Court, especially because of its unanimous decision, was not really usurping power, but had "merely outlawed the technique[!!] set up by the Roosevelt administration".

In the same issue of the *New Leader*, an editorial discussing the aspect of fascism in the light of the Supreme Court decision even looked favorably on the Court as a "protector" against fascism which might come by executive usurpation. Said the *New Leader*:

"We merely add this observation [to Waldman's dissertation]. In denying the executive the power to govern by decree, it [the Court] has struck down a power which is exercised by every dictator in Europe.

"This power in the hands of a future president less scrupulous than Roosevelt would be a constant menace to the whole labor movement. Those who fear fascism should keep this in mind."

While nobody will deny that the executive power vested in an American president can be utilized towards speeding fascism in the United States, no foe of fascism would look to the nine judicial

monarchs of the Supreme Court as an obstacle to fascism. Especially is this so when the Supreme Court as a body has progressively become the more dictatorial expression of finance capital, as the pressure of the masses on Congress and on the president grows greater.

3. *The fight for a constitutional amendment as advocated by the Communist Party.* Spiking all illusions about "constitutional socialism" through amendment, or the value as a foe of fascism of any single branch of the American capitalist state, the Communists fight for a constitutional amendment to allow every measure of social legislation to become law without judicial veto, and to curb the power of the Court.

Such a battle for the most immediate demands of the workers, buttressed with the strengthening of the trade unions, and by extra-parliamentary actions, brings pressure on and against the capitalist legislatures and executive, and acts to curb the swollen judicial power. It becomes a fight, not only for amending the Constitution, but against the capitalist state itself.

It rallies behind it the rising streams of independent political action leading to the formation of a mass Farmer-Labor Party.

The Communist Party's fight for constitutional amendment goes hand in hand with the struggle to preserve democratic rights; with the struggle for the immediate economic needs of the workers; with the fight for relief and social insurance for workers, farmers, and others; and with the formation of a mass Farmer-Labor Party. The Communist Party constantly directs all of these attacks against capitalism into swifter channels leading to the revolutionary goal of struggle for the ultimate overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Soviet power as the only road to socialism.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party has already popularly outlined our main tasks around the issue of Supreme Court usurpation in its statement, "Sweep Away the Autocratic Power of the United States Supreme Court!" (*Daily Worker*, Jan. 11, 1936.) We here summarize these tasks:

1. It is necessary to develop the most popular and lively agitation against the Supreme Court. We must show the masses how it blocks social legislation at every avenue. It works against democratic rights, striving consciously in behalf of the most reactionary sections of capitalism to defeat the struggle of the masses for political independence, and advancing the incipient fascist forces in this country.

2. In the fight to curb the Supreme Court, we must put in the forefront the indispensable goal of the broadest united front against such reaction; which means the formation of a Farmer-Labor Party as the best instrument in the fight against the Court and reaction generally. In the fight against the usurped power of the Supreme

Court, for amending the constitution, for changing the composition and power of the Court, the Farmer-Labor Party can thereby drive through more effectively and speedily the program for the immediate needs for social legislation and the protection of the democratic rights of the masses.

3. The fight to curb the power of the Supreme Court should center about the mass movement for amending the Constitution, for specifically ending the right of the Supreme Court to nullify legislation. We must at every stage of the fight bring greater mass pressure on Congress and the President to curb the tyrannical power of the Court by every possible means, taking the lead ourselves in the fight to clip the Court's reactionary claws.

4. As Communists, we must utilize the mass resentment against the Supreme Court as a favorable opportunity for enlightening the workers and exposing the real nature of the capitalist dictatorship through its state power. By exposing the action of the Supreme Court, drawing lessons of the nature of the capitalist dictatorship, we have a concrete argument for the necessity of ultimately supplanting capitalist rule with a government of workers and farmers, in which all the instruments of power of the newly created state work for the advancement of socialism and the well-being of the toilers. We can contrast Soviet power in the U.S.S.R. and the advance of proletarian democracy there with the growth of reaction and the encouragement of fascism in the United States.

It is up to us to make the most of the growing mass sentiment against this organ of brazen reaction, the judicial oligarchy, in the fight against fascism and for democratic rights. The historical conditions of the United States in the development of the Supreme Court and the fight against its tyranny give us the most favorable possibilities for revolutionary struggle against the whole capitalist state and for the advance of the workers' cause.

Lenin on the Woman Question

By IRENE LESLIE

"While fascism exacts most from youth, it enslaves women with particular ruthlessness and cynicism, playing on the most painful feelings of the mother, the housewife, the single working woman, uncertain of the morrow."—Dimitroff's report at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International.

WOMEN are an important factor in economic and social life. They make their contributions as workers in factories and on farms, as housewives, and as professionals. Low wages, wage-cuts, unemployment, depressed farm conditions, and a high cost of living, affect the working women even more than other sections of the population. The reactionaries, as also the bourgeois liberals, try to canalize the discontent of the women in various way, nursing it with illusions of democratic rights and the necessity of temporary sacrifices. In this way they hope to prevent them from organizing for the struggle. Such are the methods of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the women members of the Liberty League, the League of Republican Woman, the Democratic Women's organizations, etc.

Is it necessary to mention that not all women are oppressed? We should not, of course, discuss the question as one of the "weaker sex"; we do not speak of womankind as one homogeneous social mass. It would be nonsense to speak of the women of the ruling class as being "oppressed", even when they are not allowed to be so active in the exploitation of the workers as are the men, even when they are only parasites upon parasites. We can mention, for example, three nationally prominent and wealthy women who are active members of the National Executive Committee of the American Liberty League: Mrs. Henry B. Joy (Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan); Mrs. Charles H. Sabin (New York City), one of the wealthiest individuals in America, who is also a member of the Republican National Committee; and Mrs. James Ross Todd (Louisville, Kentucky). Can such women be considered oppressed? These three women hold the power of life and death over thousands of men, women, and children. It is not these women of the ruling class whom we have in mind when we speak of the woman problem; we mean the toiling women and the wives of the toilers.

The importance of woman's active participation in social and political life and her duty to struggle for her liberation was recognized by the most progressive American elements. As early as 1886 a spokesman of the Knights of Labor declared:

"It is clearly recognized that women have been and still are more oppressed than men, and the truth has been fully perceived that it is impossible to better the condition of the masses permanently, unless the lot of working women is ameliorated. As a consequence, the Knights are everywhere endeavoring to help women to secure higher wages and more favorable conditions of service.

"Women are among the most ardent, self-sacrificing supporters of the labor movement." (Richard Ely, *The Labor Movement in America*, 1886).

The great Utopian Socialist, Charles Fourier, stressed in his writings the importance of women's participation in social life. He paid tribute to women, observing that the level of social progress in any given society can best be measured by the position of women.

In his letter to Kugelmann of December 12, 1868, Marx saw in the equality granted to women workers, a progressive sign in the development of the American labor movement:

"Great progress was evident in the last Congress of the American 'Labor Union' in that among other things, it treated working women with complete equality. While in this respect the English, and still more the gallant French, are burdened with a spirit of narrow-mindedness. Anybody who knows anything of history knows that great social changes are impossible without the feminine ferment. Social progress can be measured exactly by the social position of the sex (the ugly ones included)."

Our great leader, Lenin, always maintained that the success of a revolution, and of all liberation movements, depends upon the extent of women's participation. The main thesis of Lenin is that real freedom for women is possible only through communism; for their social and economic position is closely linked up with private property in the means of production.

Lenin indicated that capitalism unites "official" equality with economic and social *inequality*. This is one of the hypocritical peculiarities of capitalism. At the same time, this "official" equality, as understood by bourgeois democracy, means the "equality" of the hungry with the satisfied, of the possessor with the dispossessed. The inequality of women with men is an expression of this contradiction in capitalism. Lenin pointedly remarked that the most democratic republics in the world could not assure real equality for women because the basis of their inequality lies in the capitalist system itself. By involving women in industry, capitalism is a progressive factor just as when it involves any mass of people in a higher form of production. But at the same time, it transforms the women into wage slaves at a degree of exploitation even greater than that of men, inflicting upon them a double oppression—economic and social.

Lenin considered it wrong, however, to advocate the elimination of women from industry and their return to the patriarchal form

of life, even if that were possible. He considered this a reactionary tendency, because involving women in social production, especially in large-scale machine industry, is to push forward their development, increase their independence, and create such conditions of life which are higher than the old patriarchal forms, preparing the women to participate in the class struggle and finally in building a new social system.

THE CLASS APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

Lenin's thesis is—that only through the proletarian revolution and through communism can the woman question be solved completely. Bourgeois democracy has promised equality and freedom to women, as it has promised them to men; but they are only empty words for both. In reality, women, who compose half of humanity—are deprived of their human rights and are subjected to men.

Lenin firmly maintained that the problem of women is not an isolated one, but is part of the general problem of the liberation of the toilers. He taught us that we must have a class approach to this problem; we must consider it from the point of view of the working class as a whole. He criticized the tendency of the liberal and some of the Socialist women who try to divert this problem into the channels of feminism, thus disregarding it as an integral part of the class struggle. Lenin indicated that the movement for the liberation of women is a class movement of all the exploited and oppressed. He pleaded that the road which leads to freedom for toiling women is the road trod by their toiling class brothers and not the one into which their bourgeois sisters wish to herd and side-track them.

During the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart, in 1907, Lenin furiously attacked the tendency of certain Austrian and German Social-Democrats, who, for the sake of expediency, wished to soft-pedal the demand for the equality of women. He also exposed the false class position of the British woman delegate from the opportunist camp of the Fabians, who defended the point of view of limited electoral rights for women, not universally, but determined by the ownership of property. Lenin said that although she was the only one who defended this point of view, she nevertheless, demonstrated the class position of the bourgeois British ladies who wanted to get suffrage rights for themselves only, but not for the proletarian women.

Lenin championed the participation of women in all activities of life. He always insisted on the necessity of drawing women into politics, and he warned that the success of the proletarian revolution in Russia could be assured only by the participation of a majority of the women. In his article on the task of the Left Zimmerwaldians

in the Social-Democratic Party of Switzerland, he demanded the abolition of all limitations on the rights of women, maintaining that it was necessary to clarify for the masses the special importance of this reform, at a time when war and the high cost of living were playing havoc with the lives of the workers. It was also necessary to excite the attention and the interest of women in political life.

In the *Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution*, Lenin stressed the role of women in the struggle against war:

“Imperialism is a furious fight between the great powers for the partition and repartition of the world—it inevitably must lead to further militarization in all countries, also in the neutral and in small countries. What will the proletarian women do under such conditions? Will they curse war and everything that is military, will they request disarmament? The women of the oppressed class, which is really revolutionary, will never agree with such a shameful role. They will say to their sons—‘you will soon grow big. You will be given a weapon. Take it and thoroughly study the military profession. This science is necessary for the proletarians—not for the purpose to shoot upon your brothers, workers of other countries, as is happening in the present war, and as you are advised to do by the traitors of socialism; but for the purpose to struggle against the bourgeoisie of your own country to put an end to the exploitation, misery and wars, not by the means of good wishes, but the victory over the bourgeoisie and its disarmament.’” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, p. 328—Russian edition.)

