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MAX WEISS

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## ON SOME ASPECTS OF FOREIGN POLICY

EARL BROWDER

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## ORGANIZED LABOR'S TWO CONVENTIONS

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# THE COMMUNIST

A MAGAZINE OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MARXISM-LENINISM  
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE U.S.A.

EDITOR: EARL BROWDER



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## EDITORIALS

### AMERICAN LABOR NEEDS THE GUIDANCE OF LENINISM

**WE** COMMEMORATE the seventeenth anniversary of Lenin's death at one of the most significant junctures in the historic course of the liberation movements of the working class and of all oppressed. It is one of those periods in the struggles of the masses against imperialism and against the dictatorial rule of the bankrupt bourgeoisie when the greatness of Lenin and his historic role in the liberation of mankind from the horrors of decaying capitalism stand forth with particular clarity and convincingness; when the powerful truth of his teachings becomes ever more evident to the widest masses of the proletariat and its allies; when suffering and outraged humanity begins to sense that it can find its future and salvation only on the road charted by Lenin and Leninism.

Never before in the history of the class struggle in the United States was the American working class in greater need of the enlightening guidance of Leninism. This is so, not only because of the complexity and magnitude of the tasks facing the labor movement at the present time, but also because of the advanced positions reached by progressive labor in recent years. To bring up the rest of the working class to these advanced positions

together with the mass of its allies among the common people, to consolidate these positions in the face of the intensifying offensive of the imperialists and war-makers, and to initiate further advances by labor and its progressive movements—to realize these immediate tasks, American labor needs the guidance of Leninism.

Now more so than ever before. Because in the present world situation—the dying of capitalism and the birth of a socialist world system—only the revolutionary philosophy and theory of the international working class show the way out for all peoples to peace, freedom and security. No other theories lead that way. In fact, all other so-called theories and philosophies current in the labor movement lead to surrender to the imperialists and war-makers, to the perpetuation of the bankrupt rule of the bourgeoisie, to endless suffering by the masses of the people.

Why is Big Business so fearful of the spread of Leninist ideas among the American workers and among the common people generally? Why are the imperialists, and their reformist agents in the labor movement (Hillman, Green, Thomas), working so desperately to halt the spread of Communist ideas among the masses? Certainly not because they are concerned with the well being of the masses. Nobody in his senses will maintain

that the Fords, Morgans and Rockefellerers oppose the spread of Communist ideas out of devotion to the interests of the people. What is it, then, that moves them on this question? It is the fully justified fear, *class fear*, that on the road of Leninism the American working class will find its class unity, its firm alliance with the rest of the common people, its full political independence from the imperialist bourgeoisie, and eventually—leadership in the nation.

This is what the imperialists and their reformist flunkys are fearful of when they seek to halt the spread of Leninist ideas among the masses, when they drive labor organizations to adopt resolutions condemning the philosophy of communism "as inimical" to the labor movement.

For what is it that is *fundamental* in the philosophy of communism, of Leninism? It is the relatively simple idea that the working class is destined to lead humanity to liberation from the horrors and terrors of capitalism and imperialism, and to the establishment of the socialist system. It is the idea that the working class is destined to supplant the bankrupt imperialist bourgeoisie as the leader of the nation, bringing about the abolition of classes and a true moral and political unity of the nation, free of exploitation, crises, wars and oppression. It is, furthermore, the idea that the progressive leaders of labor must seek to bring about the *class unity* of the proletariat and its *political independence* from the bourgeoisie, because only a united and independent working class can rally the rest of the com-

mon people around itself and give leadership to them, that only a united and independent working class can fight successfully for leadership in the nation.

These fundamentals of the philosophy of Leninism are obviously very much inimical to imperialist rule, to predatory wars and the whole system of exploitation of man by man and nation by nation. They are clearly inimical to the Social-Democratic and reformist treacheries of keeping the working class divided and in political subjection to the imperialist bourgeoisie. And precisely in this irreconcilability to capitalism and reformism lie the truth and strength of the Leninist philosophy. That is why this philosophy is so much needed by American labor at the present time. For it is the Leninist philosophy, and only it, that points the way for American labor to the practical solution of the two most acute immediate problems now facing our labor movement—the problem of labor unity and the problem of independent political action.

Taking the question of political independence first, it is necessary to note once again that this is the thing which the imperialist bourgeoisie fears most. It fears a politically independent working class because this marks the beginning of the end of imperialist misrule. Hence the remarkable unanimity of the capitalist press on certain phases of the recent convention of the C.I.O.

On the whole, there was little in that convention that can give the imperialists and their reformist agents much comfort. On the con-

trary, most of the decisions of that great convention, and the prevailing spirit of its deliberations, can be made to bring serious benefits to the American working class and its allies. As the C.I.O. carries into life the practical program of the convention in all its phases (organization of the unorganized, defense of economic standards and civil liberties, the struggle for peace, independent political activities), American labor and its allies will not only be able to consolidate their present positions, but they will be in a good position to move forward. And these activities of the C.I.O. will continue to have profound effects upon the growth of the progressive forces in the A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhoods, thus building the foundations for the class unity of the American proletariat. All of which is not cheerful news to the imperialists and their reformist hangers-on, considering also the growing spirit of class confidence among the masses.

With so much greater avidity, therefore, the imperialist and Social-Democratic press seized upon a few other phases of the C.I.O. convention to quieten their fears and feed their hopes. They seized upon the resolution which includes communism in the general condemnation of "totalitarianism"; they coupled this with the election of Philip Murray as President of the C.I.O.; and on the basis of this, they are projecting expectations that, perhaps, the C.I.O. will change its progressive orientation. And at what point do they expect this change in the C.I.O. to occur? Note the answer: *by slowing down or halting*

*altogether its historic march to working class political independence.*

The *New York Times* reveals these hopes of Wall Street in the following roundabout way:

"It is not for outsiders to advise how much organized labor shall dabble in politics [!] and what positions it shall take. . . . Perhaps our labor movement, maturing, protected by law, is beginning to settle down to the prosaic but constructive work of making and peaceably keeping businesslike agreements under which both employer and employee can prosper." (Nov. 23.)

What is the hope? It is that the C.I.O. will cease to "dabble in politics" (read: independent political action) and will "settle down" to what Wall Street believes is the proper function of a trade union: Gompersism.

The *New York World-Telegram*, referring to Philip Murray, says this:

"For here is a man whose single lifelong interest has been collective bargaining—not personal power, not private wealth, not political influence." (Nov. 23.)

Again the same note of expectation that perhaps under Murray the C.I.O. will not fight for "political influence" for labor.

Lastly, the *New York Post*, the Roosevelt champion. It says this:

"Murray's election does more than insure that C.I.O. officialdom, like the rank-and-file membership, will be interested only in trade union objectives." (Nov. 23.)



The same note again. The hope that the C.I.O. under Murray will forget all about independent political action and will interest itself "only in trade union objectives." This is certainly a revealing identity, not only of views but also of expression, appearing on the same day in three capitalist newspapers of conflicting party orientations. And what does it reveal afresh? The fear of the imperialist bourgeoisie, of all its groups and tendencies, of the historic march of American labor, headed by the C.I.O., towards political independence, and a hope and expectation that somehow this march may be halted or broken up.

And what is it that inspires the bourgeoisie with such hopes? Its own spokesmen give the answer. It is, first of all, the resolution condemning communist philosophy. The bourgeoisie wants to hope that this will mark a turn away by the C.I.O. from its general progressive orientation and particularly from independent political action. It is, secondly, their speculations that Philip Murray as an individual may favor a course opposed to the further development of labor's independence.

Important to emphasize here is the fact that the American bourgeoisie opposes, not labor or trade union "politics" in general, but independent working class politics, the kind of labor politics which brings the masses into opposition to the bourgeoisie as a class and to all of its political parties. The same *New York Times* and *World-Telegram*, which now seem so hopeful that the C.I.O. will become less "political," had nothing but praise for those trade union leaders who

were working for the Republican Party and for Willkie in the last elections.

And the *New York Post*, which wants the C.I.O. to confine itself only to "trade union objectives," continues to insist at the same time that Hillman is a great "labor statesman" because he works for Roosevelt and the Democratic Party. In other words, according to these spokesmen of the bourgeoisie, labor politics is good when it supports capitalist policies and capitalist parties, but it—labor politics—becomes positively bad, something outside the sphere of trade union objectives, the moment labor begins to pursue a political policy independent of and opposed to the imperialist policies of the bourgeoisie, the moment labor begins to build its own independent political power and steps forward as an ally and leader of the rest of the common people in joint struggle against the policies and rule of this same imperialist bourgeoisie.

When labor begins doing all these things, and that has been the general direction of the C.I.O. and also its greatest contribution to the American people, the bourgeoisie calls it "dabbling in politics," overstepping the bounds of trade unionism, and political "ambition." The bourgeoisie hates this sort of thing and wants it stopped. And no wonder. For the moment American labor began to "overstep" the bounds of narrow "trade union politics" and to enter the field of independent proletarian class politics, it entered upon a course that, if pursued consistently, will make labor the leader of the people, resulting eventually

in the abolition of imperialist rule altogether.

And this brings us back again to the teachings of Leninism, to some of the fundamentals of the communist philosophy, to the great principles of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. We refer to the *class* unity of the proletariat, its political *independence*, its *leadership* of the people against their exploiters and oppressors. And it is not difficult to see that the application of these principles to the solution of the practical problems facing American labor today offers the best guarantee for the preservation of labor's gains and for further advancement. That is also the reason why the bourgeoisie and its reformist agents (Hillman, Green, Thomas) are so anxious to have labor "condemn" the communist "philosophy" and the teachings of Lenin and Stalin.

### NARROW TRADE UNION POLITICS AND PROLETARIAN CLASS POLITICS

**L**ENIN and Stalin repeatedly drew the attention of labor to the distinction between narrow trade union politics and class proletarian politics. The former, they said, is essentially a policy of keeping labor in political subjection to the bourgeoisie; whereas the latter is a course of freeing the workers politically from the bourgeoisie and of transforming labor into the leader of the nation. Gompers' traditional policy of "reward your friends and punish your enemies" *within the confines of the capitalist two-party system*, a policy which has kept the American labor movement in a

state verging on paralysis for a long number of years, is a sample of "trade union politics." During the last five years, especially with the rise of the C.I.O., American labor has been steadily moving *away from* the Gompers trade union politics and *toward* independent class proletarian politics. This was so because American labor, led by its progressive forces, was following a certain independent political course, a course that was leading objectively to a united people's front headed by labor.

The years 1935-39 saw the unfolding of this independent course, the first phases of its development. The fact that during those years labor was supporting the progressive features of the New Deal, even collaborating in a certain way with the Roosevelt Administration, did not change the essentially independent character of that course, its meaning as the first beginnings of independent class political action. Why? Because labor was moving objectively in a certain *direction*, in the direction of a united people's front under labor's leadership. Because, furthermore, due to the then prevailing line-up of class forces at home and abroad, the so-called New Deal did contain certain progressive features and the New Deal Administration did contain certain progressive elements which labor could support and even collaborate with temporarily in a certain *independent* way. And to the extent that labor in those years was giving this support and collaboration to the New Deal *independently*, and as a class having its own political objectives and building its own inde-

pendent political power and organization, to that extent it was moving to fuller class independence and to eventual leadership in the nation.

Was labor's support of the New Deal always given in an independent way? No, it was not. And to the extent that it was not, labor's progress to fuller class independence and greater political influence was being retarded. This is an important point to remember. Equally important is to recall the fact that the *influences* responsible for the insufficient independence in labor's support to the New Deal in the years 1935-39 were *reformist influences*, the policies and pressures of the Hillmans, the Greens, etc. It was especially the influence of the Hillmans that was persistently directed (and not without some success) towards transforming labor's independent, qualified and temporary collaboration with the New Deal into *political subjection to the Roosevelt Administration*.

In other words: the consistently progressive forces in the labor movement (the Communists among them) were seeking to utilize labor's collaborative relations with the New Deal in order to advance the independent positions and influence and power of labor and its allies, in order to reach a higher stage in independent working class political action through a united people's front headed by labor. On the other hand, the Hillmans and the other reformist leaders were seeking to exploit labor's collaborative relations with the New Deal in order to foist upon the working class the permanent leadership of the so-called liberal bourgeoisie (the

"Roosevelt leadership"), in order to retard labor's progress to fuller class independence and influence, pulling labor back to the narrow trade union politics—bourgeois politics—of the Gompers years. And the conflict between these two tendencies in the labor movement was an important feature of that period.

But it began to assume even greater importance—major importance—with the outbreak of the war in September, 1939, with the desertion of the progressive features of the New Deal by the Roosevelt Administration and its sharp swing to a course of activated imperialism abroad and internal reaction at home. Labor was at once faced with the need of making a sharp tactical change. Why? Because the change in the line-up of class forces at home and abroad, resulting from the outbreak of the war, was of such a character that labor could continue on its previous political course—towards class independence and leadership in the nation—*only* by discontinuing its collaborative relations with the Roosevelt Administration. For there could be no sort of collaboration between the anti-imperialist and anti-war policies of labor, and the activated imperialism and warmongering of the bourgeoisie which the Roosevelt Administration was carrying forward; there could be no collaboration between labor's objectives of greater security, progress and democracy, and the reactionary course of the bourgeoisie, followed out by Roosevelt, to undermine and destroy the progressive gains of the people and to establish a war dic-



tatorship of Big Business in the country.

Not only could there be no collaboration with Roosevelt, but there could be no effective defense of labor's interests and those of the American people generally without a systematic struggle *against* the policies of Roosevelt. It became evident that labor had to go on *without* the Roosevelts and *against* them, that labor initiative and leadership of the masses of the people must become the dominant feature of working class politics. And that is how it was that the influences of Hillmanism, directed toward perpetuating "the Roosevelt leadership" over the masses, became the main obstacle to the further progress of labor and its allies.

Pretending not to understand that these are the reasons for the tactical change that labor is slowly making, the Hillmans pose a number of "innocent" questions. They ask: Why do you concentrate your attacks on Roosevelt? Is he worse than Willkie or other direct representatives of Wall Street? And why do you concentrate your attacks on Hillman? Is he worse than Hutcheson and Watthew Woll?

The Hillmans understand, of course, that these are *not* the points at issue. They formulate such questions to hide their treacheries and to mislead the workers. The real issues have been made clear before and they have to be restated again. What are they?

The consistent progressives in the labor movement "concentrate" on the Roosevelts not because they are worse than the Willkies in terms of policies, programs or methods. No,

that is not the reason. The reason is that the Roosevelts (the "liberal" and "democratic" bourgeoisie) *pretend to be* the leaders of the masses against the conservative and reactionary forces of Big Business directly represented by the Willkies, while actually betraying the masses into the hands of the Willkies. The further reason is that the bulk of labor and large sections of its allies still continue, though with ever diminishing faith, to put a certain measure of trust in these false pretenses of the Roosevelts; and to the extent that the masses continue to follow the Roosevelt "leadership," the struggles of the people against Big Business reaction and imperialism are continually compromised and betrayed. And the final reason is that substantial progress towards greater political independence and power by American labor *is possible only* in the systematic struggle to free the masses from the Roosevelt "leadership," from the hegemony of the so-called liberal bourgeoisie.

What is the issue, therefore? It is proletarian class independence as against continued political subjection of labor to the bourgeoisie. And this answers already the second question. The consistent progressives in the labor movement "concentrate" on Hillman not because he is "worse" than Hutcheson or Woll; they are all essentially Social-Democrats and reformists. The reason is that the Hillman reformist influences are today the main obstacle on the road of freeing labor from the Roosevelt "leadership"; hence Hillmanism is the main obstacle in the labor movement towards the further progress of

labor's independent power, of its advance to influence and leadership in the nation.

To put the whole matter in a few words: In order that labor may be able to fulfil its historic mission of leading the American people to the abolition of imperialist rule, the rule of monopoly finance capital, the working class and its allies must be completely freed from the influences and "leadership" of the Roosevelts and Hillmans. Therefore, the most effective fight against the Willkies and the Big Business forces which he represents is that fight which proceeds from the independent class positions of the proletariat and seeks to free the masses from the Roosevelts and Hillmans. There can be no successful fight against the Willkies without liberating the masses from the Roosevelts; and there can be no successful liberation of the masses from the Roosevelts without destroying the influence of the Hillmans in the labor movement.

It is along this road—the road of Lenin and Stalin—that American labor has to travel in order to preserve its gains and positions, in order to make further advances. Only along this road will the working class of the United States achieve its *unity* and full political independence.