In October, 1905, at a time of civil war, Lenin, in speaking about the corps of the revolutionary army, stressed the importance of involving the women in revolutionary street battles by giving them special tasks. He paid tribute to women’s capacity in struggle. In his article on *The Slogan of Disarmament*, he dwelled upon the stubbornness and devotion shown by the French working women during the Paris Commune, and he discussed the role of women in future struggles. He said:

“One bourgeois observer wrote in May 1871 in a certain English paper: ‘If the French nation consisted only of women what a terrible nation it would be!’ The women and children from thirteen years of age fought at the time of the Commune side by side with the men. It would not be different also in the future struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The proletarian women will not look on passively while the well-armed bourgeoisie will shoot down the badly armed or unarmed workers. They will take up arms as they did in 1871. And from the present browbeaten nations, or rather, from the present labor movement which is disorganized by the opportunists more than by the governments, will doubtless—sooner or later—emerge the International Union of ‘terrible nations’ of the revolutionary proletariat.”

Lenin always emphasized that it is not possible to have a suc-

cessful struggle for power and the building of a socialist society without the active participation of the woman. In his early articles at the beginning of the October Revolution and on the eve of it, he always reminded us not to forget to involve the women in the movement and in all organizations. In his letter to Stalin on January 24, 1920 (Vol. XXIX, p. 387—Russian edition) Lenin stressed the necessity of involving all women in the organization of social control. In his notes on the reorganization of the state control (Vol. XXX, p. 397—Russian edition) he wrote that two-thirds of the social representatives must be women. In his notes and recommendations for the organization of the people's militia and how to involve women in it by assigning to them special tasks, such as the care of the sick and the orphans, and the organization of community restaurants—Lenin insisted that women must be treated as equal with the men. In his *Letters from Afar* (Vol. XX, p. 38—Russian edition) Lenin wrote that if we will not draw women into our social life and if we will not liberate them from the blighting drudgery of home and kitchen we will never be able to assure ourselves real freedom, we will never be able to build real democracy and will make any talk of socialism futile. One of the slogans that Lenin coined during the October Revolution was that we must teach every "kitchen maid to govern the state".

THE EXAMPLE OF WOMAN'S STATUS IN THE SOVIET UNION

Lenin's prediction, that only the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat can put an end to the old bourgeois prejudice about the inferiority of women, was realized on one-sixth of the globe—in the Soviet Union, where inequality was finally eradicated, thus drawing women into active participation in the building of a socialist society. The Communist Party makes great efforts to involve toiling women in all fields of social activity. Women are active in industry, in administration, and in agricultural work. They are counted among the best workers in all fields, including aviation. At the Congress of the Stakhanovites, of the best workers in Soviet industry and agriculture, women were represented by Maria Demchenko, who established a record in beet raising; by the two Vinogradovas, who established a record in the textile industry; and by others, who excelled similarly in other industries. These are no mere exceptions as we usually find in the capitalist industrial field. The names of thousands and thousands of women are daily on the lips of the people in the U.S.S.R., because of their distinguished services in every field of endeavor. In the Civil War, in the fight against hunger, in the struggle for the building of socialism, the women have

made invaluable contributions. This was all possible because of their changed status and because they worked in a society which has created a new social economy and political philosophy. A primary feature of this achieved equality is the liberation of the women from the yoke of housework by assuring them the care of their children during work and by creating safeguards for the health and protection of women and their children. There is a real measure of equality for women in the establishment of innumerable nurseries, community restaurants, safety devices during work, with special laws protecting them during pregnancy and childbirth, and during vacations.

This achievement of the complete emancipation of women in socialist society can serve as an object lesson for women in capitalist society, especially for the women in the U.S.A. The position of women here reflects all the misery and evil that spring from the capitalist system. The woman industrial and agricultural worker, the housewife, and the professional, are obliged to endure the hardships resulting from the general crisis of capitalism. But the women do not remain quiescent, they do not submit to these blows with resignation. They take part in the struggle, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the men. Experiences in the strikes of the past few years have clearly demonstrated the existence of a fighting spirit and initiative in the American working women. American women should always hold before them the radiant examples of this militancy and growing class consciousness and initiative, among the most oppressed group of women, the Negro women. Consider the nut-pickers' strike in St. Louis, in 1933. Of the 1,100 women strikers, fully 85 per cent were Negro women. The chairman of the strike committee was Mrs. Carrie Smith, a Negro woman. This strike was waged with stubbornness and great initiative, and it ended with a victory. What makes this triumph especially important is the fact that the strike was organized and led by Negro women.

Women also engage in the struggle against the high cost of living and are constantly to be found in the front ranks of the fighters, despite all repression and persecution.

What is also noteworthy is the participation of women in the struggle against fascism and war. This participation appears doubly important if we remember that war and fascism affect women with especial severity. Even the bourgeois and liberal women recognize the necessity of waging a struggle against war. But the problem is—by what means? The only correct answer to this question is that women must organize in a united front struggle against war and fascism, must boldly come out in support of a Farmer-Labor Party, which is the only way the fascist, war-mongering offensive of finance capital can be blocked.

WE MUST REACH THE TOILING WOMEN IN THE BOURGEOIS ORGANIZATIONS

Most American women belong to some kind of an organization—either a club, a religious group, a peace union, a patriotic or a political association, or a trade union. Most important of women's trade union organizations is the National Women's Trade Union League.

There are more women workers in the Young Women's Christian Association than there are as yet in trade unions. The religious organizations have a membership of over 400,000 women.

Church organizations bringing together large numbers of girls and women all over the country include the following: Christian Endeavour, with 4,000,000 members (young men as well as young women); Epworth Leagues of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with 612,000 members; National Council of Jewish Women, 40,000 members; the National Council of Catholic Women, with several million members organized in over 2,000 national, state and local organizations; and the Women's Christian Temperance Union, with a million members.

There are many Negro women members in the two national organizations of Negroes—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, having 100,000 members, and the smaller Urban League with branches in many centers.

Peace organizations have brought together many thousands of women, largely of the so-called middle class. Most important of these is the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which "aims at uniting women in all countries who are opposed to every kind of war, exploitation and oppression, and who work for universal disarmament and for the solution of conflicts by the recognition of human solidarity, by conciliation and arbitration, by world cooperation, and by the establishment of social, political and economic justice for all, without distinction of sex, race, class or creed."

Another important peace group is the National Conference on the Cause and Cure of War, headed by Carrie Chapman Catt.

Among general organizations, the most important are the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, with 1,727,000 members, dealing especially with problems of the schools; and the General Federation of Women's Clubs, with 2,000,000 members.

Political organizations of women include the outstanding League of Women Voters, with 36 state leagues and 500 local branches. The national political groups of women in the two old parties are the Women's National Democratic Club and the Women's National Republican Club.

Professional women have formed the National Federation of

Business and Professional Women's Clubs, especially interested in fighting the discrimination against women in teaching, in federal service and in other fields. College women are organized in the American Association of University Women, with 46,000 members.

Great numbers of young girls belong to the two outdoor organizations, the Camp Fire Girls, with 229,000 members, and the Girl Scouts with 373,000. Both of these organizations have camps during the summer and include many girls from working class as well as middle class families.

The Daughters of the American Revolution, while a professional patriotic organization potentially fascist in its national policy, nevertheless includes 147,000 members, most of them from middle class backgrounds.

Among miscellaneous organizations of importance are the various birth control groups, organizations working for social reform, such as the National Consumers' League, and the cooperatives which are increasing in strength and numbers.

It is interesting to note that a large number of followers of Father Coughlin come from starving, hopeless, and disappointed women, who are being lured by his demagogic promises.

What should be our tasks today in helping to solve the woman problem? Our main task is to win the women's organizations for the struggle for the economic and social equality of women, not only theoretically, but actually. We must organize the unorganized women. We must involve women in all activities of social life; we must make them fight against all the evils of capitalism in concrete and organized ways. We must rally them to the movement for the Anti-Fascist People's Front—the Farmer-Labor Party. We must rally them for the mass independent actions in behalf of peace and in the defence of the Soviet Union. Only a common struggle of exploited and oppressed men and women can bring the final liberation and complete freedom from the yoke of capitalism.

As Lenin said:

"The ice is broken in all corners of the world.

"The liberation of the peoples from the yoke of imperialism, the liberation of the working men and women from the capitalist yoke, is steadily advancing. This cause is being promoted by scores and hundreds of millions of working men and women in industry and agriculture. For this reason the cause of the freedom of toil from the capitalist yoke will conquer throughout the world."

Left Trends in the Socialist Party

ON THE LEFT-WING "DRAFT FOR A PROGRAM FOR THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES"

By ROBERT MINOR

(Continued from the February issue of THE COMMUNIST)

THE SOCIALIST STATE

MANY of the Left Socialists who would like to bring their Party to a genuine revolutionary Marxian program to meet the dangers of war and fascism and for the struggle for socialism are rendered ineffective, or partly so, by a basic confusion as to the character of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

This draft program of the Left Wing seems to express, not a wish to clarify, but a desire to exploit this confusion.

The writers of the draft program wish to have the Socialist Party recognize "the Soviet Union as the first workers' country in which the basis for a socialist society is being built", and to defend it "against all capitalist attacks". But at the same time they wish to have the Socialist Party say that it:

"... does not believe in the infallibility of the policies or leadership of the Soviet Union."

Since neither Lenin nor Stalin or any other rational human being, certainly no Marxist, ever believed in any infallibility, this remark of course means something else. It is just an indirect way of saying that in the present relationship of forces in a world smoldering with "a second round of revolutions and wars", the program-authors are not quite ready to take an unequivocal position; in a sharp world war situation, in which one-sixth of the world is under the flag of socialism, they cannot quite whole-heartedly choose their flag. The Socialist state, together with the oppressed three-fifths of the human race of the semi-colonial and colonial world, are now as before facing the ruthless, world-imperialist machines of Great Britain, France, the United States, Italy, etc., capable of any crime of violence and treachery to serve their own ends. At the same time, they are facing Hitler's and the Japanese imperialists' plans for *immediate* war for the subjugation of Europe and Asia and the extinction of the democratic forms of capitalist states. In this situation the dominant thought of these would-be revolutionary Marxist program-makers seems to be:

"It cannot approve the present foreign policy of the Soviet Union. . . ."

And the appeal to the oppressed of the whole world for solidarity among themselves and with the socialist state is for them an:

". . . attempted subordination of the international labor movement to that policy."

Since the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is, admittedly, a "workers' country" and has neither a capitalist class nor a landlord class, and has no industrial system in the hands of capitalists—since, therefore, it has no policy of the capitalist nationalist sort—it does not attempt the "subordination of the international labor movement" to *anything*. The failure of the authors of the draft in this respect to differentiate themselves from the Old Guard can only mean that now, as in 1914, there is even among the Left Socialists a hesitation before the duty of international revolutionary action against war and for socialist revolution. A trace of the influence of imperialist press propaganda against "red imperialism" is of course reflected here—we will say a dash of Hearst and Trotsky.

The Left Socialists' "right to criticize, in a fraternal manner", such policies as they believe "to be harmful", we look upon in a political way. As long as it remains (or as soon as it becomes) fraternal, and does not dangerously violate that revolutionary discipline in time of action that every worker knows to be strike discipline multiplied a hundred times in the revolutionary struggle for socialism, we do not object to it, and fraternal criticism can be made useful. However, when it dovetails with Hearst we must not conceal its character as an example for strikebreakers.