### THE ROAD TO A PEOPLE'S PARTY HEADED BY LABOR

**W**HEN the Hillmans and Greens talk about labor unity, they seek to cover up a reformist pur-

pose which is the very opposite of labor unity. Reformism by its very essence means division and split of the working class—a truth formulated by Lenin and confirmed by the experiences of the labor movement all over the world. Why is this so? Because reformism, which is class collaboration, spells the subjection of labor to the capitalists. The reformist leaders themselves are agents of the capitalist class in the labor movement; and their function there is precisely to hamper and retard the growth of the class unity of labor. For it is clear that, as the working class achieves greater and greater class unity, the more difficult it becomes for the reformist leaders to keep labor subjected to the capitalists. That is why reformism is the greatest enemy of labor unity.

Unity of labor can be achieved—is being achieved in a difficult and painful process—only in struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie and its reformist agents. Only in such struggle does labor *as a class* become fully conscious of its historic liberating mission, of its power, of its role as leader of the people against their exploiters and oppressors. This is Leninism. This is the philosophy of Communism which the imperialists and reformists want labor to "condemn," that is, *to condemn the fight for the class unity of labor*. But at the same time the bourgeoisie and its government are rendering all sorts of support and encouragement to the treacherous maneuvers for "labor unity" led by the Hillmans and Greens. Doesn't this alone expose the whole reformist business as

fraud and deception? It should be evident to every work that when Big Business, the enemy of everything labor is interested in, supports the "unity" maneuvers of the Hillmans and the Greens, there must be something radically wrong with the whole thing. And so there is. And what is it?

Big Business realizes that there is *already on foot* a powerful process of development that is leading to the class unity of labor and its complete political independence from the bourgeoisie. This process shows itself most impressively in the growth of the C.I.O., in the strengthening of its progressive character, in the spread of its influence among the workers of the A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhoods, in the ties of collaboration between progressive labor and other sections of the common people. It shows itself further in the growing popularity of Leninist ideas among the more advanced sections of the workers. It shows itself finally in the increasing influence of the Communist Party, in the growing effectiveness of its work as the vanguard party of the American proletariat—the party which symbolizes most completely and voices most consistently the aims and aspirations of the class unity of labor, because it is the party of Leninism, the party which follows the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

The conditions for the class unity of labor are being created precisely in these processes of struggle. The imperialist bourgeoisie knows it. The reformist leaders know it, too. And they hate and fear it. That's

why they seek to stop it. And this is the meaning of the "labor unity" maneuvers of the Hillmans and Greens. These maneuvers are part of the general offensive of the imperialist bourgeoisie to hamstring labor, divide its ranks still further, and halt the progressive development of the American working class.

The progressive forces in the labor movement will therefore intensify their struggle for the class unity of labor. They will do so, as is already evident from all developments, by promoting further the organization of the unorganized and, most particularly, by helping to realize fully the great organization program adopted by the convention of the C.I.O. They will do so by encouraging and assisting all forms of united action on specific issues between the organizations of the C.I.O., A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhoods—issues common to all labor for the defense of its economic standards and civil rights and in the struggle for peace. They will do so by popularizing and promoting the movement for independent working class political action in alliance with all common people. And the success in this field will depend largely upon a complete understanding by labor's progressive leaders of these two propositions. First, that the further development of labor's political independence requires *absolutely* a policy of uniting the anti-imperialist forces *into a people's party headed by labor*; a policy which aims at that objective. Secondly, that the struggle for the class unity of labor and the fight for labor's independent



political power *go hand in hand*, that one cannot be promoted successfully without the other.

Labor unity will be hammered out only in the course of these struggles for the well being of the masses. This is what we learn from the experiences of labor here and everywhere, from the experiences which form the foundation and very life-blood of the teachings of Lenin and Stalin. And we also learn that, in the course of these struggles, the progressive labor movement will have to resist and combat, even more energetically than heretofore, the reformist maneuvers and conspiracies of the Hillmans and Greens. Without continuous alertness to these maneuvers and systematic struggle against them, labor's progressive programs cannot be realized. But not only that. Progressive labor must become conscious of the *growing* menace of another reformist tendency, the one of *compromise and conciliation with the Hillmans and Greens*. This reformist tendency, present in the labor movement for some time, may become more active and dangerous. What the imperialist bourgeoisie could not achieve directly through the Hillmans and Greens, it will try—is trying—to get with the help of those reformist leaders who incline towards compromise and conciliation with the Hillmans and Greens. And since such “compromises” can mean only the compromise and betrayal of labor's interests, it is clear that this reformist tendency has to be guarded against, exposed and combated.

This is the way in which American labor will be able to hold its

positions against the increasing onslaughts of the imperialists and war-makers and, in doing so, prepare for further advances. And in traveling this independent road, the progressive forces of American labor need the enlightening and guiding power of Leninism, of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. They need to study and master the great theory and philosophy of the international working class as the safest guide to action in the present complicated and difficult situation. They need to study and learn from the leadership of Joseph Stalin how to organize and lead the masses to struggle *and victory*.

On this, the seventeenth anniversary of Lenin's death, we say together with the advanced labor and people's movements of all countries: Follow the guidance of Leninism. Learn from the glorious leadership of the great Stalin. Study the socialist victories and experiences of the Soviet Union and put them to use in the liberation movements of the American working class and of the American people.

### LABOR'S INDEPENDENT LINE

**W**HEN Big Business holds up production on Government contracts because the business has not yet been made “sufficiently” profitable, this is perfectly all right with both Congress and the Executive, even though the net profits of, for example, eighteen leading steel companies for the first nine months of 1940 had risen 221 per cent over the comparable period of 1939. But when workers go out on strike

because the company refused a demand for a wage increase from 50 cents to, say, 65 or 70 cents an hour, Government agencies become at once feverishly active to intimidate the workers, to demoralize them and to drive them back to work on the old conditions, if possible. And this is called "national defense" and a struggle for "democracy."

Moreover, following the strike in the Vultee plant, various agencies of Congress and of the Executive have launched a regular lynch campaign against labor and its unions, bandying around such epithets as "treason" and "sabotage" with the utmost liberality. And at this writing, a whole flock of new laws are being designed to *protect the war profiteers* from the just grievances and demands of their underpaid and overworked employees.

During the election campaign, the candidates of the New Deal wanted to be understood by the masses as favoring a policy which would protect the masses, and protect them *against* the war profiteers. Now the elections are over, and the New Deal Administration is safely in office for the next four years. And what happens? A member of President Roosevelt's cabinet, Attorney General Jackson, steps forward as the initiator and leader of a terroristic campaign against the very masses whom his party pledged to protect from the rapacious profit appetites of Big Business. The so-called "protectors" of the people from the oppression of the monopolies have turned around and begun to protect the monopolies from the just grievances and demands of the people.

The Communists told the people that this was precisely what was going to happen. The Hillmans, on the contrary, assured the masses that their only protector against the Big Business Willkies was Roosevelt. Now, who was telling the masses the truth—the Communists or the Hillmans?

Of course, this game of reformist deceit is not over, not by a long shot. It will become even more intense and varied, but with this difference: more often, and more systematically, reformist deceit will be supplemented and "reinforced" with persecution and violence against the masses applied directly by the agencies of the monopolies and of Government. Judging by the various new anti-labor laws and policies and maneuvers that are now being prepared in various Government circles, this is precisely what is cooked up for the working masses of the country in the name of "national" defense, in the name of "protecting" democracy.

One need not at all ignore the fact that President Roosevelt may be favoring (at least, he intimated that) measures and policies against labor and the unions that are somewhat less sweeping and brutal than those recommended by some Republican and Democratic Congressmen. Where the latter would embrace all union organizing campaigns under the head of "sabotage," including under it every labor demand for improvement in conditions, and providing a penalty of life imprisonment for anyone found guilty of this so-called "sabotage," President Roosevelt might favor (this too was intimated

at a press conference) a more "precise" definition of sabotage and not quite as heavy a prison sentence. Possibly; we are not altogether certain. But this much is certain: the executive branch of the Government, far from restraining the developing lynch campaign against labor, is itself leading it, feeding it, and giving it all sorts of encouragement. This is how the "liberal" and "democratic" bourgeoisie—the Roosevelt Administration—is leading the fight of the people (according to the Hillmans) against the conservative and reactionary bourgeoisie, against the backers of Willkie.

Looking at this entire situation a bit more closely, it is impossible to escape the impression that we are witnessing a certain division of labor in the imperialist camp. At least, in an objective sense. The conservatives and reactionaries, in both the Republican and Democratic parties, are cooking up against labor extreme measures of great severity, and the capitalist press is doing all in its power to incite and befuddle the middle classes in support of these measures. The "liberals" and "democrats," headed by Roosevelt, do nothing to interfere with their reactionary colleagues, but watch their doings with a certain "objectivity" and rather sympathetically. And they—the "liberal" capitalists — speculate somewhat as follows: If labor is confronted with extreme and severe measures against the unions, as threatened by the reactionaries, it may perhaps begin evidencing a greater willingness to listen to "liberal reason" as coming from

President Roosevelt and his supporters; namely, to give up its rights voluntarily, to accept cheerfully a certain sort of mediation and arbitration machinery which, for all practical purposes, would tend to paralyze labor's efforts to protect itself, and perhaps to accept also the fake "labor unity" scheme of the Hillmans and Greens which would place the trade union movement under Government control.

It is as though the "democratic" bourgeoisie headed by Roosevelt was telling the workers the following: You see, we really have no sympathy for the extreme measures advocated by the reactionaries; we would like to save you from those measures; but you must help us; you must show a willingness to collaborate with us; and if you do, by accepting our schemes for arbitration and labor unity (in effect: voluntary servitude to the war profiteers), we shall see to it that you are not abused over much.

Naturally, there is a difference between the "liberal" and the reactionary schemes. One is not as bad as the other, if taken only at their face value. And the reformist leaders, the Hillmans and Greens, are exploiting this point to press labor into accepting the liberal anti-union schemes—virtually compulsory mediation and arbitration. But labor must not be deceived by these maneuvers. Labor must realize, first, that both schemes are bad, the "liberal" as well as the reactionary; and even though the *face value* of the former is not as bad as that of the latter, the ultimate effect upon labor is bound to be the same, if the labor movement

goes into this business willingly and voluntarily. If labor approves, or even acquiesces in, the "liberal" schemes of hamstringing the unions, it surrenders a principle—the freedom and independence of the trade union movement. The reactionaries will take this as a signal for more intensified attacks upon labor, and the liberals, parading as the friends of the masses, will again come forward with "compromise" solutions. Thus, step by step, labor will be driven into a position of virtual impotence.

Labor must realize, secondly, that the liberal schemes for mediation and arbitration are part of a larger anti-labor program. They are part of the program of the Roosevelt Administration and of the Hillmans to place the trade union movement under the control of the Government and of the Hillmans and Greens. It is part of the general program to perpetuate and strengthen the political hegemony—"leadership"—of the liberal bourgeoisie, of the Roosevelts, upon the labor movement. It is the same program which today presents *the main obstacle* to the further progress of American labor towards greater class unity and political independence. It is clear, therefore, that labor can neither approve nor acquiesce in these anti-union schemes of the liberal bourgeoisie and of the Hillmans. It must fight against these as it fights against the more sweeping and brutal schemes of the reactionaries.

To the charge of the reformists that such a position signifies giving preference to the reactionary schemes as against the liberal ones,

the answer is: The reformist leaders are liars and slanderers, in addition to being traitors. Our position is based on the truth that *the only way to fight off the reactionary plans, to restrain the reactionary offensive, and to secure for labor the best possible outcome from the present situation, in accord with the prevailing relation of forces, is for the workers to strengthen their class unity and their progressive mass organizations, to defend and develop further their political independence from the bourgeoisie, to build their alliances with the rest of the common people, and to fight consistently against the offensive of the imperialist bourgeoisie along the entire front.*

By thus mobilizing and demonstrating its maximum strength, labor will most certainly gain the best possible conditions under the circumstances; and, what is even more important, it will retain its independence and freedom of action to defend what it has, and to move forward to new gains as conditions become more favorable. This, in passing, is also the only way to exploit the differences and conflicts within the imperialist bourgeoisie for the purpose of strengthening the working class and its allies instead of letting the bourgeoisie exploit for its purposes the existing divisions in labor promoted by the reformist leaders.

In other words: Our policy is one of getting for labor and its allies the best conditions possible under the circumstances, and to get them in such a way as to strengthen the *independent power* of labor for further advances. The policy of re-

formism, of the Hillmans and Greens, is to inveigle labor into surrendering to the imperialist bourgeoisie *through accepting the "leadership" of its "liberal" section*, and to destroy in the process labor's unity and independence.

The greater the class unity and political independence of labor, the stronger its ties with and leadership of the rest of the common people, and the more *consistent* its daily struggle against the imperialists and war-makers, the more substantial will be the concessions forced from the bourgeoisie by the people, the closer will come the day of labor's leadership in the nation. It is a Leninist and Stalinist principle, and it has demonstrated its power to win.

With this principle as its guide, American labor will be able to solve also other current problems. On the question of expanding the capacities of the heavy industries, which now faces the bourgeoisie in its war preparations, labor will have to adopt its own independent position. This will mean support for *neither* the anti-expansionist position of Big Business which prefers to sacrifice the consumption needs of the masses to war profiteering, *nor* the expansionist position of the "liberal" bourgeoisie which would build new plants with the people's money and present those plants gratis to the monopolies. Proceeding from its anti-imperialist and anti-war position, labor will have to insist that the burden of the war preparations be carried by the rich and not the poor, that speed-up be eliminated, that the unemployed be given jobs, that labor standards be improved,

that the rise of living costs be checked in struggle against the monopolies and food speculators, and that the consumption needs of the masses not be sacrificed to the rapacity of the war profiteers, to the one-sided development of the war economy.

These are the main lines of the program adopted by the C.I.O. convention. These are also the demands of the workers in the A. F. of L. and in the Railroad Brotherhoods. They are the demands of large sections of the working farmers, of the youth and of the Negro people. And here is the basis for widespread united action of the masses under labor's leadership, on an independent anti-imperialist course.

Equally, the conflict within the imperialist camp on the question of the "national defense" set-up has certain bearings on labor's general struggle against the imperialists and war-makers. It is clear that labor cannot support, under any circumstances, the plans of Big Business to establish its full hegemony and *direct* domination in the "defense" machinery of the Government. And this is what the reactionaries in Congress are fighting for. Neither can labor support in any way the "liberal" compromise, favored by the Administration, to let Big Business men (Knudsen, Stettinius, etc.), handle the technical and production angles of the "defense" while retaining for the President the last word on matters of policy and general coordination. This is a compromise, all right, but one that will be realized in practice by the daily sacrifice of the inter-

ests of the masses and, in addition, will enable the liberal capitalists to maneuver as the "protectors" of the people against the rapacities of Big Business, while betraying daily the interests of the masses into the hands of the same Big Business.

On this question, too, labor will have to make sure its main efforts are directed towards defending the freedom and independence of the trade unions, that labor organizations and labor leaders do not become adjuncts to the imperialist war machine, that the general course of struggle of the American people against imperialism and war is not

compromised, and that labor's freedom of action be further developed and strengthened also by independently utilizing the very divisions within the camp of the imperialists.

Thus will American labor be able to hold its own and to prepare for further advances. Thus will the progressive and creative forces of labor come closer to a consistent proletarian position, to the teachings and principles of Lenin and of his great continuer—Stalin. Thus will the day of liberation from capitalism be brought nearer and the victory of the people made certain.

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# LENIN AND PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

BY MAX WEISS

**I**N JANUARY of this year, the proletariat and the oppressed people of the capitalist world join with the emancipated people of the U.S.S.R. to commemorate the seventeenth anniversary of Lenin's death. The historical perspective of these seventeen years have added beyond measure to the magnificence of Lenin's name as the great leader of the international working class.

Following the path marked out by Lenin, over one hundred and ninety-three million people abolished capitalism and established socialism in the Soviet Union, thus realizing for the first time in history the age-long dream of toiling humanity. Millions more outside the Soviet Union are following that same path today inspired by Stalin—Lenin's disciple and continuer—to inevitable world victory in the future.

It is truly an international army which fights its way to freedom under the banner of Lenin—for the path of Lenin is an international path. It is preeminently the path of proletarian internationalism.

*Working men of all countries, unite!* That was how Marx and Engels summoned the proletariat to battle in the concluding words of the immortal *Communist Manifesto*.

Lenin, the Marxist of the epoch of imperialism and of proletarian revolution, carried forward this principle of proletarian internationalism, planted it firmly in the very heart of the working class struggle against capitalism, defended it against the attack of its class enemies, restored it after its betrayal by the leaders of the Second International—and triumphed with it on one-sixth of the earth's surface.

Today, this principle, around which Lenin's whole struggle revolved, is embodied in the glorious Communist International which under Lenin's guiding hand rose, phoenix-like, out of the ruins to which the flames of the first imperialist World War and the treachery of its opportunist leaders had reduced the Second International. It forms the very lifeblood of the struggle of the Communist parties which grew up in all the principal countries of the world in the fight for freedom along Lenin's path.