The Left program draft:

". . . urges that a much broader democracy be introduced into the Soviet structure . . . and that the present distortion of the proletarian dictatorship should be eliminated."

Just how broad do they wish this democracy to be? In the capitalist democracy of the United States (with 127,000,000 population) in the last national election 66,900,000 were permitted the right to vote and 39,800,000 voted. In the socialist state (with 165,000,000 population), 91,000,000 were qualified voters in 1934 and 77,000,000 voted. That is, allowing for the difference in population, the Socialist state has by far the larger percentage of eligible voters; and of the eligible voters of the United States only 59 per cent actually cast their votes in the biggest election turn-out we ever had, while in the last Soviet election 85 per cent of the 91,000,000 voters cast their ballots. Those forbidden to vote in the United States are practically all within the laboring classes—homeless workers, Negroes in

the South, all young persons under 21, and poverty-stricken farmers unable to pay a poll tax; in the Socialist state those eliminated are former tsarist policemen, priests, kulaks, and the remaining dregs of formerly dominant capitalists, nobles, and White Guard officers—in all about two and one-half per cent of the population of voting age. Which of these would our Left Socialists wish to see brought into the electorate to “broaden the democracy” of the Socialist state? More significant than mere figures is the structure of Soviet democracy, which brings the entire working population into direct participation, day to day and week to week, in the actual exercise of government power. Socialist Soviet democracy elects representatives of workers from the shops; in capitalist democracy, those elected are almost exclusively representatives of the exploiting classes. Would the comrades wish to “broaden” the democracy of the Socialist state in the sense of what we have in America, where the worker once in two years goes to the corner barber shop polling booth to put a piece of paper in a box as his only connection whatever with government? But such “democracy” would make impossible the interweaving of the whole laboring population with the day-to-day and hour-to-hour popular control and guidance of industry which is necessary to socialism; and the Left Socialists have themselves pointed out in this same draft program that “workers’ democracy . . . will be adapted to the needs and interests of the workers and farmers of the country”. But perhaps they wish only to criticize the *indirect* form of Soviet elections, the open form of voting, and the disproportionate representation allowed the industrial workers—all of which were necessary safeguards during the period of the stronger survival of capitalist elements. If so, they are doing no service to “the democracy of the poor, against the rich” or to the improvement of Marxian theory, by such proposals. And if they are talking about the present, it must be that the Socialist Left has not yet heard of the decision of the Seventh Congress of the Soviets to abolish indirect election, open balloting, and disproportionate representation, as no longer necessary. Would the Socialists not be ready now to give up this “pecking” at the socialist form of democracy, at genuine, Soviet democracy, at least enough to help us fight for democratic rights here so as to win the vote for the Negro in the South, for the disfranchised workers—and for the 8,000,000 American young people between 18 and 21 who are excluded from the ballot in the United States while the corresponding category of young workers are allowed full voting and citizenship rights in that “narrow” democracy of the Socialist state?

Where have you been sleeping, my dear Left Socialists?

These Left Socialists speak of the *only existing* dictatorship of

the proletariat as "the present distortion of the proletarian dictatorship". By what measuring-rod do you measure it, my friends? During eighteen years of the torture of civil war, famine, blockade, invasion by fifteen imperialist armies; and the painful overcoming of it all with the building of a colossal industrial state that has outstripped all the nations of Europe because it is on a superior socialist basis—these American Left Socialists have *disbelieved* in the dictatorship of the proletariat. If they have now come to believe, at least in an abstract way, in the dictatorship of the proletariat, one might expect them to take perhaps more than eighteen weeks to learn that there is no such thing as a dictatorship of the proletariat "*in general*", that there is only dictatorship of the proletariat in the *concrete*, "*as is*", and that this is the most necessary and the most magnificent of all the instruments of the labor movement, that its concrete expression is the most democratic of all states that exist or ever existed.

But time is short and war and fascism may overtake them in their hesitation. They would do much better sooner than later to face the fact that after the victory of socialism on one-sixth of the surface of the world, it is not possible successfully to appeal to workers in behalf of an *imaginary* socialism. Workers are too much realists for that. Charlatans aplenty are offering synthetic brands of "social transformation", and some of them enjoy the material advantage of heavy subsidies from fascist sources; you cannot successfully "sell" another brand of even "honest" *synthetic* socialism in competition with them.

The truth is that some of the Left Socialists are trying to synthesize certain sets of ideas, taken from the literature of socialism, with certain other ideas absorbed in the atmosphere of middle class "Labor-Liberalism". The result is that they put up against the *real* socialism that exists a totally imaginary socialism—an eclectic and therefore fruitless effort to build a social system out of the odds and ends that they have learned to *like* under the totally different conditions of capitalism. The working class is not composed of such intellectual "chemists" and certainly not *now* when it is ripe for an independent historic movement. Synthetic socialism is the typical basis for a sect, not of a mass party. What Marx said of this in 1871 is still true:

"The development of the system of socialist sects and that of the real workers' movement always stand in inverse ratio to each other. So long as the sects are (historically) justified, the working class is not yet ripe for an independent historic movement. As soon as it has attained this maturity all sects are essentially reactionary."

Let me suggest that as soon as socialism has become a living reality in one-sixth of the world, all Socialist sects are essentially

reactionary. They become subject to manipulation by the rottenest forces of reaction. Even the most elemental question of disloyalty becomes cloudy to them.

The Socialist Party will find itself in "inverse ratio" to the now rising real workers' movement if its Left wing, like its Right wing, thinks it can win the working class to a shadowy word-picture of *invented* socialism while vilifying the living socialism. Do they not know that the triumphant building of socialism in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics plays a tremendous and ever-increasing part in the present vast turning of the mind of the workers and middle class away from the blood and hunger and dirt of capitalism and toward socialism?

SOME "FRONTIER GUIDES"

In the beginning of this article I said that the program-writers gave *one side* of the reason that the socialist movement of the whole world is deeply stirred to a reconsidering of all questions of program; namely, "the defeat of the working class of Germany" with the collapse and bankruptcy of the Social-Democratic policy. But now—what of the *other side*, which they omitted?

Do these comrades really not know that the other side of the reason that they are now so deeply engaged in programmatic questions is *the successful rise of socialism* on one-sixth of the earth while misery and decay continue in capitalist countries? Georgi Dimitroff said that "the masses of the Social-Democratic workers are beginning to be revolutionized, on the one hand under the influence of the defeats suffered by the working classes in Germany, Austria, and Spain, defeats which were chiefly the result of the Social-Democratic policy of class-cooperation with the bourgeoisie"; but then he added:

"... and on the other hand under the influence of the victories of socialism in the Soviet Union which are the result of the Bolshevik policy and of the application of living revolutionary Marxism."

One cannot help asking how it happens that so tremendous a thing as the demolition of the capitalist system on one-sixth of the world's surface and its replacement by a socialist system, while recognized by these program-writers, is overlooked as a reason for revising a conflicting program. Has some one injected *method* into this madness? I am afraid so. Earlier I spoke of the reflection, in this draft program, not only of the old, but also of a new type of resistance to the living form of Marxism; and now we come to it.

This new type is of the same class origins, but develops in *new forms to meet new conditions*. It develops on the basis of conditions where the Socialist state power stands, consolidated internally, in a world of decaying, partly fascized and war-mad imperialist states

on the one hand, and a world of smaller capitalist and semi-colonial nations on the other. Internally consolidated within the Socialist territory, the consolidation of the *international* front to prevent the outbreak of war and to defeat fascism becomes the immediate decisive task of the revolution. New forms of opportunism begin objectively to reflect the interest of the bourgeoisie of large imperialist countries not only in obstructing the formation of a united front of labor in each country, but also in *isolating* the Socialist state from the proletariat of the capitalist countries and from the series of nations that are menaced by the states that are *immediately* seeking to precipitate war. Of course, the Old Guard leaders in the crudest *old way* reflect this interest of the bourgeoisie. But the new type of opportunists specializing in this function within the Left wing, and bringing more specialized skill to the task, originates in sources that were for a time outside the Socialist Party.

At this time of the upsurge of revolutionary feeling in the Socialist Party, there appears a type of volunteer guides "to revolutionary Marxism", wishing to be considered as "experts" in things pertaining to Communism, as "specialists" or, let us say, scouts or frontiersmen, knowing every foot of the no man's land that divides the Socialist Party from the Communist Party because they have traversed the ground going backwards. But comrades of the Socialist Party might well ask themselves why these "expert guides" to the healing of the breach in the revolutionary labor movement close every "Left" article with an argument *against the united front*.

Ben Gitlow writes in the *Socialist Call*, August 31, that the Russian Communist leaders:

"... are fully aware that as a result of the Franco-Soviet pact they may have to fight with France on the side of Italian fascism. Hence we have not only good governments and bad governments but good fascism and bad fascism! The Comintern can sink to no lower depths! . . .

"... The Comintern policy breaks the international front of the working class and throws worker against worker. The slogan of international socialism—Workers of the World, Unite—becomes a huge fraud. The Comintern policy disarms the workers, divides them and renders them helpless in the face of fascism and war.

"The new line of the Comintern cannot be the basis for unity in the struggle against fascism and war."

Could the debauching of the Socialist press sink to a lower level than this—even if the Old Guard were running it?

Albert Goldman, who disagreed with the Communist Party on questions of revolutionary Marxism and, to carry on his fight against it, joined the Trotskyist camp, is now camping in the Left wing of the Socialist Party to continue the fight. In opposing the Bauer

thesis on international unity on the claim that it comes too close to solidarity of Communists and Socialists and does not openly enough oppose the foreign policy of the Socialist state, Goldman writes, in disregard of the facts, that that thesis tells the workers to "help the imperialists in the next war". He implies that the Communists do not want to kindle the fires of class war, and declares that, on the contrary:

"... to defeat fascism and to defend the Soviet Union the fires of the class war must be kindled in every capitalist country." [That the workers] "will scorn to listen to those who support their own capitalist governments [meaning the Communists]."

And (though we insist that Mr. Goldman is *not* crazy) he continues—trying to confuse the Bauer thesis with the position of the Communist Party:

"The Right wing of the Socialist movement, the Communists dancing to the tune of Stalin's foreign policy, the author of the [Bauer] thesis have chosen what is essentially the same path taken by the Social-Democracy in 1914. And the revolutionary Socialists must choose the same path that was taken by Lenin and all other revolutionary Socialists. The first path led to fascism; the second to the October revolution in Russia."

Is it not clear that James Oneal could never think up such "reasons" for fighting against the international solidarity of labor and the first Socialist republic?

At a time when the Socialist republic is using its position to compel unified international action by all states to close down all supplies for Mussolini's war, and when this and the prevention of world war depend upon concerted action, Herbert Zam tries to persuade the Socialist workers that *isolated* action by the Socialist state—precisely the thing that will break up its efforts and open all other markets to Mussolini—is what is needed. Could "cleverness" be reduced to cruder sabotage than this? While the Soviet state is straining every effort to obtain the universal application of sanctions, Zam misleadingly speaks of:

"... the Soviet Union's continual sale of oil to Italy even after the application of sanctions."

These men are *opposed* to collective sanctions by a whole series of states against the war-making Mussolini, but they want the Socialist state to apply sanctions alone. Instead of shutting off fascist Italy's trade to stop war, they want to shut off Soviet Russia's trade, leaving Italy's trade untouched by any collective state action. As Earl Browder said in a recent speech, they want, not the blockade of Italy, but the blockade of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics!

Surrounded by such "Buffalo Bills", Norman Thomas throws up his hands and exclaims:

"If necessary let other nations enjoy the accursed gains of selling the tyrant Mussolini what he needs to kill his own young men in his war with Ethiopia."

But we can't agree to anything that will let Mussolini kill his own young men and those of Ethiopia. It seems to me that the revolutionary Socialists, through hard-headed working class instinct, must reject such conceptions and will come to agreement with us that the business before us is world-wide action *to prevent Mussolini's getting oil*, to bring about Mussolini's *defeat*; and that we cannot surrender this serious task in order to take a lofty moral pose.

SO WHAT OF THAT QUESTION OF THE STATE?

The draft program led off with some brave and seemingly Marxian formulations about the state. But its authors clearly fail to understand this cardinal question when it comes to the revolutionary proletarian state power, at a time when a clear understanding of it is all-decisive! In their formulations on the bourgeois state power they give none but a mechanical application, and therefore reach only defeatist attitudes, where questions of mass actions against bourgeois states are concerned; their only solution seems to be timidity, in fear that they may become opportunist. And when it comes to the state power of oppressed peoples, our authors are as kittens hesitating before a saucer of milk.

So what have they understood of the Marxian conception of state power?

COLONIES

Of the two conditions named by Lenin in his pamphlet *Socialism and War*, under which Socialists even in this imperialist epoch would give their support to one of the sides of a war between non-socialist states, I have mentioned only the hypothetical case of concerted action of states interested in maintaining existing treaties, against another imperialist power precipitating war against a weaker people. The other is the case of an oppressed nation making war against an oppressor state:

"For instance, if Morocco were to declare war against France tomorrow, or India against England, or Persia or China against [tsarist] Russia, etc., those wars would be 'just', 'defensive' wars, no matter which one was the first to attack. Every Socialist would then wish the victory of the oppressed, dependent, non-sovereign states against the oppressing, slave-holding, pillaging 'great' nations."

The draft program of the Left Socialists does not show that its

authors fully understand the great significance of this position in its relation to the world revolutionary movement. Under the heading of "Colonies" the draft contains a conventionally good statement of the revolutionary Marxian position as it would have been stated, say, twelve years ago. Covering not only colonies but also semi-colonial countries and emphasizing American imperialism, it says:

"Throughout the world, the major portion of humanity is suffering from imperialist oppression. The Socialist Party favors complete independence of all colonial people and their right to determine their own form of government."

The principle is applied very well to the Latin-American and Pacific peoples under Yankee imperialism, and cooperation with the labor movement in these oppressed countries is advocated. Further:

"Revolt in the colonies will intensify crises at home and hasten the proletarian revolution in capitalist countries."

But after this excellent observation, the whole world situation as to oppressed peoples seems to pass into the blind spot of the program-authors. To the biggest of all facts of the entire world history of "revolts of oppressed nations against their oppressors", these writers on revolutionary Marxism are stone blind. More than a decade ago began the great revolt of semi-colonial China against subjugation followed by betrayal on the part of Chiang Kai-shek, who has now become the Japanese imperialists' hired gunman against the Chinese people. But the Left Socialists have not yet heard that this has resulted in the revolt against Chiang and in the establishment of a gigantic revolutionary state of a hundred million inhabitants—four-fifths the size of the population of the United States—with a revolutionary Red army of one million men built up in victorious struggles against *six* invasions! This one fact—that a successful revolution has carved out of the center of China a colossal area of resistance to foreign imperialism—has shaken the whole imperialist world structure and caused strategic changes in the plans of all six of the greatest imperialist powers, altering alignments and changing war plans. But our revolutionary Socialist comrades have not yet heard of it, for if they had, they would know that it is impossible to write a Marxian program in 1935-36 without giving weight to this. May we hope that, after another eighteen years, they may "recognize" this world-shaking revolutionary phenomenon?

NEGRO

On the question of the Negro people's struggle for freedom the program-draft is narrow, perfunctory, sectarian, hardly differing from the old position of the Socialist Party which completely failed.

The Left Wing draft promises that the workers' and farmers' government "will bring complete equality to the Negroes in this country". To this very laudable promise, it adds:

"The Socialist Party advocates and will consistently fight for complete equality for the Negroes. It will expose and fight against all forms of discrimination against the Negroes, jim-crowism, segregation. It will campaign incessantly against lynching and for extreme punishment of all those participating in it."

This is all excellent as far as it goes. As far as the Negro in the Northern cities is concerned, if there were no South, it would be an adequate statement. But is this enough to say to those many millions of Negroes of all classes who live as a proscribed, disfranchised, doubly exploited and tortured mass in the South, who have for generations felt every white hand (within their knowledge) against them, and entire white population locally ready to hunt them down as wild beasts? The program-draft offers these masses the verbal promise to:

". . . work for the unity between white and Negro workers and farmers for a common fight against capitalism and for socialism."

But are these Negro masses quite ready to accept that verbal promise?

One of the most powerful weapons against capitalism in the revolutionary struggle will be the Negro population of the South; but do these program-makers imagine that for the ten million Negroes of the Southern Black Belt it will be so relatively simple as the struggle "for socialism"? Unity of white and Negro is the keystone of our structure; but isn't there a "little" something to consider "also"—in order to be able to mortar that keystone in place—that is, the establishing of the *voluntary* base for the Negro masses' share in this struggle? After two centuries of slavery and a half-century of segregation, exclusion from trade-unions—not to speak of burning at the stake—why be so simple as to think that the Negro in the South who has been *forced* to become a *people*, will not act as such, with a will of his own? To speak frankly rather than pleasantly, the Negro mass has deeply imbedded in its psychology a certain result of 60 years of lynching and exclusion from political, social, economic, and trade-union life; and this result is a suspicion of the good faith of *all* whites, including those of the labor movement. Promises under these circumstances are not enough; there have to be guarantees. The Negro mass has generated a will of its own. It is a will that will come as an overwhelming storm at a time when "capitalist society is plunged into chaos" (to use the language of the draft program), when "its unity disappears", when its "co-

hesiveness weakens", when "it is unable to carry on sufficient production to feed the population", when "it cannot conduct the routine work of government", when "the country is convulsed by a series of strikes, culminating in a general strike assuming a revolutionary character". Half starved Negro tenant farmers will be thinking of the *land*—and control of their own destiny.

Of course, the comrades have not in mind sending troops against the Black Belt after the manner of the British Labor Party government that sent troops against India; and therefore the comrades will have to learn that whatever the Negro masses in the U.S.A. do, during and after the revolution, will be determined freely by the Negro masses themselves. Those who have been forced to live "as Negroes" and think "as Negroes" and die "as Negroes" will, in a time of "chaos and convulsion", decide for themselves—perhaps even "as Negroes"—whether and how they will fight for socialism. Their fight against capitalism, or against the white ruling class, is a large and indispensable part of the revolution that will overthrow capitalism and establish socialism in this country. But just as their participation in the fight will be determined by themselves *en masse*, so also, will their participation (or non-participation) in a socialist state and system be determined by themselves. If this shocks and grieves the comrades program-makers, they can know that this and this alone can make possible the tremendous creative share of the Negro masses in the American proletarian revolution.

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For any Marxian it seems not at all accidental that a program that fails to grasp the significance of all questions relating to the struggles for national liberation should ignore also the questions relating to the farmers. True, the draft speaks often of the wrongs of the farmers, and speaks of a *Farmer-Labor Party*; but one is led to suspect that the authors think the American farming masses will require nothing further of a program than a "struggle for socialism". There is not one word of specific provision for the immediate demands of the millions of toilers in the farming regions.

TRADE UNION

The collapse of the Old Guard trade union policy in America, like the collapse of the Social-Democratic policy as a whole in Europe, has a great deal to do with the new movement in the Socialist Party in this country. The Old Guard's policy depended mainly upon what it called an "alliance with Labor" by which it meant an alliance with the rock-ribbed reaction represented by cer-

tain leaders in the Executive Council of the A. F. of L.—based upon the theory of control by expulsions and Red-baiting, as Louis Waldman so correctly understood when he appealed to the A. F. of L. to pass the “Red amendment”. The Old Guard built its hopes upon the theory of permanent reaction in the A. F. of L. But the biggest fact of trade union history today is that the mass of the A. F. of L. is moving rapidly away from the ground upon which the Old Guard expected to make its rendez-vous “with labor”, and the blue-print of the Old Guard’s alliance proves to be not so much *with*, as *against*, the A. F. of L.

The trade union question, therefore, is not only basic to consideration of any program, but, in the present situation, basic to the struggle in the Socialist Party. Fortunately the Left Socialists appear to see this:

“It will work for the unification of the unions into industrial unions and against union-splitting, disruption, or dual unionism; it favors the organization of the unorganized and unskilled; it opposes discrimination against Negroes, women and youth; and will champion them on all occasions. It opposes discrimination against union members or applicants because of their political beliefs. The Socialist Party recognizes and supports the American Federation of Labor as the main stream of the American labor movement, and will urge all independent trade unions and individual workers to affiliate with it.”

In another part of the draft appears the not entirely accurate statement that “in the British General Strike, as well as in the general strikes in Seattle, and Winnipeg, the trade unions assumed government power”. This inaccuracy can, with some uneasiness, be forgiven as a blunder made in transition to the correct view expressed by the draft that: “During periods of intense class struggle, the workers set up their own organs of leadership”, which “tend to assume government functions and even to replace the government”.

Instead of the “revolutionary” discovery that state functions were exercised by the trade unions in England, Seattle and Winnipeg, it is perhaps more revolutionary in effect when the draft says:

“Disciplined and unified Socialist work will eventually win the trade unions to the support of the revolutionary struggle for socialism.”

UTOPIAN REFORMIST MOVEMENTS

The program draft sees that *opposition* sentiment of the workers and discontended middle class

“. . . has supplied the basis for the rise, on the one hand, of utopian-reformist movements (Epic, Townsend) which ignore the class

struggle and spread the illusion of overcoming crises and unemployment within capitalist society; and on the other hand, of reformist-fascist movements of the Long-Coughlin type, patterned after Nazism, and laying the foundation of a complete fascist organization."

But then the comrades come to the conclusion simply that "these movements" must be "*militantly combatted*".

In regard, first, to the Townsend and Epic movements:

When a *tremendous mass movement of millions* of workers and middle-class people arises and commences struggle against certain intolerable features of the social system—is the best thing to do that you think of to "combat" it? This mass movement is the long delayed beginning of a ground-swell of social attack against the no longer endurable cruelties of decaying capitalism. Did you expect it to come out of a nicely-bound book printed by Charles H. Kerr & Company?—or is it to come out of the great American mass, a little bit sodden (though not as hopelessly as some think), with the priest-ridden and Hearst-ridden ideology of capitalism? Is their lack of clarity not accounted for precisely by the non-existence of a mass workers' political party guided by the science of Marxism? Instead of saying these movements "spread the illusion", would you not better say that their relative ineffectiveness is the *result* of the illusions of an American capitalism that has never had a mass political labor movement?