The Soviet Union today, led by Stalin, Lenin's comrade-in-arms, has already recorded the victory of socialism. It stands as a fortress of the world proletariat, a symbol and an inspiration to the toilers of all lands, the materialization of the principle of proletarian interna-



tionalism which Lenin elevated to the level of paramount importance in the fight for socialism.

The present imperialist war, with its attendant orgy of chauvinist nationalism, is precisely the setting in which the sacred obligations of proletarian internationalism insistently demand fulfilment. Above all, at such a time, does the fight for the international solidarity of the working class of all lands become the decisive question.

"The fact is that it is by no means easy to be an internationalist in deeds during a frightful imperialist war. Such people are few; but it is on such people *alone* that the future of socialism depends; they *alone* are the *leaders of the masses*, and not the corrupters of the masses." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 8-9, International Publishers, New York.)

Thus wrote Lenin almost a quarter of a century ago during the first imperialist World War. As a result of the work and struggle of Lenin himself, "such people" are no longer few; they are today an imposing army, marshaled under the banner of Lenin and Stalin. But it is still—perhaps even more so now than ever—on "*such people alone that the future of socialism depends.*" And because "*it is by no means easy to be an internationalist in deeds during a frightful imperialist war,*" it is especially necessary, in commemorating Lenin's death, to review his teachings in order to raise the banner of proletarian internationalism, the banner of victory in the struggle against imperialist war and for socialism, to still greater heights.

This great task is, further, dictated by the panicky attempt of the Roosevelt Administration to outlaw the principle of proletarian internationalism through the infamous Voorhis Act. The enactment of this reactionary piece of legislation by the bourgeoisie testifies to its fear of the great power of international solidarity of the working class. The warmongers recognize in this solidarity an obstacle on the path they have taken toward involving the American people in the slaughter abroad—an obstacle they are bent on clearing.

But they will not succeed. The great sacrifice which the Communist Party of the United States made in disaffiliating from the Communist International in order to remove itself from the provisions of the Voorhis Act was a sacrifice made in the interests of furthering the Leninist struggle for proletarian internationalism. It has already resulted in bringing before the class-conscious workers, for their most intense and absorbed discussion and reflection, their responsibilities as part of the world army of the working class. Out of this reflection on the significance of the action forced on the Communist Party will come a renewed and heightened sense of proletarian internationalism, an intensification of this internationalism in deeds, an even deeper loyalty to the principles of the leaders and teachers of the international proletariat—Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

This devotion to the principle of proletarian internationalism is all the more assured because the American working class, in particular,

owes a limitless debt of gratitude to that principle. It was that principle which contributed gifted leaders of the European working class as fighters in the Union armies during the American Civil War. It was the spirit of internationalism which inspired the British workers, under the guidance of Karl Marx, to organize huge demonstrations against Palmerston's efforts at counter-revolutionary intervention on the side of the South during the Civil War. It was the international working class movement of Europe that took up the demand first raised by the American workers for the eight-hour day. The founding Congress of the Second International, held at Paris in 1889, adopted the American workers' May Day as an international workers' day of demonstration. It was the principle of proletarian internationalism which set millions of European workers into motion in the fight to free Tom Mooney, in the fight to save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti, in the fight to free the nine Scottsboro boys. The whole history of the American labor movement is replete with stirring examples of assistance given it by the working class of the European countries.

In turn, some of the most brilliant pages of this same history were written by the American workers themselves when they came to the assistance of the workers of other lands. In the early days of the Soviet Republic when it was beleaguered by economic blockade, starved by famine and harassed by counter-revolutionary intervention, the American workers boldly raised the slogan of defense of the Soviet

Union. The Pacific Coast dock workers refused to load munitions intended for use by the American army of intervention against the young Soviet Republic. The working class movement carried through mass meetings against Wilson's intervention. Later it raised money to equip and sent to the Soviet Union a complete tractor unit as the material contribution of the American workers toward the economic reconstruction of the Soviet Union along the path of socialism.

The American workers joined with the workers of the whole world in the most stirring campaign of international solidarity ever carried through—the campaign of support to the Spanish people in their struggle against the fascist onslaught of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini. The actions of the American workers, together with the workers of all countries, formed the backbone of a mighty movement of international people's solidarity with the Spanish Republic. Culminating the whole drive for political support and financial aid was the formation of the International Brigade in which three thousand American volunteers fought and with their blood sealed the bonds of international solidarity between the American workers and people and the workers and people of all lands.

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In the very early days of his revolutionary activity, as far back as 1896, Lenin set forth the basis of, and the historical necessity for, international working class solidarity in the fight against capitalism:

"The fight against the rule of the capitalist class is now being waged by the workers in all European countries as well as in America and Australia. The unity and solidarity of the working class is not confined to a single country or a single nationality; the workers' parties of various countries loudly proclaim that the interests and aims of the workers of all countries are identical.

"They gather at congresses, put forward common demands to the capitalist class in all countries, they fix a common day to celebrate the international festival of the united proletariat which is striving for its emancipation (May 1), and rally the working class of all nationalities and of all countries into a single, great workers' army. The amalgamation of the workers of all countries is essential because the capitalist class does not restrict its rule over the workers to a single country.

"Commercial intercourse between the various states is becoming ever closer and more widespread: capital is constantly passing from one country to another. The banks, these enormous storehouses of capital which gather capital from all parts and distribute it in the form of loans to the capitalists, are being transformed from national to international institutions, and are gathering capital from all countries and loaning it to the capitalists of Europe and America. Enormous joint stock companies are now being formed to conduct capitalist enterprises, not only in single countries but in several countries at once; international capitalist companies are now being formed. The domination of capital is becoming international. That is why the struggle of the workers in all countries for their emancipation can be successful only when it is waged jointly against in-

ternational capital." (*Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 481-82.)

In this extremely simple but comprehensive statement, Lenin established the fact that proletarian internationalism expresses the common bond of sympathy which exists between the workers of different countries who find themselves fighting for substantially the same aims within their respective countries. This common bond of sympathy, Lenin emphasized, results from the fact that proletarian internationalism is dictated by the common interests of the working class of all countries, and is its response to the pronounced international tendencies of capitalist development.

This tendency of capital to worldwide penetration and domination which Lenin noted as early as 1896, he later emphasized as the most fixed, pronounced and dominant feature of capital in the imperialist era. Hence, it was inevitable that Lenin—the Marxist theoretician and proletarian leader in the epoch of imperialism and of proletarian revolution—should put forward in all of his teachings the principle of proletarian internationalism as the chief and dominant feature of the struggle of the working class against imperialist oppression, against imperialist war and for socialism, that he should elevate this basic principle of Marx and Engels to new heights and develop it in all of its many-sided significance. *That is why the path of Lenin is pre-eminently the path of proletarian internationalism.*

Lenin stressed the fact that the international solidarity of the work-

ing class was a prerequisite for the victorious outcome of the struggle within each separate country. This salient characteristic of proletarian internationalism lies at the basis of the teachings of Karl Marx who wrote:

“Past experience has shown how disregard for that bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the working men of different countries, and incite them to stand firmly by each other in all their struggles for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts.” (Karl Marx, “Address and Provisional Rules of the Working Men’s International Association,” *Selected Works*, Vol. II, pp. 441-42, International Publishers, New York).

This central idea, that proletarian internationalism is imperatively demanded by the self-interest of the workers who are called upon to support their brothers in other lands, runs like a red thread through all of Lenin’s teachings.

For example, in his discussion on the national and colonial question, Lenin wrote:

“Marx demanded the *separation of Ireland* from England, ‘even should the separation finally result in a federation,’ and not from the standpoint of the petty-bourgeois Utopia of a peaceful capitalism, not from considerations of ‘justice to Ireland,’ but from the standpoint of the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat of the oppressing, i.e., the English nation, against capitalism.” (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, p. 370, International Publishers, New York.)

A correct understanding of this fact is necessary in order to batter down the reactionary, opportunist outlook of the Greens, Wolls, and Hillmans who claim that the tasks of international solidarity of the American proletariat are tasks which are separate from, or alien to, the tasks of the American workers, that internationalists are “foreign agents” who introduce special foreign interests into the native American labor movement.

The direct interests of the American workers in the successful outcome of their own struggle against the American bourgeoisie dictates to them the strengthening of their international unity with the workers of all countries. The reason for this is clear. Whenever the workers of any country deliver a blow which weakens their own bourgeoisie, their own exploiters and oppressors, they help to weaken the imperialist system as a whole. This inevitably helps to weaken the powerful and ruthless Wall Street imperialism with tentacles stretching into many countries on all continents. This is particularly clear in the case of those countries directly oppressed or dominated by American imperialism, as, for example, the Latin American countries.

The economy of these countries is largely—and in some cases—almost completely dominated by American banks, trusts and monopolies, such as Standard Oil, Anaconda Copper, Electric Bond and Share, United Fruit, and the Chase National Bank. The struggle of the Latin American workers is primarily a struggle against these Yankee imperialist banks, trusts

and monopolies which are, at the same time, the oppressors and exploiters of the American working class. By its solidarity with the Latin American workers in their struggle for national independence and complete national sovereignty, the American workers help deliver a blow at American finance capital. Every advance made by the Latin American workers in their struggle for freedom helps to weaken American imperialism and thus to advance the direct interests of the American working class against the American bourgeoisie.

These are the considerations which lie behind the whole activity of the Communist Party for aid to the Latin American people in their struggle against Wall Street imperialism. It is in the interest of the American proletariat itself that the workers, farmers and oppressed people of Latin America should be freed from the yoke of Wall Street domination.

Thus, proletarian internationalism, far from "distracting" the workers from their tasks of struggle against the American bourgeoisie, far from being something which is "imported" into the American labor movement, is the indispensable condition for the most complete and successful solution of the tasks of the American labor movement. It grows out of the very requirements of the struggle against the American bourgeoisie by the American working class. That is why the Communist Party serves the best interests of the American working class when it rallies the American workers to support the struggle of the international prole-

tariat and the oppressed people of all lands.

The American working class has in its own experience had the most forceful proof that its problems can be solved only in the process of struggle to uphold the principles of proletarian internationalism. From its own bitter experience, the American working class came to recognize the truth of Marx's statement that: "*Labor cannot emancipate itself in a white skin where in the black it is branded.*"

The enthusiastic participation of the working class of the North in the fight to abolish slavery during the Civil War was at one and the same time an act of the highest proletarian internationalism and an act imperatively dictated by the interests of the working class itself. In fact, it was only the abolition of slavery which made it possible for the American working class to undertake in a serious fashion the struggle to abolish capitalist exploitation. In referring to this, Marx wrote:

"In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. . . . The first fruit of the Civil War was the eight-hour agitation that ran with the seven-league boots of the locomotive from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California." (Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 329, International Publishers, New York.)

The struggle of the American working class for Negro liberation today is a special manifestation of proletarian internationalism, one of

the supreme tests of proletarian internationalism. Its special features flow from the fact that the Negro people constitute an oppressed nation within the boundaries of the United States. But this fact of itself establishes most vividly the need for unbreakable unity between the working class and the Negro people in their joint struggle against the common enemy—American imperialism.

The basis upon which the national oppression of the Negro people rests is to be found in the Black Belt of the South—a territory with a Negro majority—where in the form of tenancy and sharecropping, the economic survivals of slavery and feudalism still remain. The struggle against the plantation owners, the Southern Bourbons and the Wall Street financiers, whose fingers stretch into the plantation system, is a struggle against the very fountain-head of reaction in the United States, a struggle against the most bitter and hardened enemies of labor and the people. In the struggle for Negro national liberation with the right of self-determination, the American working class gains a natural and historic ally for its own struggle against American imperialism.

The American working class is increasingly assuming all the immediate tasks which flow from this struggle because it has learned that without fighting for Negro rights it cannot defend its own rights, without organizing the masses of Negro workers, it cannot organize the basic industries. Without the most complete solidarity of Negro and white, it cannot win its strikes for

higher wages and better conditions. This is most clearly exemplified in the increasing assumption by the labor movement of its responsibilities in the fight to abolish the poll tax and to pass the Anti-Lynching Bill as part of the whole fight for democratic rights for the labor and progressive movement.

The struggle for national liberation of the Negro people has a powerful driving force in the existence of the Negro proletariat which forms the backbone of the struggles of the Negro people. The Negro workers are increasingly assuming hegemony of the struggle of the Negro people for its national emancipation. At the same time, the development of the Negro proletariat helps to weld still further the solidarity of the American working class as a whole with the Negro people by bringing forward the tasks of organizing the Negro workers.

Thus, the interests of the American working class impels it relentlessly along the path of proletarian internationalism. The Communist Party which is the vanguard of this struggle for Negro liberation has proved itself, thereby, to be the best fighter for the common interests of the working class and the Negro people.

The Communist Party has for years called upon the American working class to aid the Chinese people in their struggle for national liberation. Was this introducing some special "foreign" consideration into the labor movement? The masses of the American people now recognizes that aid to the Chinese people is in the American interest,

that it is a requirement growing out of the needs of the American working class and the American people as a whole.

But the interests which motivate the American working class in fighting for aid to the Chinese people stand at opposite poles from those which motivate the sudden display of "friendship" for the Chinese people on the part of the Roosevelt Administration and its Social-Democratic agents. The advanced workers fight for aid and assistance to the Chinese people because the defeat of Japanese imperialism would deliver a body blow to the whole imperialist system of colonial slavery, would pave the way for the ousting of all imperialist powers from the Far East, including Wall Street imperialism, would give tremendous impetus to the development of the anti-imperialist movement in all colonies and dependencies.

The "interests" which motivate the State Department in making a hypocritical pretense of "aid" to China are based upon the desire of American imperialism to strengthen itself in the Far East at the expense of its Japanese rival and the Chinese people. The motives which prompt such "aid" is revealed in the fact that it is accompanied by continued large-scale sale of war materials to Japan for use against the Chinese people. American imperialism understands full well that in hurling Japanese imperialism out of China, the Chinese people say to Wall Street: This story is told of you, too!

That is why the State Department's pretense of "aid" to China is

accompanied by continued maneuverings with Japanese imperialism to carry through a Far Eastern Munich at the expense of the Chinese people, and directed against the Soviet Union. For, more even than a victory of the Japanese imperialists over China, the American bourgeoisie—the same bourgeoisie which in the past resorted to armed force against the Chinese Revolution—fears a decisive victory of the Chinese people.

The Communist Party is the tireless champion of friendly relations and peace collaboration between the United States and the Soviet Union. Its advocacy of this course flows from the immediate, concrete necessity for the establishment of such collaboration in order to help assure peace for the American people. Because it has fought for years in a true internationalist spirit to make the American working class the "friend of the Soviet Union," the Communist Party has thereby proved itself the best friend of the American working class.

When the Communist Party rallies the American workers to support the Soviet Union, when it widely popularizes the achievements of socialist construction in the Soviet Union, it is thereby serving the direct interests of the American proletariat. The successful socialist construction emphasizes the bankruptcy of the decaying capitalist system. These victories of the Soviet workers give the American workers confidence in their own ability to win out in the struggle against the American bourgeoisie. This special significance of the socialist victories of the Soviet



Union was emphasized by Joseph Stalin:

"If the successes of the working class of our country, if its fight and victory serve to arouse the spirit of the working class in the capitalist countries and to strengthen its faith in its own power and in its victory, then our Party may say that its work has not been in vain. And there need be no doubt that this will be the case." (J. V. Stalin, *From Socialism to Communism in the Soviet Union*, pp. 62-63, International Publishers, New York.)

The Soviet Union, by the very nature of its social-economic and political system, is an anti-imperialist power. The strengthening of the socialist Soviet Union, therefore, weakens world imperialism and strengthens the workers and all anti-imperialist forces everywhere.

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This profound essence of proletarian internationalism as the prerequisite for successful struggle in the interests of the American workers, is confirmed by the organic connection which exists in the Social-Democratic betrayal of the interests of the working class in domestic and international affairs—class collaboration in internal relations and chauvinist support of "its own" imperialism in foreign relations. The record of American Social-Democracy in its relation to the Negro people, to the Latin American people, to Puerto Rico and the Philippines, to the Spanish people, to the Chinese people, to the Soviet Union is but the other side of the medal which bears on its face the refusal to organize the unor-

ganized, the refusal to fight for higher wages, the servile willingness to accept deprivation of all the rights of the American workers, the support to a policy of sacrifices in the interests of imperialism. Their betrayal of the workers' interests at home is complemented by their support of the foreign policy, the war policy of imperialism—the most shameful kind of surrender of proletarian internationalism.

Lenin's whole struggle against the first imperialist World War was accompanied by the most passionate denunciation of the leaders of the Second International for their betrayal of internationalism in favor of support to their own imperialist bourgeoisie. The war of 1914-18 was the acid test which revealed the emptiness, the mendacity, the hypocrisy of the internationalist phrases of whose utterance the Social-Democrats had become so adept. It brought into the light of day the polar opposition between true internationalism on the one hand, and support to the imperialist war on the other.