When a great mass movement arises in making demands against capitalist society, it is our business, not to "combat" it, but to *strengthen* it in its demands against capital, in its effectiveness and its volume! The Townsend and Epic movements arise out of protest against the crudest brutalities of decaying capitalism; against the casting of a quarter of the population into unemployment in a wilderness of unused machinery of production; and the condemnation of the entire working class population to slow death through starvation, automatically to begin at the age ("old at 40") when they can no longer keep up with the speeded machines of private capital. If these movements are "*not Marxian*"—arising in a vast, once prosperous America where there is no mass political party of the *class that is next due to take political power*—it is our business to *make* them Marxian in their direction and effectiveness, by building rapidly the mass Labor Party (or Farmer-Labor Party, rather) with a central core of the trade unions, and drawing these vast numbers of workers and middle-class people of the Epic and Townsend movements into *effective* action against the poverty they want to end, and for the old age pensions they strive to attain. To do this, we do not *fight* against these mass movements, but *strengthen* them. We must fight *those who oppose* a plan to use government power to

re-open the closed factories, those who *oppose* a movement for unstinted pensioning of the aged.

Have we something in common with a mass movement that seeks to compel the payment of substantial old-age pensions? Yes; their *objective* is what we have in common with them; that is the big thing. Or, we can, if we prefer, emphasize that which *distinguishes us from* this mass movement; the fact that as Marxists and representatives of the interests of the working class, we *cannot accept* the sales tax and inflation (which would rob the masses) which their spokesmen propose as the means with which to accomplish their objective. By taking *this* as the "decisive" characteristic of the old-age pension movement, we *can* find an excuse to stay away from it. I think an aphorism of Marx would help to explain the matter:

"The sect sees the justification for its existence and its 'point of honor'—not in what it has in *common* with the class movement but in the *particular shibboleth* which *distinguishes* it from it."

I think we can and should place the decisive emphasis upon what we have *in common* with both the Epic and the Townsend movements, and *change* the dangerous misconceptions as to how their objectives can be attained, which would otherwise lead to their defeat.

Certainly, illusions that are the result of the absence of a mass workers' political party must be overcome. But, in a country where the national income can be multiplied five times on the basis of existing means of production (American national income can be increased from \$60,000,000,000 to \$300,000,000,000 per year with the social use of the means of production), is it really necessary for us to join the reactionary Mark Sullivan and the Liberty League in arguing that the Townsend scale of old-age pensions "cannot" be realized because the necessary \$20,000,000,000 would be "one-third" of the national income? Remembering that the Townsendites offer their plan as an *ultimate* solution, is it necessary for us to withhold the fact that, not only \$200 per month, but much more than is expressed in that sum, can be realized for the aged of our country? If we show these millions of the Townsendites how to prevent the parasite class from *reducing the workers' \$200 to two hundred dimes by inflation*, or to prevent the thwarting of their whole purpose by placing the burden upon the exploited classes by the sales tax, this will be not "combatting" the present great mass movement for old-age pensions, but strengthening it. We must place clearly in the Epic clubs the question of the Labor Party and the road to power of the working class; with the Marxian program "to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to establish democracy", and to "use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from

the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state" and to "increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible". Then we will not be "combatting" the Epic clubs, but by making united front with them to compel action by the state to reopen closed factories, we will be replacing the "socialized junk-shop" theory in the Epic clubs and bring to them a colossal *strength* that will prevent the calamity of their frittering away and leaving a residue of cynical, declassed elements for the use of fascist organizers.

As to the Coughlin and Long movements, is it possible that the program-drafters think that an approach to, and contact with, the working class and middle class elements in these movements, to win them away from fascist leaders, would be "ideological and organizational flirtation with fascism"?

UNITED FRONT

This draft program would seem to be a vital and serious contribution when it proposes to say for the Socialists of America:

"Considering united action by the workers essential, the Socialist Party favors the united front of all labor organizations, political, economic, fraternal, for the purpose of achieving immediate aims, and of developing labor solidarity. To be effective a united front must base its roots in the organized labor movement."

There could be absolutely nothing more true, more important or more correctly said, than this. But later it says:

"A formal united front, representative of different political views, but without the organized workers, is futile."

What is referred to here is obviously not a "formal united front" in the sense of being *purely* formal; what is meant here is a united front to be entered into by agreement between the two political parties in the labor movement, the Socialist and Communist Parties. The preceding statement, that "to be effective, a united front must base its roots in the organized labor movement", is absolutely correct. But *then* this correct idea is debased into the notion that the two political parties that claim leadership of the workers must not agree to try to lead the workers to unity in the organized labor movement—*until after the wished-for unity of action in the organized labor movement shall have been achieved!*

Is this not somewhat in the nature of abdication of leadership? Or is it a distorted notion of "united front from the bottom" which our Socialist comrades have so long misunderstood and complained of as coming from the Communists? Or, could it be a version of the idea of the Green faction in the A. F. of L. or of the Oneal-

Waldman camp—their idea of the united front as expressed in their Labor Party proposal—the idea that we should have the Labor Party “when labor wants it”? Is there not a little of abdication and a touch of “tail-ism” in it, when our comrades say:

“The essential function of the united front is to promote the action of the working class. Therefore, while favoring united action of all sections and tendencies in the labor movement, the Socialist Party will give first consideration to the need for united action supported by the organized labor movement.”

The function of the revolutionary political party of the working class requires it to be the *vanguard*, not the *rear guard*. Otherwise, what *is* its function?—to prevent unity against fascism, as the German Social-Democratic Party did?

Of course, the united front would be a sham and a farce if it were a private agreement between two handfuls of leaders without the knowledge of the masses, and did not become a living series of actions in the shops, the trade unions, and on the streets—those points among the masses where *alone* any action *can* be carried out. (A united front is united *action*, or it is nothing.) If our Socialist comrades wish to say that formal agreements should not take place “at the top” between leaders of the two parties, without contemplating some basis of approach to united action among the workers and especially in the trade unions—then we could agree with them. But has not such a basis of approach to united action been established? What of the furriers’ union? What of the shoe workers? What of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel & Tin Workers? The automobile workers? The rubber workers? What of the storm that is sweeping through the unions and the United Mine Workers and that has created the powerful movement for industrial unionism in connection with the determination to organize the five-sixths of the workers who are not organized?

Do not these Socialist comrades know that the most *real* thing in the American labor movement today is precisely this terrific urge toward unity, and that this urge is exactly *why* they now feel impelled to get out a draft program? Do they not know that a lack of agreement for action of the Communist and Socialist Parties is an *active* process of maintaining *disunity*, and that an agreement between these parties would by its mere *example* stimulate and draw into action vast forces as yet hardly suspected of existing?

We could exchange some of these fine words for action.

INTERNATIONALISM AND PARTY UNITY

The draft makes an excellent statement on “internationalism”. It would have the Socialist Party recognize “that the class struggle

is an international struggle", that "the workers have no community of interest with the capitalists of their own country", and promises to work for "an effective revolutionary and united Socialist International". Further:

"The revolutionary Socialist movement was split by the war and has remained divided into two main camps ever since. This division has been very harmful to the working class, and has resulted in increased warfare between the Socialist and Communist movements. The creation of a single united International would be of inestimable value to the Socialist and labor movements, and we will work toward that goal.

". . . however, that unity can be valuable and effective only if it is finally based upon revolutionary Marxism, and this finds expression in democratic procedure inside the united movement."

But, may we add, this organic unity is possible only if *first* we begin to cooperate in *action*, in a united front against the menace of fascism and war. Otherwise, how can we eliminate the *necessity* for the division that had to be made in 1914 in order to enable the revolutionists to struggle against war?

* * *

The promise of the draft program to support the formation of an American Labor Party (which will, in fact, take the name of Farmer-Labor Party), "based primarily on the labor unions, and . . . backed by mass organizations of unemployed, farmers and middle class", would hold a bright prospect—if those who write words were only willing to perform deeds accordingly.

* * *

The Old Guard lives by forging for itself false certificates of "orthodox Marxism" to cover its counter-revolutionary anti-Socialist role. As for the Left wing, Norman Thomas once said, more honestly: "I am not an orthodox Marxist."

But life is "an orthodox Marxist", my friends, and many of the difficulties you are having with life today are due to your not understanding this. Revolutionary Marxism calls, not for weasel words, but for action, for unity of the working class in action.

Communism for Americans

A REVIEW OF EARL BROWDER'S
*WHAT IS COMMUNISM?**

By V. J. JEROME

THE weapon of proletarian theory has from the first been beaten sharp on the anvil of proletarian practice. The immortals who formulated the basic principles of revolutionary guidance for the working class fashioned them under fire. Thus it was with Marx and Engels, with Lenin and Stalin; thus it has been with every spokesman worthy of being called their disciple. It becomes especially necessary to emphasize this today, in the "Marxian vogue" arising from the growing authority of the Communist Party and the increasing popularity of the Soviet Union. But yesterday shunned or derided by the scribes of the class enemy, Marxism now finds itself courted by bourgeois professors and penmen, who seek to conduct it away from the class struggle, into the calm of cloisters and ivy-clad walls. It is of such "Marxists" that Lenin wrote:

"They omit, obliterate, and distort the revolutionary side of its teaching, its revolutionary soul; they push to the foreground and extol what is, or seems, acceptable to the bourgeoisie."

And it is in refutation of such "Marxism" that the book *What Is Communism?* has been newly offered to the American working class by the general secretary of the Communist Party, Earl Browder.

What impresses one at the outset in examining this book is that a class is speaking—the working class, through its political leader, the Party. The book pulsates with dynamic American contemporaneity. It voices a rising challenge to the die-hard Liberty Leaguers with their shibboleths of "Americanism"; to the New Deal with its cant of the "forgotten man"; to the false prophets of reactionary utopias; to reformist labor chieftains who would bar the way to independent political action by labor; to the Old Guard traducers of Socialism; to near-fascists, fascists, and war lords.

But this devastating criticism of reaction is penetrated with the positive principles of Communism. Against the chaos of the capitalist crisis—its unemployment, its mass misery, its wars—we are shown the actuality of planned production: a place for each to function and contribute; economic plenty and cultural enhancement; an abiding, granite policy of peace. Confronting the decaying, brutalized, and desperate old world of capitalism, arises the living struc-

* Vanguard Press, New York, 1936; 249 pp., \$2; paper-covered ed. 50c.

ture of Socialism in the Soviet new world—an indictment and an example.

Neither dogmatic nor pragmatic, neither prescribing hypotheses as truths nor reducing all grasp of truth to hypothesis until “after the event”, Marxism-Leninism is a valid guide to action. For it is the generalized embodiment of the experiences of the proletariat throughout all the rising gradations of its struggles. Marxist-Leninist in the classic sense, Comrade Browder’s book proceeds to set forth the truths of Communism through examining under the Marxist-Leninist searchlight the experiences of the American working class in its day-to-day struggles around immediate issues and demands, in order to chart for the workers—for all the laboring people, the specific course of action needful in this hour, to lead them out of the crisis of capitalism, with victory theirs.

And the course that is charted is not a fairyland short-cut of utopianism, traversed with seven-league boots. It is a hard road, a road beset with obstacles, a road of zigzag processes, a road of struggle for every inch. The battle for bread, for clothing, and housing; the gathering movement for unemployment and social insurance; the fierce struggle in the trade unions for industrial unionism, for rank-and-file initiative and democratic control; the defense of the right to strike and organize, the right of assembly and free speech; the struggle against white ruling class oppression of the Negro people; the militant guardianship of the democratic rights and civil liberties, encroached upon by the fascist offensive in this country; the elemental urge of the masses for peace, developing into independent actions—such is the stuff the dream of Communism is made of.

And through these struggles around daily issues the great purpose, the Communist ideal, penetrates like a seam of gold the dross of capitalist conditions.

How valuable is the lesson to be derived from Comrade Browder’s method of permeating the particular with the general, the immediate with the ultimate! In our efforts to avoid the millennial blue-print of a Bellamy, we too often fail to give the inquiring, perplexed masses a glimpse of the social order which will arise at the end of the road we are asking them to take.

How necessary it is for us to remember that, in the classic programmatic documents of Marxism-Leninism—the *Communist Manifesto*, the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, the *Program of the Communist International*—the discussion of contemporary issues, of strategy and tactics, not only proceeds toward the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the classless society, but the nature of the Communist society is set forth.

How else can we illumine the goal and give zeal to the struggle toward it?

Our Party has of late made a good beginning in the direction of popularizing the slogan *Soviet power!* By publishing the *Soviet America* pamphlet series, it has shown to cross sections of the American toiling population, if only in bare outline, what their working and living conditions will be in a Soviet U.S.A.

But the path-blazer in this direction, and the document which has nothing to equal it for eloquence and suasion in the political literature of our Party, is the *Manifesto of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.*,* drafted by Comrade Browder and adopted by the Eighth Convention of the Party, in April, 1934.

The Manifesto's analysis and exposure of the sham panacea of the New Deal leads the way to the exposition of the logical necessity for the revolutionary way out, which has its example in the Soviet Union, and is realizable through the ripeness of the material pre-conditions for socialism, obtaining in this country.

The document then devotes a section to what a workers' government would do. In words that should be made to reach the ears of the millions for whom they are intended, the section begins:

"The first acts of such a revolutionary workers' government would be to open up the warehouses and distribute among all the working people the enormous unused surplus stores of food and clothing. . . .

"Unemployment and social insurance would immediately be provided for all, to cover all loss of work due to causes outside the control of the workers, whether by closing of factories, by sickness, old age, maternity, or otherwise, at full wages without special costs to the workers. . . ."

With its concreteness and directness of appeal, and with its presentation of the new order as something palpable and meaningful in terms of specific mass needs, the *Manifesto* has in the two years of its circulation brought our Party thousands upon thousands of followers. It has served widely as an antitoxin to the demagogic promises of the sundry fascistic camp leaders. Manifestly, it is our clear duty to make the *Manifesto* the Communist primer of every working class household.

* * *

Earl Browder's book exposes as a viciously deceitful defense mechanism the American ruling class propaganda that Marxism-Leninism is a stranger within the gate. Certainly, the work of this foremost spokesman of the Communist Party leaves no room for any contention that Communism is a transplantation from an alien

* Reprinted entire in the Appendix in the book under review.

soil. The international principles of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin are here shown to be inherent in the grain of the American revolutionary and progressive tradition—in the grain of Americanism at its best. The book opens significantly with the chapter entitled, "Who Are the Americans?" This chapter rings with the force of the notable declaration of George Dimitroff that the internationalism of Communism has nothing in common with national nihilism. No one in the Communist Party of the U.S.A. has emphasized this principle so eloquently, with such pioneer fervor, as Comrade Browder. *What Is Communism?* presents the American workers' love of country as being in accord with the principle of proletarian internationalism. Such attachment to the American land arises out of the very conflict against chauvinist nationalism and imperialist patriotism. It arises out of the revolutionary struggle against the Kautskyan Old Guard social-patriotism which virtually gives up the wealth of this land to the lords of the old order. It arises out of the Bolshevik resoluteness in the consciously justified struggle of the workers and farmers for the world that is theirs to gain. "The workingmen have no country," of the *Communist Manifesto*, does not mean that the workingmen must turn their backs upon the country enriched by their toil. On the contrary, and this is in essence what Earl Browder teaches, the words of Marx and Engels mean a challenge, a spur to the working class, to struggle and achieve for themselves the fatherland. This is the lesson of Lenin's and Stalin's leadership of the Russian toilers, which achieved for the first time in history a real fatherland, not only for the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, but for the laboring masses of the entire world.

The fatherland once gained for the American workers and farmers will not only mean that the American laboring masses will at last have come into their own, but the frontiers of the already existing fatherland of the world workers will include a new land, a land of continental size.

The will to achieve this fatherland cannot come out of the political indifferentism of national nihilism. The goal of the working class is real, material. It is land, fields, prairies, mines, rivers, railroads, factories, storehouses, shops, offices, homes. The structures set up by the workers' hands are, in the light of history, meant to be their own. Therefore, the class consciousness which teaches the proletariat to behold the minutest events in their historic light teaches them to look constantly upon the goal—the American land and all that is in it: to will it, to move toward it, to demand it.

And so, hurling the lie in the teeth of the Hearsts and the Hearstlings of all brands who demagogically stigmatize Communism as un-American, Comrade Browder proclaims:

"We love our country. Our affection is all the more deep in that we have watered it with the sweat of our labor—labor which made this country what it is; our mothers nourished it with the tears they shed over the troubles and tragedies of rearing babies in a land controlled by profit and profit-makers. If we did not love our country so much, perhaps we would surrender it to Wall Street?"

Love of country means for Communism, centrally, love of the creators of the country's material and cultural wealth. It means faith in the capacities and historic world-transforming role of the working class; it means faith in the past, present, and future of the masses; it means seeing the shoot struggling beneath the sod upward toward the sun; it means seeing the process towards eventual liberation even in the most rudimentary, distorted, and negative expressions of the class struggle, from its earliest phases. It means seeing in 1776, not only the release of the new progressive bourgeois class destined to economic and political supremacy during an epoch, but also the advent of newer social forces that will further the struggle when the enthroned bourgeoisie seeks to stem it—preparing the stage of a new, a higher revolution.

Earl Browder answers the apologists of the present order who wish to mummify the revolution of 1776 and the Civil War of 1861 in the sealed shrines of a remote past. Communism makes manifest that this nation was cradled in revolution, that the program of the Communist Party is not directed toward something alien to the American people, but that the slogan for the overthrow of capitalism is in genuine American terms the slogan for the fulfillment of what was begun a hundred and sixty years ago. Against those who wish to drape upon their counter-revolutionary carcasses the revolutionary traditions of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln, Earl Browder declares:

"Our American giants of 1776 were the 'international incendiaries' of their day. They inspired revolutions throughout the world. The Great French Revolution, the reverberations of which filled Europe's ears during the entire nineteenth century, took its first steps under the impulse given by the American Revolution. The Declaration of Independence was for that time what the *Communist Manifesto* is for ours. Copy all the most hysterical Hearst editorials of today against Moscow, Lenin, Stalin; substitute the words America, Washington, Jefferson; and the result is an almost verbatim copy of the diatribes of English and European reactionary politicians in the closing years of the eighteenth century against our American founding fathers. Revolution was then 'an alien doctrine imported from America' as now it is 'imported from Moscow'."

With the challenge of a leader who knows that history is with his army, Earl Browder speaks:

"The revolutionary tradition is the heart of Americanism. . . .

We Communists claim the revolutionary traditions of Americanism. We are the only ones who consciously continue those traditions and apply them to the problems of today.

"We are the Americans, and Communism is the Americanism of the twentieth century."

In reclaiming the revolutionary tradition from the spider-scripts spun about them by the bourgeois historians, Communism does not, however, fall into the fallacy of mechanical historic parallelism. History is a dynamic process, ever changing social forces in ever changing socio-economic milieus.

Historical materialism rejects the mystical notion of eternal recurrence and social metempsychosis which leads to the verdict: thus it was and thus it shall be. Marx warned against this false historicism in discussing the borrowings by bourgeois revolutions from the traditions of antiquity:

"The awakening of the dead in those revolutions therefore served the purpose of glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old; of magnifying the given tasks in imagination, not of fleeing back from their solution in reality; of finding once more the spirit of revolution, not of making its ghost walk again."

Earl Browder, therefore, differentiates the revolutionary heritage of Communism from those who, professing to revere the revolutionary traditions of America, turn their eyes only to the past. We claim the right to the tradition of the American revolution. "That does not mean, of course," warns Browder, "that we Communists raise the slogan of 'Back to 1776'." "The Americanism of the twentieth century" is the *new* revolutionary Americanism—the proletarian revolutionary Americanism. As the *Manifesto of the C.P.U.S.A.* declares:

"The 'principle' which must provide the foundation of the 'new government' mentioned in the Declaration of Independence is, in 1934, the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat; the new form is the form of the workers' and farmers' councils—the Soviet power. The 'new guards for their future security', which the workers must establish, are the installing of the working class in every position of power, and the dissolution of every institution of capitalist class rule."

Comrade Browder's emphasis on American revolutionary tradition can in no way give comfort to those "friends" of Communism who demur at our presenting the Soviet Union as the inspiration of the American workers and farmers in the course of their struggle. A recent letter addressed to our Party by one who describes himself as feeling "a certain bond of sympathy with those who are engaged in the work of the New Revolution", speaks of "the almost servile allegiance which, by implication at least, has been paid to the Soviet

Union"; and the inquirer desires to know why we do not "put the movement upon a strictly American basis". The inquirer, and all those who share this opinion, simply fail to comprehend the international significance of the October Revolution and the Soviet Union. Some may be blinded by propaganda to the effect that the Soviet Union is merely a historic accident or a peculiarly racial or geographic phenomenon that can have no bearing upon a largely Anglo-Saxon people in the Western Hemisphere. What they fail to see is that the overthrow of tsarism in Russia was the revolution of *a section of the modern world working class* against *a section of the world exploiting class*; that the revolutionary overthrow, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the state form of Soviets, and the building of the socialist society, are but the opening of the way for the workers of the rest of the world to follow in the direction of socialism and the classless society. It is well for them to realize that in the same manner in which the Greek word *democracy* and the Latin word *republic* have been received into the lexicon of all the peoples, so the word *soviet*, once exclusively Russian, has now conquered its way into the language of the oppressed throughout the world. This is proved by the Soviet districts of China which embrace a population of 100,000,000; by the Soviets which were set up in the revolutionary upheavals following the World War in Hungary, Bavaria, Latvia, and Finland; by the Soviets established by the heroic Asturians in the recent revolution in Spain; by the Soviets set up in the revolutionary upsurge in Cuba and Brazil; it is proved today by the resounding cry "*Les Soviets partout!*" which can be heard in the street demonstrations of the Popular Front in France; by the advance that the Soviet idea is making into the consciousness of the American masses—the specter of Communism which causes the American ruling class to tremble.

No, the American revolutionary tradition that Earl Browder champions is no Monroe Doctrine Americanism. *What Is Communism?* points boldly to the achievements of the Soviet Union and declares to the American workers and farmers:

"Its victories are an unending source of inspiration and encouragement to the toiling masses of every country. They are the living example of the possibility of finding a way out of the crisis in the interests of the toilers. The experience of the victorious workers of the Soviet Union before, during and after the seizure of power, throw a brilliant light showing the path which must be followed in every land, the path of Bolshevism, of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin."