"If the emancipation of the working classes requires their fraternal concurrence," Marx had written in the inaugural address of the First International, "how are they to fulfill that great mission with a foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs, playing upon the national prejudices, and squandering in piratical wars the people's blood and treasure?" (Karl Marx, *Cited place*, p. 441.)

This searching question put before the workers of the world in 1864 by Karl Marx leaped over the

decades to confront the proletariat of all countries once again in 1914 when the opportunist leaders of the Second International moved in support of precisely such a "foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs."

It was Lenin who undertook the great task of exposing the betrayal of internationalism by Social-Democracy, of tracing its fundamental causes back to the systematic opportunism which had matured within the bosom of Social-Democracy into full-fledged social-chauvinism, and of pointing the road to real internationalism—determined and consistent struggle against one's own bourgeoisie during an imperialist war as in times of peace.

If support of the workers' struggles in the spirit of proletarian internationalism is vital to the struggle of the workers at home against their own capitalists, then it is equally true that the relentless struggle of the working class of each country against its own bourgeoisie is the greatest contribution to the struggle of the workers of other lands. This Leninist conception of proletarian internationalism is of exceptional significance during the present imperialist war.

In the light of this fundamental Leninist principle, the "internationalism" of Social-Democracy is truly a touching sight. There is no end, for example, to the appeals of British Social-Democracy for revolution against capitalism—in the "enemy country." The German workers are called upon to revolt, the Italian workers are called upon to revolt, the Japanese workers are called

upon to revolt. But in Britain, or Canada, or India or Africa even the most elementary struggle for the simple demands of the British workers, the Canadian workers, the Indian or African peoples is held in check by British Social-Democracy which is so concerned with revolution in the "enemy country."

As far as Britain is concerned, Social-Democracy calls for "socialism"—after the war, when British imperialism will be free to cope with the "inordinate" demands of its "internal enemy."

In the meantime, the British workers are to support their own bourgeoisie, to help slaughter their German and Italian working class brothers on the field of battle, to yield all their labor rights, to accept wage cuts, to pay enormous taxes, to sleep in filthy subway stations—and be good "internationalists" by urging the German, Italian and Japanese workers to fight in their countries the rivals of British imperialism. That is how British Social-Democracy carries out its international obligations to the German, Italian and Japanese workers! That is the policy which the carrier pigeon of the British foreign office, Sir Walter Citrine, recommends to the American labor movement as well.

It was against this profanity in the name of proletarian internationalism that Lenin struck his mightiest blows in his struggle against the last imperialist war:

"There is one, and only one, kind of internationalism in deed: working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and

the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) such, and only such, a struggle and such a line in every country without exception." (V. I. Lenin (*Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 63.)

Lenin's exposure of the mock "internationalist" phrases and sophistries by which Social-Democracy attempted to substitute schemes for "internationalism" in the future for proletarian internationalism in deeds now has an additional immediate application to the struggle against the present imperialist war. Once again echoing its bourgeoisie, Social-Democratic talks about the establishment of a "new international brotherhood of nations"—after the war and in the image of its bourgeoisie. It has nothing to do with proletarian internationalism. It is concerned only with defeating the reactionary imperialist "internationalism" proposed by "the enemy" in the form of the "New Order in Europe" or the "New Order in the Far East"; it is concerned only with counterposing to these "internationalist" schemes the equally reactionary imperialist "internationalism" proposed by its own bourgeoisie in the form of a "United States of Europe" or a "Federated Union" or a new "Pan American Brotherhood." Yes! There is absolutely no lack of such "internationalism" in every manner, shape and form, during the present imperialist war!

Once again the workers are offered a "United States of Europe"—after the war is over in lieu of proletarian internationalism now. The

brazeness and perennial recurrence of that hoary delusion and reactionary scheme—the "United States of Europe"—is almost unbelievable.

In 1875, Frederick Engels, leveling a devastating attack against the shameless abandonment of proletarian internationalism by the German Workers Party in its Gotha program, wrote to August Bebel:

"And what is left of the internationalism of the workers' movement then? The faint prospect—not even of the future cooperation of the European workers for their emancipation—no, of a future 'international brotherhood of nations'—of the bourgeois Peace League's 'United States of Europe.'" (Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, p. 29, International Publishers, New York.)

But the slogan of a United States of Europe, which in 1875 was deserving only of ridicule and scorn as a petty-bourgeois vulgarization of proletarian internationalism by reformist German Social-Democracy, became in the imperialist era, especially after the outbreak of the first imperialist war, a most sinister cloak for the reactionary aims of the imperialist powers.

Lenin turned his guns more than once against this slogan, especially in the struggle against Trotsky. Commenting upon an analysis of certain parasitic features of imperialist development as portrayed by Hobson, a liberal economist, Lenin wrote:

"... As early as 1902, he had an excellent insight into the meaning and significance of a 'United States of Europe' (be it said for the benefit of Trotsky the Kautskian!) ...

namely, that the opportunists (social-chauvinists) are working hand in hand with the imperialist bourgeoisie precisely toward creating an imperialist Europe on the backs of Asia and Africa. . . ." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, p. 752.)

In a more detailed examination of the meaning of this slogan, Lenin wrote:

"From the point of view of the economic conditions of imperialism, i.e., capital export and partition of the world between the 'progressive' and 'civilized' colonial powers, the United States of Europe is either impossible or reactionary under capitalism. . . ."

"A United States of Europe under capitalism is equivalent to an agreement to divide up the colonies. . . ."

"Of course, *temporary* agreements between capitalists and between the powers are possible. In this sense the United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the European capitalists. But what for? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe. . . ." (*Ibid*, Vol. V, pp. 139-40.)

This analysis of the political content of the slogan for a "United States of Europe" applies with full force today when it is flung around as a catch-all for the workers by Norman Thomas and other Social-Democrats. Its fundamentally imperialist character is indicated by the fact that it is advanced impartially by both sides in the present imperialist war—by the German imperialists under the guise of a "New Order in Europe" and by the British and American imperialists and their apologists under its more familiar name. In either case, it represents the aspirations of one or

another imperialist grouping for a coalition of European states under its direct hegemony, resting upon the "backs of Asia and Africa" and directed against the Soviet Union and the revolutionary movement in all countries.

That is what the "internationalism" of Social-Democracy reduces itself to.

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It is a significant historical fact that the international associations of the American revolutionary movement, which reached their highest point in the affiliation of the Communist Party of the United States to the Communist International, have had the result, above all, of profoundly Americanizing that movement and at the same time of drawing it closer to the working class movement of all countries.

The kernel of all the commentaries made by Marx and Engels on the American revolutionary movement, the direction of all their advice, was toward more thoroughly integrating the American revolutionaries with the American masses. The biting sarcasm with which Marx lashed out at one of his former colleagues, Kriege, because of his utopianism in connection with the movement of the American National Reformers; the sharp criticism made of the attempts by the American followers of Marx and Engels to transplant European formulas to the American labor movement; the halt which Marx and Engels called to all efforts of their followers to impose socialist ideas into the American labor movement from the outside without regard to the experience of American work-

ers; the perpetual insistence of Marx and Engels that the American workers would have to arrive at socialism as a result of their own special American experiences and not as a result of the artificial injection of dogmas—all this resulted in the fact that the international association of the American revolutionaries with Marx became a factor for their integration with the American masses, for making better Americans out of them. It had the effect simultaneously of helping establish closer ties between the American workers and the European workers through the international teachings and activities of Marx and Engels.

Lenin's association with the American revolutionary movement carried forward this main line of Marx and Engels. It was Lenin's teachings which helped the American Communists to learn the art of explaining the great problem of the struggle for socialism in America in terms of the experience of the American masses themselves, in terms of their own history, in terms of their rich revolutionary traditions which are given full meaning in the light of the international experience of the working class.

Lenin constantly drew upon the lessons of the American Revolution, upon the lessons of the American Civil War, upon the lessons of the early anti-imperialist movement of the 1890's to illustrate his teachings. In this way he called to the attention of the American Communist Party the fact that the history, traditions and experiences of the American people and of the American labor movement were a vast reservoir into which the American

workers must dip to find the answers to their problems. He taught the American Communist Party to find the explanation for the policies and program of the Communists in the life and experience of the American people itself. He taught the American Communists how really to know America.

Correspondingly, and in the spirit of Marx and Engels, Lenin continuously emphasized the necessity for ridding the American revolutionary movement of those sectarian traits which separated it from the great body of the American working class.

On the basis of a most thorough study of American conditions and of the opinions of Marx and Engels, Lenin wrote:

“What Marx and Engels most of all criticize in British and American socialism is its isolation from the labor movement. The burden of all their numerous comments on the Social-Democratic Federation in England and on the American Socialists is the accusation that they have reduced Marxism to a dogma, to a ‘rigid orthodoxy,’ that they consider it ‘a *credo* and not a *guide to action*,’ that they are incapable of adapting themselves to the labor movement marching side by side with them, which, although helpless theoretically, is a living and powerful mass movement.” (V. I. Lenin, “Preface to Letters to F. A. Sorge,” *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 722-23.)

Lenin summed up the observations of Marx and Engels on America in the following concise terms:

“In countries where there are *no* Social-Democratic workers' parties, *no* Social-Democratic members of parliament, *no* systematic and consistent Social-Democratic policy

either at elections or in the press, etc., Marx and Engels taught that the Socialists must *at all costs* rid themselves of narrow sectarianism and *join* with the labor movement so as to *shake up* the proletariat *politically*, for in the last third of the nineteenth century the proletariat displayed *almost no* political independence either in England or America. In these countries—where bourgeois-democratic historical tasks were almost entirely absent—the political arena was *wholly* filled by the triumphant and self-complacent bourgeoisie, which in the art of deceiving, corrupting and bribing the workers has no equal anywhere in the world.” (*Ibid.*, p. 732.)

In the whole past period, Joseph Stalin has made the most invaluable contributions toward helping the American Communists become the best representatives of the interests of the American proletariat. It was Stalin’s profound contribution to the discussion of the problems of the American working class which armed our Party in the struggle against the treacherous and splitting intrigue of the Lovestone clique, smashed to bits the Lovestone theory of American “exceptionalism,” showed the inevitability of America’s being profoundly affected by the deepening general crisis of capitalism. This prepared our Party politically to take the lead in gathering the forces of the working class for effective organization and struggle, for the fight against unemployment, for all the demands of the workers suffering under the impact of the crisis.

In the course of doing this, Stalin enriched our Party’s understanding

of the fact that proletarian internationalism is based on the common international features of capitalism and the struggle against it, armed us with a fundamental conception of the international character of the struggle of the working class, showed the relationship of the struggle of the American working class to the struggle of the workers of other lands.

Thus, Stalin, like Marx, Engels and Lenin, helped the proletarian vanguard cement the bonds between itself and the workers and toilers of other lands. Stalin’s characterization of the struggle in Spain as the “affair of all advanced and progressive humanity” was a clarion call which helped arouse the advanced workers to a full knowledge of the international character of the struggle of the Spanish people. The Stalinist policy of aid to the struggle of the Chinese people for national independence is a living reminder to the American workers of their own responsibilities to the Chinese people. The Stalinist policy of struggle for peace helped, and helps, the American working class find its place side by side with the workers of all countries in the common international struggle against the imperialist war.

Thus, the international associations of the Communist Party with the great leaders of the world proletariat—Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin—as well as its association with the world Communist movement through its affiliation with the Communist International have contributed something invaluable. They have helped more than anything else to make of our Commu-

nist Party a living current of the American working class, to make it more fully a part of the American people, to make of the American Communists the best type of Americans, and, at the same time, to strengthen their ties with the workers of all lands.

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Most significant and fundamental of all the lessons learned from the international working class movement by the Communist Party, the lessons which the Communist Party of the United States has worked most diligently to transmit to the American working class, are the lessons of the glorious Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

It has taken to heart the words of Lenin:

“Now we already have very considerable international experience which very definitely establishes the fact that some of the fundamental features of our revolution have a significance which is not local, not peculiarly national, not Russian only, but international. I speak here of international significance not in the broad sense of the term: not a few, but all fundamental and many secondary features of our revolution are of international significance in regard to the influence it has upon all countries. I speak of it in the narrowest sense, i.e., by international significance I mean the international validity, or the historical inevitability on an international scale of what has taken place here, and it must be admitted that some of the fundamental features of our revolution possess such significance.” (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. X, p. 57.)

The American proletariat is in an especially favored position to appreciate the international significance of the October Revolution. It can show a special readiness to respond to and to learn from it because of the revolutionary international role which the American people itself has played.

When the “sage of Concord” immortalized in verse the story of those embattled farmers who “*fired the shot heard 'round the world,*” he put into the language of the muse a most profound characterization of the War for Independence in 1776—its international significance. For the American Revolution reverberated through all the countries of Europe, galvanizing great popular revolutions into motion. The “American example” became in the eighteenth century the bane of existence of the crowned heads of Europe.

When Abraham Lincoln—through a letter of his ambassador in England—responded to the address of the First International, he showed a great consciousness of the international significance of the American Civil War:

“Nations do not exist for themselves alone, but to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind by benevolent intercourse and example. It is in this relation that the United States regard their cause in the present conflict with slavery—maintaining insurgents as the cause of human nature, and they derive new encouragement to persevere from the testimony of the working men of Europe that the national attitude is favored with their enlightened approval and earnest sympathies.”



Not in any narrow national light as a mere domestic issue concerning the United States alone, but as an "example" to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind beyond America's borders—this is how Abraham Lincoln understood the international significance of the second American revolution, the Civil War.

Thus, twice within a century, the American people carried through great revolutions which had international significance and played an international role. Despite the hostility with which these revolutions were met by the ruling classes of Europe, the "American example" in both cases proved highly fruitful. The "American example" was absorbed and spread by the masses in all the countries of Europe.

"As in the eighteenth century, the American War of Independence sounded the tocsin for the European middle class, so in the nineteenth century the American Civil War sounded it for the European working class." (Karl Marx, "Author's Preface to First Edition," *Capital*, p. 14.)

A people which twice in its history has set an example from which other nations learned can readily appreciate the necessity of itself learning by international example. Having been itself subjected to taunts, jibes and sneers for being the "horrible American example" of 1776 and 1860, the American people will not shrink back when these same stale imprecations are hurled by the present ruling classes at the "Russian example" of 1917 and its great leaders, Lenin and

Stalin. That is why the Communist Party of the United States considers it one of its profoundest international obligations to bring the extremely rich and valuable lessons of the successful struggle for liberation of the Russian workers and farmers as drawn by Lenin and Stalin to the workers and farmers of the United States.

The Soviet Union, led by the great Stalin, has for almost a quarter of a century now been realizing the profound international teachings of Lenin. In its very structure as a great union of socialist republics formed by granting the right of self-determination to all nations which had formerly been oppressed in the tsarist prison of nations, the Soviet Union symbolizes this proletarian internationalism.

Its policies and actions, both domestic and foreign, represent the quintessence of proletarian internationalism. It has consistently adhered to this course because of its fundamental characteristic as a socialist power: the interests of the Soviet Union are identical with the interests of the workers and the broad masses of the people in all lands. This complete harmony between the building of socialism in the Soviet Union and the most concrete expressions of solidarity with the workers in the capitalist countries expresses on a higher social stage, in a country where the workers have state power, the truth continuously elaborated by Lenin that the workers of all countries have common interests.

The whole peace policy of the Soviet Union, both prior to the outbreak of the present war and, now,

during the present war, combines the interests of the Soviet masses who need peace to build socialism, and the interests of the workers in the capitalist countries which demand peace and a struggle against imperialism and for socialism. In its concrete aid to republican Spain whose struggle Stalin called "the affair of all advanced and progressive humanity," as well as in its steady and unwavering material aid to the Chinese people, the Soviet Union has given unmatched examples of true proletarian internationalism.

The liberation of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union, the freeing of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina from Rumanian capitalist rule were all instances of the supreme form of proletarian internationalism—the liberation from capitalist oppression of almost twenty-five million people by the workers of the Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin.

The Soviet Union stands before the workers of all lands as a powerful, anti-imperialist, peace-pursuing socialist power. Its policy teaches lessons to the workers in the capitalist countries. Based on its understanding that both camps in the war are imperialist, the Soviet Union refuses to be a partner to either side. It follows its own independent policy of socialist neutrality in order to strengthen its socialist positions and to advance the interests of the struggle against imperialism, for peace, and for socialism all over the world. As against the reactionary efforts of Social-Democracy to chain the working class to support of the imperialist war, the policy of the Soviet Union, led by Joseph Stalin, teaches the workers in the capitalist countries to struggle against the imperialist war, to develop their own independent class policy, to strengthen their organizations and positions, and to develop the struggle against imperialism, and for socialism.

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## ON SOME ASPECTS OF FOREIGN POLICY

BY EARL BROWDER

**T**HERE have been several requests that I deal with comments of the capitalist press on my Boston speech of October 6, and to develop further some of the points of that speech. I do this the more readily, since many persons have misinterpreted that speech to obscure one of its main points, which needs constant re-emphasis. I said:

*"It will be worse than useless for the United States to approach the Soviet Union in the hopes of finding an ally in a war, the aims of which are to redistribute the colonies and subject peoples among the great powers. The Soviet Union will never participate in such a war."\**

That would seem to be clear and definite. Yet for the capitalist press and commentators, another phrase was taken from the speech, and interpreted to mean just the opposite; namely, that I was advocating that the United States should seek to obtain the Soviet Union as an ally in the imperialist war. I must emphatically repudiate such a suggestion.

It is necessary for me, however, to admit that I carelessly helped these falsifiers, when I gave them the quotable and ambiguous formulation of a "Washington-Moscow-

Chungking Axis" as a possible description of what would result from a correct people's policy for peace on the part of the United States. That made it too easy for gentlemen like Mr. Sokolsky and others to distort the whole question and obscure the real issues. Therefore I must disclaim this formulation of "Axis," and make this the occasion for deepening the whole question.

One of the chief features of the international situation, and the decisive factor for the United States, is the fact that the United States Government is pursuing a policy of feverish intervention in the imperialist war. It has embarked upon a gigantic and intense drive for building the greatest empire the world has ever seen, with the instrument of an overwhelming military machine. In this course it is expressing the will of the united American bourgeoisie. The policy and aspirations of Washington may be summed up in two headlines from *The United States News*—"Unofficial Merger of Britain and U.S." (Oct. 4, 1940), and "America to be Enriched by Vast British Holdings" (Nov. 29, 1940). For these aims American youth is conscripted, the masses are loaded with the burdens of enormous armaments, social and labor legislation is being

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\* See: *An American Foreign Policy for Peace*, p. 13, Workers Library Publishers, New York.

dismantled, civil liberties are curtailed and swiftly being extinguished, and standards of living are driven down. For the masses the slogans are "national defense" and "democracy," but among the ruling classes it is frankly and outspokenly for "enrichment," for empire.

The American bourgeoisie is united behind this policy. But it is not fully united on *how to realize it*. One important difference is that one trend says, in the words of another headline in *The United States News*, that it would be wise to consider "Russia and China—New Allies for the U.S." (Oct. 11, 1940); or in the words of Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen in a recent issue of *Look* magazine, "the U.S. and Russia are natural allies"; or to quote the *New York Daily News*, "We should hold our nose and make a deal with Stalin." Another trend says, in the words of George Sokolsky:

"It is preferable to go down to defeat than to be victorious as the little ally of the Russian Brute. It is preferable to suffer the agonies of a prolonged world war than to accept peace as a bounty from Stalin." (*New York Sun*, Oct. 9, 1940.)

Now both these trends are part of the one war camp of the bourgeoisie. Both consider relations with the Soviet Union purely from the angle of whether the United States can or cannot use the Soviet Union as a catspaw for its own imperialist purposes. The first says it is possible and should be tried; the second says it is impossible and that to try it would be dangerous. Both are

war policies, against the interests of the American working class and equally against the interests of the Soviet Union.

The American people, the real nation, are truly the "natural allies" of the Soviet Union and its peoples; but "Washington," that is, the present imperialist, war-making regime, is a natural enemy of the Soviet Union and of its policies of peace, of neutrality toward the imperialist war, of limiting the war and stopping it at the earliest possible moment. Washington, Roosevelt and the American bourgeoisie see in the Soviet Union the most powerful obstacle to the realization of their grandiose dreams of a far-flung American empire.

The approach of Washington and our ruling classes toward China is purely imperialistic. For years the United States complacently furnished the Japanese militarists with the materials for their war of conquest in China. Only now, when the Japanese threaten to seize the whole Far-Eastern colonial empire, including the rubber, tin, and oil of Indonesia, does the United States, still niggardly and half-heartedly, grant some credits to China and threaten to cut off supplies from Japan.

Clearly, under present circumstances, to speak of any alliance or even collaboration between the United States, China, and the Soviet Union, except as the result of the reversal or defeat of the present policies of Washington, only means to pour water on the mill of the imperialist war-makers.

Does this mean, however, that we shall not urge the American people

to demand a correct policy toward both China and the Soviet Union, a policy that would truly be in the interests of the people of all three countries, a policy of peace? Of course, it means that we *shall* urge and fight for such a policy. But we must always point out that the people's interests clash with those of Wall Street, and the Wall Street-dominated government, and that such a policy must be imposed by the people.

Does this mean that the United States Government must inevitably, so long as it remains an imperialist, capitalist government, further follow up its hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union? Not necessarily, for even Nazi Germany found it advisable to replace its hostility with a formally correct attitude toward the Soviet Union. At least as much may be demanded, and gained, from the Government of the United States, by an informed and alert working class.

Clearly, all phases of a correct people's policy of peace—neutrality toward the imperialist war, friendship with the Soviet Union, real help to China, the denial of aid to the Japanese invaders of China, limitation of the spread of the war, and its earliest end—all these things must be continuously demanded from whatever administration holds power in the country. They may be

achieved in part, by a sufficiently energetic struggle of the masses, against the will of the bourgeoisie, before imperialism is thrown out of power.

But they will be achieved only by struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie and its policies, and never by falling under any illusions of collaboration between the working class and this imperialist bourgeoisie.

These considerations were the foundation of and were implicit in my Boston speech of October 6. Any contrary implications drawn from the "Axis" formulation are false and dangerous; and the use of that formulation is wrong as giving color to such implications.

The Soviet Union is the stronghold of peace for the workers and oppressed peoples of the world. It is fully capable of defending itself from any attacks, especially since it has the warm sympathy, love, and support of the toiling masses over the whole world. It is steadfastly holding its peoples outside the area of the imperialist war, giving an example thereby of how the interests of the American masses could best be protected. It is a beacon light showing us and the whole world the way out of capitalist oppression, starvation and war, to a new world of socialist freedom, plenty and peace.

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# ORGANIZED LABOR'S TWO CONVENTIONS

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

## *The Conventions and the War*

**T**HE second imperialist war is raging on with increasing fury and unparalleled destruction. British, German, French, Italian and Japanese imperialism are locked in a death struggle for a redivision of the world. American imperialism, in a more or less well-defined military alliance with Great Britain, is steadily marching into the war. Among its major war objectives are the aims to establish its imperialist rule throughout Latin America; to cripple Japan's control and to extend its own in the Far East; to prevent the establishment of a powerful German imperialism; to share in the loot of the shattered French, Dutch and Belgian empires; and to set up a receivership over the collapsing British Empire. While pursuing these imperialist foreign policies, Wall Street and its Roosevelt government are also seeking by various devices to foist the huge cost of this war program onto the shoulders of the workers and other toilers.

For the masses of the American people, the continuation of this whole complex of imperialist policy can bring only wholesale impoverishment, political reaction and military slaughter. First, on the decisive question of this country's foreign

policy, the main task confronting the A. F. of L.'s sixtieth convention at New Orleans and the C.I.O.'s third convention at Atlantic City, in order to protect their members' interests, may be briefly stated under three main points: (a) to repudiate the Roosevelt government's pro-war program and to join with the people's peace forces of the country generally in a struggle to keep America out of the war; (b) to insist upon the dissolution of the alliance between the United States and Great Britain, which is daily taking on more of a war-like character; (c) to demand the reorientation of American foreign policy upon the basis of developing a peace collaboration with the Soviet Union, China, India, Latin America, and the other democratic and oppressed peoples of the earth.

The responsibility of the two great divisions of the labor movement to take this clear line regarding American foreign policy was all the greater because there is no broad Labor Party to which the masses of workers could look for guidance. As for the A. F. of L. convention, dominated by reactionary bureaucrats, it not only failed completely to provide the working class with the necessary leadership in the growing war crisis—it gave the wrong lead. Instead of con-

demning the war, the A. F. of L. blessed it and gave full allegiance to the war policies of the Wall Street government. The A. F. of L. leaders supported the Anglo-American military alliance by praising Great Britain as "the last outpost in the Old World in defense of democracy," and by calling for all aid to that country. They also gave a blanket endorsement to American imperialism's policies of aggressive conquest in all parts of the earth. As little even as the big capitalists themselves did these labor bureaucrats favor peace collaboration with the U.S.S.R. Hailing Wall Street's "national unity" fraud, they did everything possible to make the labor movement an integral part of the war machine of American imperialism. About their only worry was that the labor bureaucracy is not being given fuller representation by the Government in carrying out the war program.

In line with this reactionary policy, the A. F. of L. convention added its weight to the rising tide of war hysteria in the country by a full endorsement of the F.B.I. and the Dies Committee, by demanding that the Communist Party be ruled off the ballot, and by vilifying the Soviet Union. The A. F. of L. Executive Council, among its other anti-Soviet lies, actually had the brass to declare that Germany and the U.S.S.R. had had a working alliance in the Spanish war.

To make doubly sure that the A. F. of L. convention would plump for the war program, the Government launched a big concentration of warmongers there. The President himself sent a pro-war letter, and

to the same effect Secretaries Stimson and Perkins appeared in person. Representatives of the American Legion were also on hand. Star warmongers also were Citrine and Stampfer, labor bureaucrats of Great Britain and Germany, who presented European Social-Democracy's arguments as to why our workers should sacrifice their lives and liberties for the American capitalists in the war.

As against this deluge of chauvinism and warmongering, not one strong voice was raised at the convention to expose the imperialistic character of the war and the warlike nature of our Government's policies—a situation which emphasizes afresh the need of a progressive opposition throughout the A. F. of L. to give expression to the will of the membership, as against that of the ultra-reactionary leadership.

In contrast to the unrelieved warmongering of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats in New Orleans, the C.I.O. convention took an essentially anti-war position. The Government agents, captained by Sidney Hillman, did not succeed in roping the C.I.O. convention into the pro-war "national unity." Although the C.I.O. by no means grasped the full significance of the war, it reflected, in the main, the peace wishes of its membership and the American people. The convention refused to endorse the war as a fight for democracy, but instead condemned it (although all too vaguely) as imperialist in character. The convention expressed a determination to stay out of the hostilities and gave no endorsement to the war policy of "all aid to Great Britain," or to



other warlike foreign policies of American imperialism. Furthermore, although it did not condemn the armament program as such, it warned the American people against dangers in the huge militarization now going on, and urged them to protect their democratic gains and living standards from the rapacious profiteers and war-makers.

The C.I.O. sessions were not cluttered up with Government and outside Social-Democratic warmongers, unlike the A. F. of L. gathering. The Government was depending on Sidney Hillman to line up the C.I.O. behind its program. Mr. Hillman has his hand-picked Labor Policy Advisory Committee of the National Defense Committee—a committee which was not officially delegated or endorsed by either the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and the Railroad Brotherhoods, but which is nevertheless presuming to speak in the name of all organized labor. The A. F. of L. leaders more or less automatically dovetail with Hillman's war committee, so his big job was to bring the C.I.O. under its control.

Despite its basically anti-war stand, there were serious weaknesses in the C.I.O. convention's actions on questions of foreign policy. If uncorrected, these shortcomings can lead to surrender or to defeat at the hands of the warmongers. They can lead eventually to an endorsement of the war, as we see in the case of the C.I.O. in Canada.

First, the convention, although refraining from endorsing Roosevelt's foreign policies and his program of "national defense," did not fully expose their war character. Notably the convention did not go so far as

Lewis did in his election speech, when he declared categorically and correctly:

"Those . . . who have studied the public addresses of the President . . . will understand his motivations and his objective. It is war. His every act leads one to this inescapable conclusion."

Secondly, the convention did not clearly enough warn against dangers of the so-called "national unity," but, instead, demanded participation and representation in the various war boards. Murray's post-convention plan to have the unions guarantee war production is a dangerous step in the wrong direction.

Thirdly, the convention's anti-war program, so far as it related to foreign policy, had too much of a negative, isolationist character. It was too restricted to a reiteration of the generality that we should stay out of the war; it lacked a fundamental and detailed criticism of the Government's foreign policy. Also, it gave only a faint suggestion of peace collaboration with the democratic forces of the world and it ignored altogether the vital question of American-Soviet cooperation for peace.

Fourthly, the convention made a dangerous concession to the Dies-Green-Hillman Red-baiters and warmongers by adopting the anti-Communist resolution. This resolution, by lumping together fascism and communism and by condemning communism as "inimical to the welfare of labor" is a gross falsification on its face. No clearer proof of this is necessary than the loyal and effective work of the Communists in helping build the

C.I.O. One of the basic reasons for the success of the C.I.O. is precisely that it has generally refrained from Red-baiting. The chaos caused in the United Automobile Workers Union a couple of years ago by the notorious Red-baiter and company agent, Homer Martin, should be a warning not to allow this disease to develop in the C.I.O., not to permit reactionaries in the C.I.O. to use the resolution for this purpose.

The anti-war position of the convention constituted a defeat for the pro-war Hillman forces, who, speculating on differences among the C.I.O. leadership over the recent elections, hoped to stampede the convention for Roosevelt's war program. The decisions of the C.I.O. convention regarding the Government's war trend, despite their many weaknesses, should be supported by the workers in their fight to keep this country out of the imperialist war. But the C.I.O.'s anti-war program must be supplemented along the lines of the stated criticisms. Especially is it necessary to oppose the developing imperialistic war alliance between the United States and Great Britain and to strive to reorientate American policy on the basis of a friendly peace collaboration with the U.S.S.R., China, and other anti-imperialist forces throughout the world.

#### *Organized Labor's Domestic Policies*

The domestic phase of the Government's war program, which, broadly stated, is to tie labor to the war chariot and to load the war costs upon the toilers, requires the breaking down of the resolute peace sentiments of the American people

and the regimentation of the workers in the interests of the profiteering greed of the capitalists. Hence, the growing attacks upon the democratic organizations, economic standards, social legislation and civil liberties of the people, including the current vigorous assaults upon the right to strike, the growing efforts to establish compulsory arbitration, the attempts to undermine the Wage-and-Hours Act and to wipe out all restrictions upon the length of the working day, the continued persecution of the trade unions under the anti-trust law, the efforts to castrate the National Labor Relations Act by amending it and by placing Dr. Harry A. Millis at the head of the Board, the further jettisoning of the W.P.A. and the national health program and social services generally, and the intensified drive to outlaw the Communist Party.

A trade union movement intelligently and loyally defending the interests of its membership necessarily would have to come into conflict with this whole domestic program of American imperialism. However, inasmuch as the foreign and domestic phases of American imperialism's war program are all of one piece, the reactionary A. F. of L. convention, having fully endorsed Roosevelt's foreign policy, inevitably accepted in substance his domestic policy. It enthusiastically subscribed to the capitalistic pro-war "national unity." But the A. F. of L. convention, however subservient its leaders may be to the Government and Wall Street, could not frankly accept the many plans of the employers to increase the eco-

conomic exploitation of the workers. This would have constituted a dangerous affront to the increasingly militant mass of A. F. of L. members. Seeing the cost of living mounting and the employers making huge profits, these workers want their wages raised, the speed-up system checked, the attacks upon the unions and upon the right to strike halted, and the scuttling of the Government's social security program stopped. They are very much in a mood to defend themselves, and their fighting spirit is stimulated by the activities of the C.I.O.

So the A. F. of L. high moguls in convention, in their role as labor lieutenants of the capitalists, felt compelled to cover up their policies of surrender to the Government and employers on the domestic field by some formal pretenses of opposition and by thick layers of demagogy. One would be naive indeed to take at its face value the A. F. of L. convention decision that it will fight against Government contracts going to violators of the National Labor Relations Act, or to believe William Green's wordy defense of the workers' right to strike. Such stuff is for rank-and-file consumption. The real policy of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, expressed by many actualities, is that the workers, in the interests of "national defense," must make sacrifices in their standards of living and civil liberties. That these leaders themselves, however, propose to make no sacrifices was made clear by the salary boost of Meany and Green from \$10,000 to \$12,000 and \$18,000 to \$20,000 respectively.

The letters and speech of Presi-

dent Roosevelt, Secretaries Stimson and Perkins, and other Government officials calling upon the A. F. of L. workers to make "sacrifices" were received sympathetically by the convention of high-paid bureaucrats. This showed their true policy. Also, with the spokesmen of the Government and the employers demanding that the work-week be extended to fifty or fifty-five hours, the A. F. of L. leaders, defending the forty-hour week, tongue-in-cheek, expressed their readiness for the workers to work ten or twelve hours per day "if necessary." And when the capitalist press, outraged by the Vultee aircraft strike, was clamoring for the abolition of the right to strike in "defense" industries, Green at the convention exposed his true policy by condemning such strikes and proposing what was virtually compulsory arbitration. While giving lip service to democracy, the convention and its leaders worked closely with the twin Gestapos—the F.B.I. and the Dies Committee. And similarly when, emboldened by the spreading war hysteria, the employers are increasing their assaults upon the workers' right to organize, the A. F. of L. convention made it a special point to press its reactionary amendments to the Wagner Act.