* * *

The enemies of Communism delight in painting proletarian inter-

nationalism as a blanket policy that takes no cognizance of national and local peculiarities. Marxism-Leninism time and again has affirmed in its theoretical and programmatic writings, and demonstrated in constant practice, that internationalism spells the international unity of the program and strategy of the world proletariat, which takes into account the diversity of conditions and the concrete peculiarities in the various countries. Leninism, however, does not set up national peculiarities as the main basis of the activity of the Communist Party in a given land. Such a position would mean the denial of the general features of capitalism, common throughout the capitalist world, and would set up ultra-peculiar or "exceptionalist" countries exempt from the general laws of motion of capitalist society—as the Lovestoneites attempted to do. The national peculiarities must be reckoned with—but in secondary degree, in relationship to the application of the general revolutionary principles. In the words of Comrade Stalin: "Specific features are only supplementary to the general features."

On the other hand, Communism rejects the national nihilism Comrade Dimitroff warned against—the refusal to recognize national peculiarities, a course which must lead to sterility and sectarianism, to isolating the Party from the masses. It is a fundamental of Leninism that the international principle requires a national manner of application.

Comrade Browder's book well illustrates this tenet.

The chapter, "A Special Kind of Depression", demonstrates the specific features which mark the operation in the U.S.A. of the peculiar protracted depression amidst the general crisis of capitalism, which Comrade Stalin characterized as "a depression of a special kind"; the chapter shows conclusively wherein this depression, notwithstanding all the "recovery" expedients of Wall Street, can offer no way to a new period of "prosperity" in the United States.

The chapter, "Fascism: American Brand", takes as its theme the specific American manifestations of the fascizing process in the present offensive of reaction throughout the capitalist world. Warning against the tendency to understate the fascist danger in this country, Comrade Browder points out that American fascism in its incipency, aware of the anti-fascist mood of the American masses, seeks to differentiate itself from the European brand by raising slogans that are ostensibly against fascism, such as: against foreign importations of fascism and communism! The chapter proceeds to show how, playing upon this demagogic pipe, ultra-reactionaries like Hearst seek to make the rise of Communist activity appear responsible for the fascist danger.

This is pre-eminently the technique of Father Coughlin. In a discerning chapter entitled "Priest or Politician", Comrade Browder identifies certain features which the semi-fascist priest has in common with the Liberty League camp:

"The main enemy, all of them shout, is Communism, Socialism, Marxism, foreign ideas. If we don't crush these influences, they say, then fascism is inevitable. Thus they attempt to introduce fascism under the banner of the struggle against fascism. Their fight to destroy democracy is carried out under the slogan of the defense of American democracy. The right of the capitalists to sabotage production is defended by attacking Roosevelt's attempt to organize that sabotage through the government. Trade unionism is attacked by identifying it with the bureaucratic excesses of the reactionary wing of the A. F. of L. leadership. Company unionism is promoted in the name of freedom for all working men. Culture, science, education are to be protected from subversive influences by a regime of loyalty oaths and witch-hunting. Americanism and love of country are prostituted to the vilest chauvinism, to the service of reactionary domestic and foreign policy. American isolation is used to mask brazen support of fascism abroad."

Herein lies the great peril for the American masses. And Comrade Browder sounds the warning that, with the present restiveness of the American population in a situation which begets alongside of unabating misery anxiety for a way out, "the door is open, not only to struggles against the capitalists . . . but also to a mobilization of the masses against their own interests". For who will discount the powerful resources and demagogic propaganda agencies which the Liberty League monopoly capitalists have at their disposal:

* * *

How shall the hydra-headed menace of fascism and war be answered?

Through applying the principles of guidance formulated by the World Party of the proletariat at its Seventh Congress to the specific conditions obtaining in the U.S.A.; by working for the establishment of the proletarian united front and of the anti-fascist people's front, in its American form—the Farmer-Labor Party.

This, Comrade Browder sets forth, is today the central tactic of Communism. It is the tactic of cutting the American working class loose from its lingering subservience to the bourgeois parties; of promoting its independent political action; of bringing about its unification, on the basis of which it can rally the broad masses of non-proletarian toilers into alliance, under its hegemony, in the struggle for the revolutionary way out of the capitalist crisis.

Hence, the present flux of the masses, notwithstanding obvious

yieldings on their part to the recent brands of utopist cure-alls, must be viewed in the light of the opportunity it offers for the formation of a people's front. This is how Earl Browder approaches such movements as the Utopians, the Epics, and the Townsendites—by stressing their positive possibilities. He is thus enabled to show how we can attract the mass following of the Townsend movement, who sincerely desire social insurance, though that be at present of a certain category, into the movement for unemployment and social insurance in the broad aspects expressed in the Frazier-Lundeen Bill. He is enabled to show how we can save such movements as the Townsendites and the Epics from becoming stamping grounds for reactionary imposters; from becoming, against their will, the social base of fascism; and how we can establish a common denominator for united action with them in the anti-fascist Farmer-Labor Party.

Likewise, the strong desire for peace that is present in the masses. *What Is Communism?* warns against allowing the peace sentiments of the American masses to be exploited either by the neutrality demagogy of the war-maneuvering Hearsts and Coughlins, on the one hand, or of the Roosevelt foreign policy on the other. "Neutrality" and "isolation"—as history has proved with such cost to the laboring masses!—are but utopian snares into war. Comrade Browder points to the danger of the policy adopted by the 55th American Federation of Labor Convention of translating the anti-war sentiment of the membership into endorsement of the Roosevelt "neutrality" policy, which, as everyone knows, has not prevented shipments of munitions to Mussolini, while it has prevented the Ethiopian people from procuring arms for its defense.

The book also takes to task the "isolationism" of Norman Thomas. It establishes against the pacifist implications of that position the logic of the revolutionary principle advanced by the Soviet Union of the *indivisibility of peace* and the *definition of the aggressor*, as a basis for promoting *collective security*. It makes clear that this principle is the only basis for the independent peace actions of the American masses in conjunction with the efforts of the peace forces in every country and that there can be no effective struggle in behalf of peace which does not include the task of supporting the Soviet peace policy and defending the Soviet Union.

* * *

In dealing with the Socialist Party, Earl Browder is guided by this central motive of achieving unity of action, leading to the political unity of the American working class; of giving to the people's front party the proletarian Socialist-Communist backbone of

the united front. In that succinct, yet comprehensive chapter, "The Split in the Socialist Party", he traces the course of classic Social-Democracy from the period of the inevitable historic split to the present moment, when the Left-radicalization in the Socialist ranks and the growing movement for common action between the two parties open prospects for organic unity. In urging the united front, Comrade Browder, standing on the firm position of Marxism-Leninism, does not slur over the programmatic differences in principle between the Parties of the Comintern and those of the Second International. He takes the position that Lenin took when, in the interests of proletarian unity, he declared on the eve of the Bolshevik split from Menshevism: "Before we unite, let us first draw lines of demarcation."

But the differences in program, the book makes clear, should not stand in the way of common action in behalf of the concrete issues of the day; on the contrary, the very existence of these differences makes the united front a necessity. And it will be the common action which will re-unite the Socialist movement—this time, on the basis of revolutionary Marxism.

In the words of Earl Browder:

"We are coming to the end of that period, which began with the betrayal by the leaders of the Second International in the World War, and the rise of the Third International on the basis of the Russian revolution, the period of the world-wide split in the Socialist movement. We are entering the period which will witness the healing of this split, a period which was begun by the final victory of socialism in the Soviet Union.

* * *

What Is Communism? is the product of a period that marks the maturing of a new phase in the life of the American toilers—the turn toward independent political action. In this historical moment the Communist Party, through its leader, Earl Browder, presents to all the exploited and downtrodden of America a rallying program for closed ranks in the coming great struggles for genuine emancipation.

Earl Browder's book is the authoritative answer to the question: Which way out for the American people?

What Is Communism? is fascinating in its readability. It is written with a clarity, directness, and persuasive power that make the word of the Party accessible to the widest social reaches. One can hear the voice; one can almost see the gesture now and then. Earl Browder writes as he speaks; those who have heard him will consider this high praise.

For a Powerful United A. F. of L.

(Statement of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of the U.S.A.)

A STRUGGLE of the greatest importance to the entire American working class is now taking place within the American Federation of Labor around the issues of industrial unionism. In this struggle, the Communist Party stands firmly on the side of those progressive forces which are fighting for industrial unionism. Throughout its existence, the Communist Party fought for the organization of the working class into industrial unions. In this work, it carried on the best traditions of the progressive forces in the American labor movement, which have fought for industrial unionism ever since the rise of large-scale trustified industry.

That this issue has now become of primary importance and is agitating millions of organized and unorganized workers in the United States and Canada, that it is championed even by people who once fought the Communist Party on this and other issues, is only proof of the far-sightedness and correctness of the Communist program and tactics. The Communist Party welcomes this development in the direction of industrial unionism, which shows that the American workers are taking an important step forward. We believe that their experiences and the work of the Communist Party will also very quickly convince these workers, and, we hope, many of their leaders, that the fight for industrial unionism must go hand in hand with the fight for a powerful party of labor and the farmers—a Farmer-Labor Party.

ORGANIZE THE THIRTY-FIVE MILLION UNORGANIZED WORKERS

At the last convention of the American Federation of Labor, representatives of some of the most important unions in the country—especially the United Mine Workers of America, pointed out very clearly what we Communists have always stressed, namely, that unions based on the present craft unions cannot organize the millions of unorganized workers in the basic mass production industries. *The issue of industrial unionism is therefore fundamentally the issue of organizing the thirty-five million unorganized workers.* Those trade union leaders, who stubbornly refuse to modernize the organizational

structure and policies of the A. F. of L. so that it can meet the needs of trade union organization in the giant industries of the big trusts, are in reality refusing to organize the unorganized.

They wish to continue the split in the working class which keeps tens of millions of workers out of the A. F. of L. Such policies help the big capitalists who fight all attempts of the working class to organize, and aid in driving masses of workers into the company unions. *This split* in the working class drives down wages and makes worse the working conditions of all toilers, not only of the unorganized and unskilled workers, but also of the organized and skilled. Instead of united action by the working class against its common enemy, there is the forced competition of worker against worker.

The reactionary trade union leaders—the Wolls, Whartons and Hutchesons and their Man Friday, William Green, who fight against the development of industrial unionism—are fighting against the organization of the unorganized and are thus perpetuating everything that is backward and narrow in the labor movement. Like true reactionaries, they attack the best interests of the labor movement in the name of “the holiness of charter rights”. In these actions they are imitating the reactionary role of the Supreme Court, which in the name of “constitutional rights” says that the government does not have the right to give any help to the distressed masses, although these same judges do not think it “unconstitutional” when this same government spends billions to swell the profits of the rich.