The manner in which the A. F. of L. convention leaders covered up their actual surrender policy with demagogy was illustrated in a statement made by George Meany, Secretary-Treasurer of the A. F. of L., a gem carried by the Associated Press on November 13. Said Mr. Meany: "The A. F. of L. is prepared to make sacrifices to hasten the de-

fense program, but at the same time we will fight to retain the gains we have won." Thus, Mr. Meany wonderfully proposes at once to retreat and to stand his ground. Which end of Meany's self-contradictory policy the A. F. of L. leaders are actually putting into effect is evidenced by their course of subordinating the workers to the Government policies. Just as in the case of the foreign policies, so the domestic policies expressed by the realities of the A. F. of L. convention are in violation of the interests of the workers. Only by mass pressure against their leaders can the A. F. of L. workers advance their desire for peace and protect their working, living and civic standards.

As in the case of the A. F. of L. convention, there was also a harmony between the foreign and domestic policies adopted by the C.I.O. convention, but in a reverse sense. For, notwithstanding some shortcomings, the C.I.O.'s policies in both spheres were directed against the war.

Whereas at the A. F. of L. convention the central idea behind the domestic policies endorsed was acceptance of the Government-employer demand that the workers must sacrifice in the name of "national defense," the C.I.O. convention correctly called upon the workers to defend their economic and political demands. The convention stood on the principle that the first condition for national defense is to enhance the prosperity of the people and to develop American democracy. John L. Lewis expressed the spirit of the convention in the following declarations:

"I associate myself with the fifty-two million shrunken bellies in this country and I am for them regardless of any consideration, regardless of their creed or color, their previous condition of servitude or anything else. . . .

"I represent that spirit of labor which is dissatisfied with year after year of exploitation, and is determined to fight for labor's rightful share in the bounty."

In this militant vein, and against the resistance and sabotage of the Hillman pro-war minority, the convention conducted its business. The sum total of its work is a program genuinely conforming to the interests of the great democratic masses of the American people. The economic heart of this program is contained in the following five-points presented by Lewis:

"1. The proportion of all income which goes to wages must increase. . . .

"2. The cost of living must be protected by the maintenance of a stable and reasonable price structure. . . .

"3. Profits must be kept at a reasonable and just level. . . .

"4. The national tax structure needs a vigorous reversal in its now seriously retrogressive character [which tends to place the main burden on low-income groups]. . . .

"5. A further expansion in purchasing power must be made available to beneficiaries under the Social Security program and the unemployed."

Upon this general basis the C.I.O. convention adopted a series of resolutions for improved wage standards, for shorter hours, against the

speed-up, for the enforcement of the Wages-and-Hours law and the Walsh-Healey Act, against profiteering, for a broad housing and unemployment program, for expansion of the social security laws, for a national health program, and for a more effective farm program. Altogether, although one may dispute the C.I.O.'s theory of "reasonable and just" profits, this economic program is one that corresponds to the basic needs of the toiling masses in these war times.

The C.I.O. convention, furthermore, sounded a clarion call to the workers and other toilers to defend their threatened civil liberties. In the center of this program is the defense of the workers' right to strike, now so heavily attacked by the employers, the Government, and labor misleaders of the Green-Hillman brand. The convention also insisted upon the enforcement of all social legislation against the war-profiters; it demanded the revocation of the infamous poll tax laws and the abolition of discriminating practices against Negroes, women, youth and foreign born; it outlined a program for the protection of the draftees in the armed forces; and it demanded the annulment of the W.P.A. amendment discriminating against minority parties.

The C.I.O.'s program of immediate economic and political demands offers a practical platform, not only for its own membership, but for the workers in the A. F. of L. and railroad unions, as well as the huge masses of unorganized. It should have laid more stress, however, on the six-hour day and the thirty-

hour week, to counteract the persistent mass unemployment and the present terrific speed-up in the basic industries. The big job now is to popularize and apply the C.I.O. program throughout the labor movement.

The whole political line of the C.I.O. convention was worked out under the active leadership of John L. Lewis. But now Lewis has stepped out of the C.I.O. presidency and the Hillmanites and other Right elements in the organization are jubilant. Philip Murray stands at the helm of the C.I.O. and these reactionary forces are hopefully expecting him to veer sharply in their direction. Upon Murray therefore rests a grave responsibility to live up to the militancy that is the life blood of the C.I.O. It will require determination and foresight on his part to oppose the Government, employer and Hillmanite war-makers amidst the intensifying drive towards war, to protect the right to strike by encouraging the workers to practice it whenever necessary, and to help defend generally the economic and political interests of the workers. It is only by such a militant course that the C.I.O. program can be made into a reality. Any yielding in the direction of the Roosevelt-Green-Hillman foreign and domestic policies would fundamentally jeopardize the policies laid down by the Atlantic City convention by taking the punch out of the wage movements, organizing campaigns, and other mass activities outlined by the C.I.O. And there are many powerful leaders in the coal, automobile, steel, textile, rubber, clothing, and

other C.I.O. unions who are urging Murray to do just this.

### *Strengthening Labor's Forces*

The workers, facing the present menacing American and world situation, have urgent need to strengthen their ranks organizationally, as well as programmatically. How the conventions of the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. handled this basic problem can only briefly be commented upon in this article.

(a) *Organization of the Unorganized*: With unemployment decreasing somewhat and the cost of living rising steadily, great masses of workers are predisposed to join the unions, and if organized labor is alert it can readily add several million new members to its ranks during the present period. The C.I.O. convention, announcing a membership of "over 4,000,000" and a substantial recent growth, correctly laid heavy stress upon this question of organization. Active campaigns were outlined for the aircraft, Ford, Bethlehem, lumber, oil, and other industries. The new President, Philip Murray, stated that the C.I.O. would inaugurate the greatest organizing campaign in the history of the United States. The A. F. of L., claiming an all-time record membership of 4,247,443, including the recently re-admitted International Ladies Garment Workers Union, concerned itself considerably, although in its usual planless way, with the recruitment of members. Progressive and Left-wing trade unionists everywhere should lend all possible support to organizing work, especially that of the C.I.O.

unions. Inseparably connected with this fundamental question are the vital issues of defending the strike right and other civil liberties, protecting the living standards of the workers, and developing generally the mass peace opposition to Wall Street's war program.

(b) *Trade Union Unity*: This basic question also occupied a great deal of attention at the two conventions. Much "unity" agitation came from the Government, directly through the President and also via his labor spokesmen, Green, Hillman, *et al.* The Government and the employers keenly realize the great difficulty of anaesthetizing the working class with their war demagogy as long as the C.I.O. unions are carrying on a militant struggle, thereby giving stimulus and leadership to the workers everywhere. Hence the eagerness of Government and employer spokesmen for their kind of trade union unity—one which would bring the whole labor movement under deadening control of pro-war leaders of the Green-Hillman type.

Green of the A. F. of L. talked much about labor unity; but behind his glib proposals to negotiate with the C.I.O. on this question "anytime, any place, anywhere," lurked the same old plan of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats to split up the C.I.O. industrial unions into crafts. John P. Frey let the cat out of the bag when he declared at the convention of the A. F. of L. Metal Trades Department:

"There is no conceivable way to which the A. F. of L. metal workers could merge with secessionists from their own organizations and new members recruited by the C.I.O.

unions except to absorb them into the existing unions." (P.M., November 13.)

The C.I.O. convention wisely rejected the spurious unity proposals of the Government and the A. F. of L. leaders and reiterated its own genuine plan of achieving unity through the affiliation of the C.I.O. unions in a body to the A. F. of L., with the adjustment later on of jurisdictional problems. Such unity as the C.I.O. proposes, conserving the industrial structure of the C.I.O. unions and maintaining their progressive program and leadership, would give a powerful stimulus to the entire labor movement.

(c) *Working Class Independent Political Action:* Never was there such a broad mass basis for the workers to develop their independent political action in the general direction of an eventual Farmer-Labor Party as there is now. The workers and farmers are definitely demanding a whole set of economic and political measures that should serve as their independent program, and the two old parties, heading for war and the reduction of the people's liberties and living standards, are in no way representing the interests of the masses. The recent Presidential election showed that the Roosevelt prestige is gradually on the wane. As Earl Browder pointed out at the recent meeting of the National Committee of the Communist Party, never before did the masses vote for the old party candidates with so many doubts, misgivings and reservations. Thus, more and more favorable, therefore, grow the possibilities for a wide third

party that would fight for peace and for other mass demands.

Neither of the two labor conventions met squarely this growing need of the toilers for independent political action leading toward a mass party of their own. The C.I.O., true to its progressive role, went further in the correct direction than the A. F. of L., by stressing the need for labor, on the basis of "a common program with all other progressive elements," to "assure an independent political role for organized labor." But this formulation is too vague and uncertain; the times call for preliminary preparations for a break with the two old parties and the eventual establishment of a new party of the people. As for the A. F. of L. convention, it stuck in the mud altogether. Its leaders reiterated the stale and profitless "non-partisan" policy of "rewarding labor's friends and punishing its enemies."

The progressive and Left-wing forces in the trade unions should raise much more sharply the question of concrete, independent political action than was done at the C.I.O. convention. During the early years of the New Deal, the workers secured some political recognition through the Democratic Party; but that time is now past. The Democratic Party's policies have become virtually identical with those of the Republican Party and have nothing in common with the interests of the great bulk of the people. The labor unions, nine million strong, require imperatively, along with the farmers, the Negroes, the youth and other democratic strata, a political party of their own.

(d) *Questions of Leadership:* The American labor movement has long urgently needed more honest and progressive leaders. The C.I.O. convention, vibrant with militancy, showed this new type of leadership in the making. Even the bourgeois correspondents pointed out the striking contrast between the young and alert delegates in Atlantic City and the stodgy, fossilized and reactionary bureaucrats who predominated at New Orleans. However, the resignation of John L. Lewis, as a consequence of his election speech, places heavy responsibilities upon the incoming Murray administration. During the past several years, Lewis has made a remarkable reputation for his militant organizational work and political progressivism, a fact strikingly attested to by the repeated, enthusiastic demonstrations given him by the convention delegates. His amazing blanket endorsement of Willkie dealt a heavy blow to his prestige among the masses.

As president of the United Mine Workers, however, Lewis will remain a powerful trade union figure. If he stays out of the Willkie camp and cultivates an independent political role for labor, he can exert a great influence in the whole labor movement, especially because the war orientation of the Government will increasingly demonstrate the correctness of his criticism of the President. While reactionaries generally are gloating over the resignation of Lewis, many of them are afraid that he will continue his role. A spokesman for such elements is G. E. Sokolsky, who, much alarmed, says in the *New York Sun* of Nov.

27, "John L. Lewis has come out of the C.I.O. convention at Atlantic City even a more sinister figure than he has been in the past five years."

At the A. F. of L. convention, the leadership dabbled about with the question of cleansing racketeering from their ranks. But after considerable pother, in which Dubinsky got much cheap notoriety, they finally sidestepped the issue by adopting an innocuous resolution which passed the buck back to the affiliated unions. Nothing more was to be expected. The A. F. of L. convention was controlled by an organized group of cold-blooded, self-seeking and cynical bureaucrats with hardly more proletarian class spirit than so many capitalists. Strong pillars of their clique control are the hundreds of gangsters and crooks who infest key positions in the Building Trades, Teamsters, Longshoremen, Stagehands, Building Service Employees and many other A. F. of L. unions. Therefore, to expect the A. F. of L. leaders voluntarily to take action against these corrupt henchmen, from whom their power so largely derives, would be naive. The progressive elements in the labor movement will not bide content with the whitewash administered to the gangsters by the A. F. of L. convention. For twenty years the Communists, and for a like number of years before them the I.W.W. and the Left-wing Socialists, have fought against gangsterism and corruption in the labor movement. This struggle, militant workers should now prosecute with renewed energy. Under no circumstances should they allow this important issue to be ex-



ploited by such reactionary, anti-union elements as Westbrook Pegler.

The most dangerous figure among the leadership of either of the two conventions was Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. Mr. Hillman, Social-Democrat and Roosevelt's hand-picked labor "representative" on the National Defense Board, is an obvious aspirant for the role in the United States of a Citrine or Jouhaux, a MacDonald or a Blum. Hillman, banking upon the hope that Lewis' ill-advised election speech would kill his influence, came to the C.I.O. convention with the intention of either splitting it over the Roosevelt-Green fake labor unity proposal, or stampeding the convention for the Administration's war program, or both. But Hillman found a big majority of the delegates enthusiastically supporting Lewis, and learned to his surprise that he himself was on the spot. Especially were the delegates opposed to him because of his sneaking endorsement of military conscription and his shameful surrender to the Government on the issue of allotting war contracts to law-violating companies. So Hillman pulled in his horns and decided to remain within the C.I.O., in the hope of destroying its militancy from the inside.

Mr. Hillman, like other reactionaries when caught in a corner, sought to shield himself by a recourse to Red baiting. While his aides were demanding (in vain, as it turned out), that Communists be excluded from all C.I.O. official positions, Hillman took the lead in attacking the Communist members of the C.I.O. Among other vilifications,

he said, "Their loyalty is to an organization outside of this organization. . . . Their loyalty is to someone else. They will take orders." Hillman certainly has a crust to make such a charge inasmuch as he himself, selected personally by Roosevelt as his labor agent, was at the very moment slavishly carrying out the orders of the capitalist government, by trying his utmost to ram Wall Street's war program down the unwilling throats of the C.I.O. delegates.

Hillman displayed the characteristic anti-Communist bitterness of a renegade. With his eye on future government promotion and eager to please his conservative friends, Hillman was at considerable pains in the convention carefully to whitewash himself against possible accusations of earlier radicalism by denying that he had ever been a member of the Communist Party. He failed to mention, however, his affiliation with the Red International of Labor Unions and the Trade Union Educational League during the early years of those organizations. Opportunist that he was then, as he is now, Hillman joined up with the R.I.L.U. movement at that time when, by a widespread growth of the T.U.E.L. influence in the trade unions, it seemed like an easy path to power. But later on, when the labor movement began to encounter strong opposition, the opportunist Hillman abandoned it and set his feet upon more facile roads to personal advancement. Now he unscrupulously condemns as foreign agents those fighters who have remained loyal to the proletarian internationalism which he betrayed.

*The Conventions and the  
Perspective*

The basic meaning of the present imperialist war is that the world capitalist system is sinking deeper and deeper into crisis and that it is approaching profound economic and political upheavals. Obviously, as the war proceeds, the capitalist system as a whole is growing constantly weaker. The warring powers are destroying one another's industries and cities. Their counter-blockades and mutual holocausts have already brought Europe to the brink of famine. All the capitalist powers have become financially undermined. A whole row of countries have been militarily subjugated and devastated. The French, Dutch and Belgian empires are shattered, while the great British Empire is fighting desperately with its back to the wall. Italian imperialism, decayed and rotten, is tottering in the war with Greece. Japan has seriously sapped its strength while battering its head against the stubborn resistance of nationalist China. German imperialism, also rotten at the heart, and greatly overestimated because of its easily won victories over capitalist states which relied on "appeasement" policies, is vainly trying to tinker together the shaky European capitalist system under Hitler's New World Order. American imperialism is also now feverishly arming itself and hastening along the fatal road to war.

Meanwhile, as world capitalism decays, the world forces of democracy and socialism grow in strength. The great U.S.S.R., standing aside

from the murderous imperialist war, is daily increasing its power and prestige. The fighting Chinese people are scoring important victories against Japanese imperialism. The huge masses in India are surging with revolt against British imperialism. In Europe, too, not only in the subjugated and invaded countries, but also in fascist Germany and Italy, there is a growing mass resentment against the war and the capitalist system which spawned it.

Neither the C.I.O. nor the A. F. of L. convention, however, with their leaderships still adhering openly to capitalism, made anything approaching a fundamental examination of the world social forces at play, and of the deeper significance of the wars, economic crises, and fascism with which humanity is now being plagued. Nor did either work out a satisfactory long-run program for the stormy days ahead. Nevertheless, both conventions, especially the C.I.O., sensed serious trouble looming during the war period and afterward. John L. Lewis pointed out the danger of an unparalleled economic crash of the present dizzy war economy after hostilities cease, and he insisted upon the need of applying the basic measures of the C.I.O. economic and political program in order to forestall it.

Less disturbed and less far-seeing, William Green took occasion to tell the world that:

"The American Federation of Labor supports our American capitalist system and free enterprise . . . just as vigorously as we support trade unions and the right to organize and bargain collectively."

But even into his reactionary and capitalist-lackey mind there had penetrated a fear that all will not be well after the war. Although Green voiced the illusion that the "defense program" will practically wipe out unemployment by 1943, he is afraid of a serious let-down after the war. But he is "confident" that the employers will "accept" a thirty-hour week as the solution for unemployment.

Obviously the superficial analyses of the American and world situations made by the two labor conventions are quite unsatisfactory. Labor cannot find its true path through the deepening world crisis upon the basis of such analysis. It is imperative that the American trade union movement develop a Marxist-

Leninist analysis of what is happening in the world. Labor must come to realize that capitalism is decaying at the heart, that a broad People's Front government is necessary to protect even the elementary rights of the people, and that only in socialism can the workers look forward to a perspective of peace, prosperity and freedom. To give organized labor its indispensable socialist analysis and perspective is above all the task of the Communists. The time is more than due for the development of an educational campaign in the trade unions and in the shops for socialism, upon the basis of specific American conditions and problems and with the vast socialist experience of the U.S.-S.R. as guide and inspiration.

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# THE REAL REASONS FOR TRADE UNION PROGRESS

BY ROY HUDSON

**T**HE A. F. of L. today claims an all-time high in its membership which it reports as 4,247,443. In the November issue of the *American Federationist*, George Meany, the new Secretary-Treasurer, devoting fully three pages to an analysis of the growth of the A. F. of L. in the course of its sixty years of existence, ascribes its present position as "the result of constant, constructive, sound organizing work, based on the American philosophy." At the same time to emphasize this success and the basis for it, he claims:

"The Committee for Industrial Organization in the meantime had sown the seeds which have since resulted in its elimination as an important factor in the industrial and economic life of the country. This came about by the development in that organization of many Communistic practices which were obnoxious to the nation as a whole and by complacently allowing the infiltration into its ranks of thousands of Communist adventurers, who rapidly progressed to key positions in practically all C.I.O. organizations."

It cannot be denied that the A. F. of L. has considerably increased its

membership. And no class-conscious worker would wish to deny it. On the contrary, he would rejoice in the growth of the A. F. of L., as he would in any increased strength of the labor movement, no matter what form this strength takes. Green and Hutcheson are after all not the labor movement. Although, since Mr. Meany is so anxious to prove that the C.I.O. has been eliminated "as an important factor," one may also suspect that he might perhaps be slightly exaggerating the A. F. of L. figures. In the first place, the increase between 1939 and 1940 of some 240,000 is clearly not due to "constant, constructive, sound organizing work." It is based wholly on the reaffiliation of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union to the Federation.

What is more, it is not in the least unlikely that many of the affiliates have paid their per capita in "round figures," on more members than they actually have. We still remember how Hutcheson paid for 300,000 members year after year, for the entire period during the depression, although it was no secret that the membership of the Carpenters Union was not even half that figure. This system of padding the figures became quite a habit in

the struggle for power within the A. F. of L., since votes are allotted on the basis of per capita payments. In general one may say that the A. F. of L. figures usually are above the actual membership, while the C.I.O. figures are usually below the actual figures. Many of the newer C.I.O. unions have not yet established the habit of paying their per capita regularly. They spend their funds as they go along for organization work and then think of their per capita. This may not be in the best interests of the C.I.O., but it is unfortunately a fact.

We are, however, not concerned here with any exaggerations on the part of Mr. Meany. For the present we shall accept his figures as given. At the same time, we shall accept the figures of the C.I.O. (4,000,000 members) as being at least as accurate as those of the A. F. of L. What we are here concerned with is the political analysis that Mr. Meany makes. We are concerned with the policies of the A. F. of L. throughout its existence, especially in the recent period. We wish to challenge completely the thesis of Mr. Meany and the A. F. of L. Executive Council, which contends that the A. F. of L. growth is due to such policies as were exhibited and adopted at the recent A. F. of L. convention. We wish to prove that the growth of the A. F. of L. took place despite these policies and primarily as a result of the influence of such policies as were adopted by the recent C.I.O. convention. It is only in this sense that the figures are important. Here we are dealing, not with mere statistics, but with two currents in the labor movement. It is with this in

mind that Mr. Meany himself brings forth his statistics. What he is primarily concerned with is not history but the politics of today. It is necessary therefore to expose his analysis in order to help the workers understand that only through militant policies can they advance their interests and build their organizations.

Mr. Meany and the A. F. of L. Executive Council are today trying to take the workers on the road to war, just as Gompers did in 1917. They support Roosevelt's war program just as Gompers supported Wilson's war program. At the recent convention they abandoned even their former pretenses of favoring keeping out of war and went over completely to the "aid-to-Britain" scheme of dragging the country into the war. As part of this war policy, they also propose to help the economic royalists to make huge profits undisturbed by strikes, and struggle for higher wages or shorter hours. They want to force a type of "unity" upon the C.I.O. that will make it possible for the capitalists and the Administration to hogtie the whole labor movement. They are aware that as long as the C.I.O. remains as an independent and militant trade union center they cannot carry through their policies. This is why they are trying to convince the workers that these policies of the A. F. of L. have been the basis for successes, and that the C.I.O. militant policies are leading to failure. It is precisely to prevent them from imposing this war program on the whole labor movement that we must examine and expose these

anti-working class policies of the A. F. of L. Executive Council.

We shall not go into details of the early history of the A. F. of L., its struggle with the Knights of Labor, the rise of the Industrial Workers of the World and its role in the first decade of this century, the struggle of the militant and Left forces in the Socialist Party under the leadership of Debs, the influence of William Z. Foster and his group and the whole struggle for industrial unionism as the basis for the organization of the unorganized during the period before the first world imperialist war. A glance at that first decade would show that, while the A. F. of L. had already attained a membership of 1,676,220 in 1904, five years later its membership had slipped back to 1,482,872. Very little progress indeed in five years for a policy of "constant, constructive, sound organizing work"! All Mr. Meany tells us about this period is that it was the crisis of 1907 with its consequent unemployment. He does not tell us how the A. F. of L. leaders fought every attempt to organize on an industrial basis, how Gompers fought against the militant policies of the I.W.W. and the Left Socialists. He does not tell us what the A. F. of L. did to protect the unemployed and the living standards of the employed and the partially employed.

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Then we see the membership of the A. F. of L. for the first time reaching the two-million mark, with 2,020,671 members in 1914, or a gain of over a half million in five years. The explanation? We are told that

in 1912 Congress had set up a commission to investigate labor conditions, and that the conditions exposed at the hearings helped "bring to public notice the grievances of labor," and that the "exploited wage earners came to the conclusion that the abuses to which they were subject could be effectively combated only by enrollment in trade union ranks." But here Mr. Meany seems to put the cart before the horse. This commission was set up only after the workers had engaged in many strikes, because of the growing strength of the militant leadership in the labor movement, both inside the A. F. of L. and outside (I.W.W.), and only after the A. F. of L. itself had grown to 1,761,835 in 1911, or by about 300,000 in only two years. Mr. Meany again fails to tell us that the Gompers machine was all this time busy not organizing workers but fighting against the Left and militant forces in the labor movement.

In studying the development of the A. F. of L. until 1914, it becomes clear that the growth of the A. F. of L. was not the result of "constant, constructive, sound organizing work, based on the American philosophy." For the A. F. of L. leaders never had a plan to organize the unorganized whom it called "unorganizable"; its struggle against the militant trade union elements cannot be called "constructive"; its opposition to industrial unionism can by no stretch of the imagination be called "sound organizing work." And as to "American philosophy," this expression, which is intended to signify "class collaborationism," was by no means the way in which the

workers made their gains. They made their gains by a different kind of "American philosophy." It was the philosophy of struggle. A philosophy which the A. F. of L. top leadership at the time called "socialism" or "anarchism" or "syndicalism," always "Red," and which they today call in their struggle against the C.I.O. as "Communitistic practices . . . obnoxious to the nation."

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The A. F. of L. membership, which in 1915 again slipped back to 1,946,347, by 1920 rose to 4,078,740. This represented the biggest yearly rate of growth in its history, or about 400,000 yearly for the five-year period. This was the period of the war preparations, the war itself and the first two post-war years. Was this growth a result of "constant, constructive, sound organizing work, based on the American philosophy," as the A. F. of L. interprets this philosophy? Hardly. For, while the A. F. of L. entered into agreements for no strikes, for the status quo, counseling against struggles in the face of a tremendous rise in the cost of living, the workers, during and after the war, engaged in struggles that brought them many gains, resulting in the growth of the A. F. of L. By 1918, the year of the end of the war, the A. F. of L. membership was only 2,726,478, a gain of 700,000 from 1916, the last year before America's entrance into the war, or a yearly gain of 350,000. But in the two years that followed, the A. F. of L. growth was 650,000 per year, reaching the figure of 4,078,740 in 1920. This growth was the result of mass strikes and strug-

gles of the miners, the steel workers led by William Z. Foster, the packinghouse workers led by Foster and Jack Johnstone, the textile workers, garment workers, and others.

This period saw the first general strike in this country, the great Seattle General Strike, growing out of the strike of the shipyard workers. In every case the strikes were led by the militant forces in the labor movement and were opposed or sabotaged by Gompers and Company. Again we see that the most far-reaching growth of the A. F. of L. up to that time was the result of the influences and leadership of precisely those forces whom the A. F. of L. top leaders now charge with "Communitistic practices." It was progress made despite the policies and the role of the A. F. of L. leadership.

By 1924 the A. F. of L. membership had declined to 2,865,799. The only explanation that Mr. Meany gives us for this catastrophic decline in membership is:

"Led by the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Metal Trade Association, the open shop drive was launched by industry which was aided by the economic situation, and an unfriendly attitude towards labor on the part of the Government and the courts."

When the A. F. of L. makes gains it is a result of the "constant, constructive, sound organizing work, based on the American philosophy," but when it suffers decline, the fault lies with the capitalists, the Government and the courts, and the economic situation! But here there

is perhaps unwillingly quite an admission. Were these capitalists not the same ones as in the previous period? Were the Government and the courts not the same, even though there was in 1920 a change in the Administration? Did not the Wilson Administration secure an injunction against the miners? Did not Wilson issue the statement against the miners that "a strike under these circumstances is not only unjustifiable; it is unlawful"? Was not the great steel strike broken while Wilson was still in office? Was not the open shop drive actually begun with the building of company unions during the war, and the open shop accelerated with the defeat of the miners, the steel workers, and others under attack from the Wilson Administration? Harding only carried on as Wilson did. Just as Willkie would have carried on had he been elected in 1940.

And as for the economic situation, where is there a law that unions *must* decline during periods of depression? We shall go into this question later. But here it is clear that the A. F. of L. leadership is trying to absolve itself from responsibility. But they cannot do it successfully. For, not only did they counsel collaboration with these same open-shop employers, not only did they preach confidence in the Government and the courts, but they also directly and consciously intervened on the side of these very enemies of the workers and against the workers. They outlawed strikes, expelled whole unions with tens of thousands of the most militant members. Was this not because they

were actually afraid of the new millions of unskilled and semi-skilled workers that came into the A. F. of L.? Was it not because they were desirous of crushing the militant forces in the A. F. of L. that were growing with the growth of the A. F. of L. membership? Was it not because they were afraid that the workers were giving their own class interpretation as to what American philosophy should be?

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The lessons of the period from 1917 to 1920 and that of 1921 to 1924 are especially important for the workers today as the A. F. of L. leadership is again trying to drag the workers into war for the interests of the economic royalists. But the workers, learning these lessons, can avoid a repetition of what happened then. They can avoid it by rejecting the policies of Green, Woll, Hillman, Dubinsky and Co. and by following the militant policies as adopted at the recent C.I.O. convention. These lessons dictate above all the necessity to fight against America's entrance into the war. This, however, requires not merely reliance upon correct statements against involvement, but also struggle against every specific step being taken that brings us closer to war. Unfortunately the C.I.O. anti-war resolution did not specify these war steps.

What the workers can expect in return if they follow the Greens and Hillmans we are told in advance by Mr. Green himself. In his *Labor and Democracy*,\* he wrote:

\* Reviewed in *The Communist* for January, 1940, by William Z. Foster.—Editor.



"We had sincerely believed that the recognition given by the Government and by the employers during the war was the beginning of a real recognition of the labor movement of this country as a functioning, responsible part of industry. We had shown during the war years that we were prepared to take our place in industry as well as in the trenches, and it seemed that the next logical step, when the war ended, was to democratize industry, and management of industrial affairs. But our hope that industry had seen the value of cooperation with labor and the importance of giving labor a place in industry was destroyed as the great open-shop movement of the years immediately following the war gained strength."

Evidently Mr. Green wishes to forget these words today, and nowhere in Mr. Meany's analysis do we find any reference to the ruinous policies of the A. F. of L. during the war that laid the basis for the attacks on the labor movement both during the war and in the post-war periods.

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By 1929 the A. F. of L. membership was only slightly above that of 1924, or 2,933,545—a gain of only 68,000 for a period of five years. And this was the period of the so-called Coolidge prosperity. Since Mr. Meany makes so many references to the economic situation when he explains the decline of the A. F. of L. in periods of depression, one would at least expect him to explain why the A. F. of L. failed to grow during this period of prosperity. Up to then it was the fashion to accept as axiomatic Professor Commons' observation that during

periods of prosperity the economic organizations of labor grow, while during periods of depression, the political organizations of labor grow. But Mr. Meany merely limits his comments on the whole period to the following:

"The period of 1925-29 witnessed the nation's economic curve moving upward to unprecedented levels. The course of union membership failed, however, to correspond with the industrial trend."

As if conscious that he is trying to hide something, Mr. Meany quickly jumps to the "prosperity bubble burst" in 1929 so that he may again take up the song of "economic situation" to explain the further drop of the A. F. of L. membership from 2,933,545 in 1929 to 2,126,796 in 1933.

But we must remind Mr. Meany and the A. F. of L. Executive Council of some of the things they did in the period from 1924 to 1929 which may perhaps explain why it was that for the first time in the history of the American labor movement the trade unions declined in membership during economic "prosperity." For here we can see in their purest form the operation of the policies of "constant, constructive, sound organizing work based on the American philosophy."

Always opposing their policy of class collaboration to that of class struggle, whose existence they denied, the A. F. of L. leadership, this time joined by the Socialist Party, and the Social-Democrats the world over, discovered that the solution of the workers' problems would come, not through the road mapped out by Marx, Engels, Lenin

and Stalin, but through the road of Henry Ford. King Henry became the new prophet. The workers would all become rich, they would all become capitalists. What need would there then be to fight capitalism? Basing themselves only on the labor aristocracy (always the cornerstone of the A. F. of L. policies), disregarding completely the interests of the tens of millions of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, the agricultural workers, the Negro masses, the low-paid young and women workers, the A. F. of L. leaders became efficiency experts, entering with the employers into agreements which promised that the union would guarantee a cheaper cost of production than the employers could secure under the open-shop plan. They used the big union treasuries to build labor banks, buy stocks, and enter into other business ventures. The workers would not only become capitalists, they would even buy out some of the capitalists. For, were not already millions of workers in fact capitalists by owning stock in some of the biggest corporations? True, all the stock owned by all the workers did not amount to as much as one "little" economic royalist. But this was only the beginning. At any rate the road was clear. Capitalism is now stronger than ever. No more crises, no more unemployment (that there were some millions of unemployed even then was a matter to be overlooked), conditions would constantly improve. This is the "new capitalism" of which now Hoover, the great engineer, was the symbol.

True, there were voices of disagreement. There were Foster and

Browder leading the Trade Union Educational League which challenged this whole conception of "American philosophy," who still insisted that Marx and not Ford showed the way out to the workers. But this time the Greens and Wolls, joined by the Socialist Party which lifted the class struggle from its preamble, engaged in the most unprecedented campaign of strike-breaking and expulsions in answer to the rising progressive movement within the A. F. of L. The A. F. of L. leaders and the Socialist leaders, the Greens, Wolls, Hillmans and Dubinskys; the Thomases, Waldmans and Abe Cahans openly joined with the capitalists and the Government against the militant forces in the labor movement. The Trade Union Educational League influenced the whole labor movement; it campaigned around the slogans of *organization of the unorganized*, the amalgamation of the craft unions into industrial unions, for a Labor Party, for recognition of Soviet Russia. It received great support. It influenced the development of strikes against wage cuts, for wage increases, for shorter hours, for the right of organization. The progressive and Left forces were able to play this important role in the labor movement because, while the Socialist Party betrayed and deserted the workers, its place was taken by the growing Communist Party which was organized in 1919.

If Mr. Meany had told us something of these A. F. of L. policies, then the cause of the failure of the A. F. of L. to grow in the years 1925-29 would be much clearer.

The history of that period also shows us that it was again the influence of what Meany calls the "Communitistic practices" in the labor movement which helped, at least in part, to stem the decline of the trade unions, which kept up the resistance to the employers' attacks, and which laid the groundwork for what later became a big upsurge in the labor movement.