These reactionary trade union leaders, faced with the growing challenge of the workers to their policy, are resorting to an old trick. It is they who shout—Split! They who are the real wreckers and splitters appeal to the workers in the name of unity to abandon their fight for industrial unionism. Everywhere, the reactionary forces are coming to the aid of these bankrupt bureaucrats. The “Old Guard” in the Socialist Party is no longer able to sit on both chairs. It can no longer cover up its retreat in the name of unity as contained in Algernon Lee’s statement in the *New Leader*: “There is nothing sacred about the form of organization.” It is now openly demanding surrender to the craft union policies, echoing the charge that “the miners are creating a split in the labor movement” and threatening Lewis that “unless he desists from this attitude, he may find himself alone”.

That the issue of industrial unionism involves the fundamental problem of organizing the unorganized is just a mere trifle, something of no importance to these apologists for the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. These “labor bourbons” are not concerned with the fact that without organizing the unorganized we cannot beat back

the fascist drive of the reactionary Liberty Leaguers and Hearsts.

During the last two weeks, there have been two important gatherings—the meeting of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. and the National Convention of the U.M.W.A.—which have further clarified the issue and emphasized the tasks of those who really wish to build a powerful labor movement in the United States.

The Executive Council, refusing to listen to the demands of millions of trade unionists, for the adoption of industrial union policies, has taken additional steps to cripple the fight to organize the unorganized and to build industrial unions in the mass production industries. The Council demanded the liquidation of the Committee for Industrial Organization. They refused a national charter to 30,000 radio workers organized in federal locals, giving jurisdiction over these workers to the international union of electrical workers. They ordered skilled workers and even whole locals in the auto industry to be turned over to the machinists' union. They ordered the Brewery Workers' Union to turn over whole sections of its membership to the teamsters' union.

THE SAILORS' UNION

In line with these splitting policies, the bureaucrats at the head of the International Seamen's Union, meeting in Washington at their national convention just at the time the A. F. of L. Council made these decisions, revoked the charters of the "Sailors' Union of the Pacific". They did this because the seamen had joined with other maritime unions in creating the Pacific Coast Maritime Federation—which, although not an industrial union, is a way of achieving united action by the workers in the entire industry—in order to present a common front and conduct a common fight against the ship owners. These bureaucrats, collaborating with the shipowners, are attempting to disrupt all the marine unions on the Pacific Coast. If their disruptive attempt is successful, they would weaken the entire trade union movement on the Pacific Coast, as well as the unions in the marine industry throughout the country.

We have here a very clear picture of the splitting policy of the Executive Council. It is a policy of division, of "rule or ruin". The results of this splitting policy were also glaringly seen in the recent strike of the motor products workers in Detroit. There a representative of the Executive Council, Francis Dillon, as a result of his opposition to industrial unionism and democracy within the union, finally resorted to open strikebreaking, thus discrediting the A. F. of L. instead of uniting all auto workers into a strong industrial union within the A. F. of L.

AGAINST THE RANK AND FILE

All these decisions mean that the Executive Council has issued a declaration of war against the interests of the rank and file of the industrial unions, as well as those of the rank and file of the entire trade union movement. These decisions serve only the interests of the open-shoppers and the most arrogant reactionary groups in the country. They must be resisted to the utmost by all those who wish to fight for the interests of the workers.

The National Convention of the United Mine Workers of America unanimously decided to fight this arrogant challenge of the Executive Council. We welcome this decision which our adherents in the convention supported.

The action of the A. F. of L. Executive Council in delivering an ultimatum to the U.M.W.A. Convention, demanding the dissolution of the Committee for Industrial Organization, constitutes a threat to split the American trade union movement, as seen in the seamen's union. Should the A. F. of L. Council succeed in this attempt, it would divide the ranks of the workers, in the face of advancing capitalist reaction, and thereby encourage the exploiters of labor to intensify their attacks upon the working class. It would jeopardize the progress of the industrial union movement and the organization of the unorganized.

A STRUGGLE FOR ALL WORKERS

The Communist Party calls upon the rank and file workers everywhere to defeat the Executive Council splitters, not by capitulating to them, as the "Old Guard" Socialists propose, but by isolating them, and thus achieve a united American Federation of Labor upon the basis of industrial unionism and the organization of the unorganized.

If there is any weakness in the action of the U.M.W.A., it does not lie in the sharp rebuke that the miners gave to the arbitrary decisions of the Executive Council and to its front man, Mr. Green, about which the "Old Guard" Socialists shed such bitter tears. Their answer was the only answer that the powerful miners union could have and should have given to the Executive Council. The convention of miners could not accept the decisions for the liquidation of the Committee for Industrial Organization. Correctly, the miners encouraged the radio workers, the auto workers, the brewery workers, and the marine workers, to resist the decisions of the Executive Council which would break up and destroy their organization. The weakness of the action of the miners' convention lies rather in the fact that the leaders of the U.M.W.A. did not sufficiently empha-

size this struggle as a struggle of all workers in all unions, craft and industrial, who fight for industrial unionism and greater labor solidarity in all questions, and did not yet sufficiently mobilize the masses of all A. F. of L. unions against the reactionary splitting policy of the A. F. of L.

Only if the Committee for Industrial Organization is further cemented and strengthened, and if there is an end to all wavering in their ranks, if there is developed, on the *basis of a bold drive forward*, a collective leadership and a collective working out of all policies by the unions in the bloc, if they gather to themselves other unions both industrial and craft, if they mobilize the rank and file in the *entire* A. F. of L., if they encourage the development of real workers' democracy in all unions—especially in the unions that make up the industrial bloc—only if all these things are done, will the progressive forces in the quickest and most decisive way defeat the reactionaries. *Above all, they must undertake immediately to organize the unorganized workers.*

The Old Guard Socialists are trying to force some leaders of the Committee for Industrial Organization to yield to the threats of Green, Woll and company. They must be warned that this would only give the maximum help to the splitting policy of the Executive Council.

TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY

We must emphasize that an indispensable weapon in the fight for industrial unionism is genuine trade union democracy. This means holding conventions regularly, it means freedom of discussion, the democratic election of all officers, and the use of democratic methods so that the membership can decide on all questions. This further means the stamping out of all forms of racketeering and gangsterism which still infest many sections of the labor movement.

Without real trade union democracy, there also developed a situation which permitted Hutcheson—the reactionary leader of the carpenters' union—to speak and vote against industrial unionism in the name of 200,000 carpenters. He spoke against the real wishes of his own members, whom he has not permitted to hold a convention for eight years, and who have not had the opportunity to vote on this or any other important issue facing the trade union movement.

We are certain that if the members of the existing craft unions were only given the opportunity to vote, they would decide overwhelmingly in favor of industrial unionism. The fight for industrial unionism and for a strong and united A. F. of L. demands that the fight be carried into every craft union. But if the members

of the craft unions are to be won over to the side of industrial unionism, then they must be shown the example of how genuine trade union democracy is practised in the industrial unions which make up the Committee for Industrial Organization. It was on this point that the convention of the U.M.W.A. showed a great weakness. Is there any real reason why John L. Lewis should have kept the miners from having the right to elect their own district officials? If the leaders of the U.M.W.A. had restored full democracy to their membership, they would have greatly strengthened the fight for industrial unionism.

The U.M.W.A. convention made a serious mistake when it went on record for the support of President Roosevelt. For this, John L. Lewis is especially responsible. This action cannot help the miners, nor will it help the rest of the working class. It will not help to strengthen the fight for industrial unionism. Instead, this action carries with it the danger of making the U.M.W.A. and other unions the tail to the capitalist, strikebreaking and corrupt Democratic Party.

CONTRARY TO WORKERS' INTEREST

The U.M.W.A. convention was progressive where it broke with the old reactionary policies of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L., as on the issue of industrial unionism. Where it adhered to the old Green-Woll policies, even if in a new form, when it endorsed Roosevelt, it took a position which is contrary to the interests of the working class. We Communists, while supporting aggressively the struggle for industrial unionism, will, in the most comradely manner, but without any hesitation, try to do all in our power to convince the miners and the other workers of the dangers of the U.M.W.A. action of endorsing Roosevelt, and to prove to them that in the present situation only a Farmer-Labor Party can serve to unite the working class against the growing menace of reaction and fascism.

IMMEDIATE TASKS

The Central Committee of the Communist Party urges all Communists, all progressives, all other honest workers, whether they belong to craft or industrial unions, to carry through the following immediate tasks:

1. There should be a storm of resolutions from every local union, City Central Body, District Trades Council, endorsing the policy of industrial unionism, and protesting against the order of the Executive Council which splits up the auto workers, brewery workers and radio workers, and demands the dissolution of the Committee for Industrial Organization. They should protest and

resist the expulsion by the reactionary officials of the International Seamen's Union, of 13,000 seamen on the Pacific Coast. We especially urge the members of the craft unions to raise their voices and demand that in their unions there should be a democratically conducted referendum, or special convention, which will decide upon these questions of industrial unionism.

2. Steps should be taken to initiate and to give full organizational, financial and moral support for a campaign to organize the unorganized in the steel, auto, radio, metal mining, rubber, chemical, industries, and in agriculture, as well as other unorganized workers, giving special attention to the need for winning the Negro workers into the trade unions.

3. Steps should also be taken to organize the resistance of the workers against wage cuts, for wage increases and for maximum support to every strike of workers for better conditions. At this moment, the impending strike of 100,000 dressmakers must be given full support, and its success must be used to stimulate the organization of all unorganized workers.

4. Maximum support must be given to the struggles of the unemployed for relief and for union wages on all W.P.A. projects. They must join in the fight for social and unemployment insurance, supporting the Frazier-Lundeen Bill, thus developing the unity of the employed and unemployed, and strengthening the united front of the working class against the attacks of the bosses.

5. To strengthen the fight against the offensive of the capitalists, the Communists, Socialists and all progressive-minded workers should take the lead in working out concrete measures which will unite the efforts of the various craft unions in the different industries and which will lead to joint struggles for improved conditions and for uniform action in the working out and control of agreements. In this way we can convince the workers in the craft unions that the fight for industrial unionism does not weaken their unions, but, that, on the contrary, it strengthens their own position. In this practical way we can take the first step leading to the amalgamation of the various craft unions in the different industries, which is the road for these unions to a more suitable and more effective industrial solidarity.

6. Communists, Socialists, and all class-conscious workers must now more than ever, when the fundamental issues confronting the working class are confused by the demagogy of the reactionaries and the different capitalist groups and parties, carry forward the banner of *independent working class action—the fight for a Farmer-Labor Party.*

Against the splitting policies of the A. F. of L. Council!

For a united A. F. of L. based on industrial unions!

For trade union democracy!
For a militant fight against the capitalists!
For a Farmer-Labor Party!

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE
 COMMUNIST PARTY, U. S. A.

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, *Chairman*

EARL BROWDER, *General Secretary.*

ERRATUM

A grave error was made in the translation of Comrade Jacques Duclos' speech, "Unity for Victory", published in the January, 1936, issue of *The Communist*, which completely contradicts the sense of the original.

On page 67, the third paragraph read:

"Definitely to combat the enemies of unity of action on the international scale... means to oppose those whose splitting policy is the direct result of their refusal to practise a policy of class collaboration."

The sentence should read, to conform with the original:

"Definitely to combat the enemies of unity of action on the international scale... means to oppose those whose splitting policy is the direct result of their obstinate practise of class collaboration."

The speech was published in *l'Humanite*, organ of the French Communist Party, on December 7, 1935.

Readers of *The Communist* are asked to make the correction in their copies.—Ed.

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