Mr. Meany's explanation of what followed in the years 1929-33 is no less evasive than his comments on the previous period. He merely tells us that:

"... the prosperity bubble burst in 1929. Unemployment was widespread, as depression caught the nation in its tentacles. . . . The next years showed a considerable decline in union rosters."

But not a word on the inglorious predictions of the A. F. of L. and the Socialist Party as to the "permanency of capitalist prosperity." Not a word as to why their new prophet Ford and the "great engineer" failed them. To go into that might involve a discussion of some fundamentals. The workers might begin to see the basic contradictions of capitalism. They might draw some lessons which would not be to the liking of Mr. Meany and his friends. They might even learn that it was the Communists who warned of the coming crash at the very moment when the Meanys were singing praises to the abolition of crises under capitalism. Such information might prove very dangerous. For the lessons of history learned are a very useful weapon for the making of new history. So

Mr. Meany chooses to remain silent.

The history of the labor movement during the period from 1929-33 fares no better at the hands of Mr. Meany. He just records a drop in "income" to the A. F. of L. as a result of unemployment and lets it go at that. But we are not told about the policies pursued by the A. F. of L. Council to meet the new situation. And why not? The record is the answer. The A. F. of L. entered into an agreement with the employers and the Government of no struggles, and for the status quo, for a share-the-work program. The result? Wages went down; but the A. F. of L. opposed strikes. Conditions were worsened, speed-up was increased in the face of fifteen million and more unemployed. Only the forces in the labor movement that are represented by Mr. Meany as "Communitistic influences" held aloft the banner of struggle, organizing and leading the struggles of miners, automobile workers, textile workers, agricultural workers, needle workers, etc. It was these struggles, led by the unions affiliated to the Trade Union Unity League which was organized as an independent trade union center in the fall of 1929, and the Left forces within the A. F. of L., that not only checked the attacks of capital but also laid the basis for the rapid advance of labor in the later period.

Mr. Meany also remains silent on how the A. F. of L. leadership "helped" the unemployed. And he has reason to be silent. Hundreds of thousands of A. F. of L. members were expelled from the unions for not being able to pay their dues. In answer to the growing movement

of the progressives in the unions and the organizations of the unemployed for relief and for *unemployment insurance*, the A. F. of L. Council characterized this movement for unemployment insurance as "un-American," as being incompatible with "American philosophy," as the European dole which American labor is too proud to accept, because it would rob labor of its "dignity." It is to the credit of the powerful United Mine Workers of America, led by John L. Lewis, that in opposition to the stand of the A. F. of L. Council it was the first big A. F. of L. union that came out in favor of unemployment insurance. In this connection, since the A. F. of L. top leaders are now so eager to take the credit for some of the pro-labor and social legislation enacted under the "New Deal" as a result of the struggles of the people, it might be worthwhile to recall that the A. F. of L. Council was opposed in principle to labor legislation, with Matthew Woll delivering some heart-rending lectures on the dangers of labor and social legislation.

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When we come down to the recent period beginning with 1933, Mr. Meany's history, while suffering less from omission, suffers a great deal, however, from distortion and outright falsification. Mr. Meany begins with the influence of Section 7a of the National Industrial Recovery Act (N.I.R.A.) on the growth of trade union organization, without telling us that it was the growth of the movement for wage increases and unionization in 1933

that preceded the enactment of the N.I.R.A. and the inclusion of Section 7a. It was precisely these struggles that frightened the capitalists and the Government and resulted in this legislation.

He does not tell us that it was those unions that were organized on a more industrial basis and had a militant tradition of struggle that were the first to take advantage of Section 7a and experienced the biggest growth, as for example the miners and the garment workers. Nor does he tell us of the role of the A. F. of L. Council in trying to dismember the locals formed on an industrial union basis in automobile and other metal industries, of the role of the Council and the Government in trying, with the aid of the Government labor boards, to promote "corporate unions," a new type of company unions; and that it was these policies that were responsible for the fact that by 1935 the A. F. of L. had *only* 3,045,347 members. He does not tell us that *the gains* were a result of struggles that were frowned upon by the Executive Council. He does not tell us of the fight led by John L. Lewis at the San Francisco convention of the A. F. of L. in 1934 against the Council policies and of the compromise resolution that was unanimously adopted, only to be disregarded by the Council. He does not tell us of the arrogant stand of the Freys and the Hutchesons, their cynical attitude towards the unorganized displayed at the Federation's 1935 convention which was the real beginning of the C.I.O. He only tells us that everything was going nice and beautiful until in October, 1935:

"... the Committee for Industrial Organization was formed by a group of recalcitrant national and international unions that had failed to impose their theories of organization in a democratic test."

And after this not a word that the C.I.O. was first formed to organize the workers *within* the A. F. of L. Not a word of the expulsion of the unions by the Council for no other crime than that of organizing workers *into* the A. F. of L. Not a word, of course, of the strike-breaking engaged in by Green and Frey in their efforts to stop the C.I.O. from organizing the automobile and steel workers. Not a word of the great success of the C.I.O. in organizing for the first time in the history of the labor movement the workers in the basic trustified industries. All we are told is that labor embarked "on a period of civil warfare, with a dual, rival movement attempting to destroy the parent organization." All that Mr Meany sees is that the A. F. of L. membership dropped from 3,422,398 members in 1936 (before the formal expulsion of the C.I.O.) to 2,860,933 members in 1937. That in the meantime the greatest change had taken place in the labor movement and that the C.I.O. now, as of September 3, 1937, could report a total membership of 3,718,000, thus making the total membership of both organizations in 1937 about 6,500,000 did not seem to impress Mr. Meany as very important. All he saw was "dual unionism."

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Now as to the growth of the A. F. of L. since the expulsion of the

C.I.O. and the creation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The A. F. of L. reports, as already stated, 4,247,443 members in 1940. But since the 1940 increase is due to the reaffiliation of the I.L.G.W.U. we can take the 1939 figure of 4,000,000 as the mark of growth since 1937. This would show an increase of approximately 1,150,000 in organizing new workers. It is an important increase.

What is the basis for this increase? In addition to the general policies of the A. F. of L., to which Mr. Meany by implication ascribes this growth, he adds the fact that on "April 12, 1937, the Supreme Court rendered a momentous decision . . . the court upheld the constitutionality of the National Labor Relations Act."

We do not in the least wish to minimize the importance of this decision. But we do wish to emphasize that this decision came as a result of organization and successful struggle on the part of the workers led by the C.I.O., resulting in the organization of the automobile and steel workers. It followed the successful sit-down strikes by the automobile workers in the latter part of 1936 and the early part of 1937, strikes that were more than anything else responsible for the gains made by the workers, and their ability to force contracts from the traditional anti-union and open-shop corporations—United States Steel and General Motors.

It is these struggles that Mr. Meany characterizes as "*Communitic practices obnoxious to the nation.*" And if the A. F. of L. grew since 1937 it was largely under the

impetus of these successful struggles led by the C.I.O., as were the earlier gains a result of militant struggles of the workers themselves.

It will be noted that at the time when the C.I.O. unions were expelled, many unions of the A. F. of L. that did not follow the C.I.O. also increased their membership through struggles. These were unions that adapted themselves to the new situation, allowed for some form of industrial organization, and permitted the younger and more militant elements, those whom Mr. Meany characterizes as "thousands of Communist adventurers" to come to the front in these organizing drives. Among these unions are to be included the hotel and restaurant workers, the electrical workers, the hod carriers, the teamsters and the machinists.

In many cases, as of the electrical workers and machinists, many employers rightly or wrongly hoped to "get off cheaper" by calling in the A. F. of L. to block the C.I.O. In many cases they found that the rank and file organized in the new A. F. of L. locals were no less militant than their C.I.O. brothers. The A. F. of L. Council itself welcomed some of the "Communist adventurers" into its ranks as long as they brought in new members. They became less strict regarding organizational forms, especially where they did not face too much opposition from some of the old craft unions which claimed jurisdiction. It was this trend which set in with the formation of the C.I.O. that has carried many of the A. F. of L. unions into the present situation with consequent growth of member-

ship. And it is this policy of struggle, primarily this policy of "Communist practices," that is largely responsible for bringing new members into the A. F. of L. just as into the C.I.O. Likewise, it was this trend, this policy of struggle, aroused by the existence of the C.I.O., that made it possible for labor, for the first time in the history of the American labor movement, to go through a period of economic stagnation and decline without suffering serious loss of membership, or of being forced to submit to wholesale reduction in wages and a worsening of conditions.

That the action of the Supreme Court in declaring the Wagner Act constitutional did not of itself lead to recognition by the employers of labor's rights, without struggle, was soon made clear in the brutal manner in which the strike in "little steel" was attacked. That the policy of the Administration also by itself did not guarantee organization was also made clear during that strike in the Roosevelt declaration of "a plague on both your houses." All this is now clearer than ever when the Roosevelt Administration continues to feed billions of "defense" orders to the open-shop steel companies and to Henry Ford.

Again the lesson is made clear to labor. Labor wins the rights of organization, improved conditions and favorable legislation only in accordance with its organized strength and struggle. And these rights, once won, must be constantly enforced through greater organizations, through labor's constant vigilance and struggle.

And so we see that when the

A. F. of L. leaders speak of "American philosophy" as against "Communist practices," what they really mean is the Green-Woll-Hillman policy of surrender of the workers' interests as against the C.I.O. policy of organizing the workers and the struggle for improved conditions. We also see that within the A. F. of L. there are and have always been militant forces just as, on the other hand, there are in the C.I.O. today the forces represented by Hillman who think and act no differently than do Green and Co. The fact that the C.I.O. arose out of the A. F. of L., and the ease with which a Dubinsky could shuttle out of the C.I.O. and back into the A. F. of L. would prove this to be true. It is the militant forces in both organizations that are responsible for the growth of the labor movement, just as it is the reactionary forces that are trying to hold back both organizations. But the C.I.O. led by Lewis has, in the main, followed a progressive policy, while the A. F. of L., led by the Greens, has in the main followed a reactionary policy. The membership of both organizations wish to fight always for better conditions and to strengthen and build their organizations.

If experience shows that labor can advance only by conducting a struggle against that trend represented by Green & Co., it also means that when these gentlemen continue in power and are not effectively curbed, they act as a brake upon the entire labor movement. These experiences emphasize again that the crystallization of

the existing wide resentment against the policies of the A. F. of L. top leadership into a broad national movement that will express the militancy and progressive sentiments of the A. F. of L. rank and file is a matter of concern to everyone who wishes to strengthen labor and advance the fight for peace and security. Continued neglect of this vital task can but lead to the most serious consequences for the entire labor movement.

We see that throughout the history of the modern labor movement these two tendencies have existed and expressed themselves in one form or another. Sometimes the reactionaries succeeded in holding back the whole labor movement, and the progressive forces were relatively weak. Today the progressive forces are strong and growing. It will be clear from the history of the labor movement that the genuine, radical forces today, the Marxists, the followers of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, have always been on the side of the progressive current in the labor movement. And the progressive current was always characterized by its reactionary opponents, who tried to hide their policies behind the flag of Americanism, as "Reds," as "Socialists," and today as "Communists."

But the real American philosophy in the best traditions of the American people is today being championed precisely by those in the labor movement who fight for the interests of labor and the whole people. "The American way of life" we hear so much about

today from the mouths of the Morgans, Fords, Dies, and Wolls, as well as the Roosevelts, Greens and Hillmans, does not mean the same to Ford and to the Ford workers denied the right of organization. It is being championed by those who today fight for peace, for economic security, for the people, for the maintenance and extension of civil liberties. And we add (though in this we are still a minority) it is best being championed by those who advocate socialism.

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It is to be regretted that the C.I.O. convention was wrongly influenced in adopting a resolution which lumps together and attacks communism equally with Nazism and fascism. Surely such mere resolutions unless they are accompanied by the adoption of the Green-Woll-Hillman policies will not satisfy the employers, the Administration, the real fascist agents, such as Dies, who try to hid their efforts to introduce fascism into this country under the guise of being opponents of both communism and fascism. For what they want is an end to the C.I.O. as a militant and progressive organization. And the C.I.O. could not be a militant, progressive organization if it would allow the Hillmans to use this resolution for the expulsion of militant and radical trade union elements.

Lewis correctly said at the recent C.I.O. convention that the main danger to the C.I.O. is from within itself. He counseled a pol-

icy of freedom of expression and the joint work of all constructive forces within the C.I.O. If this policy is followed, the C.I.O., which has adopted a militant program at its convention, will continue to grow and become an even more influential force in the whole life of the country.

Mr. Meany says that the C.I.O. policies have resulted "in its elimination as an important factor in the industrial and economic life of the country." Here obviously the wish is father to the thought. For at no time was the C.I.O. more of a factor in the economic, social and political life of the country. Not only the C.I.O. membership, but the vast majority of the A. F. of L. workers look to the C.I.O. for leadership. And more and more large masses of toiling farmers, Negro people, youth, and professional groups look for leadership to the C.I.O. as the expression of the labor movement.

With the continuance of the C.I.O. policies, as developed under Lewis' leadership, the C.I.O. will not only grow but by its new strength make imperative and possible the unity of the entire trade union movement on the basis of the unity resolution laid down by the C.I.O. convention. In the meantime the C.I.O., by its policies and by its organizational work, has done more in the short years of its existence to organize and unite labor in this country than the A. F. of L. leadership has been able to do in its sixty years of existence. And the most glorious pages of American labor are still to be written in the coming struggles.



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## THE NEW RAPE OF INDO-CHINA

BY ANDRE MARTY  
(Communist Deputy of Paris)

“**G**REAT agitation reigned in Saigon on November 21, 1932, the day on which Huy was executed. A state of siege had to be proclaimed. The impassioned cries of the ‘political prisoners’ penetrated to the town. The prisoners, who were made to attend the execution, loudly expressed their sympathy with the boy and shouted their heartfelt indignation. The authorities had to call out the fire brigade and troops. What was taking place behind the prison walls? Before ascending the guillotine, the little Huy wanted to make a speech; but two gendarmes threw themselves upon him, and one could not hear his scarcely audible cry: ‘*Viet-Nam!*’—‘O’ people of Annam!’ It was the cry with which the thirteen condemned of Yen-bay went to their death.”—Andrée Viollis, *Indo-China’s S.O.S.*

“*Viet-Nam!*” Those were also the last words breathed by Tran Phu (Likey), General Secretary of the Communist Party of Indo-China, in the prison of Saigon.

“*Viet-Nam!*” Those were the words which thousands of men and women, who wanted to lead their peoples to freedom, shouted as they were going to their death.

As if Indo-China were not enough exploited and oppressed as it is, it has now been pounced upon by

another imperialist marauder who has sunk his blood-dripping talons into the living body of the victim. Following upon the heels of the Japanese air, sea and land forces which have seized Tonkin and, with the assistance of their puppets at Bangkok, are closing in upon the Upper Laos and Cambodia, the Matsuma mission is already at work organizing the exploitation of the rich apatite deposits and taking control of the exports of coal, iron, rubber and rice.

Thus Indo-China has turned out to be the first colony which the mortally stricken French imperialism is in a hurry to hand over to the arrogant heir. Before breathing its last it prefers to share the loot rather than lose everything in the event the enslaved peoples of Indo-China regain their possessions together with their freedom. A real thieves’ bargain!

But the people of Indo-China, the object of this bargaining, have not forgotten their great national and revolutionary traditions. Resenting as they do the existing yoke, they are still less willing to accept another one. In the period which is now being ushered in, the words “*Viet-Nam!*” will undoubtedly burst forth again and again from the

breasts of millions of people. It will be their call for freedom, a shout of hope for victory.

### *Forced Labor*

Indo-China has a working class relatively numerous for a colonial country. There are both skilled and unskilled laborers, excellent workmen for the most part.

The coal mines of Hongay represent one of the biggest working class centers in Indo-China. These mines, situated in Tonkin, supply anthracite of the highest quality. From 278,000 tons in 1901, their output had grown to 2,600,000 tons in 1939, of which half was exported to France and nearly the whole of the other half to Japan.

These mines are but a small part of the mineral resources of Indo-China. The bowels of the earth in Upper Tonkin and Upper Laos hold rich deposits of tin, zinc, tungsten, iron and manganese. Their output was valued at 30,000,000 francs in 1914, and at 260,000,000 francs in 1938. The output of the existing mines can be easily increased five-fold.

The proletarians of Indo-China have actually been reduced to the status of slaves. In Andrée Viollis' book we find the following moving description of their condition:

"A gigantic wall of black coal stretches under the livid glow of the torrid sky. There is something depressing in the way this cyclopean wall gleams under the rays of the all-consuming sun. Blinded at first, one can hardly distinguish anything. Then one notices that life is stirring on the vast wall of rock. Tiny creatures, like ants, individ-

ually or in groups, are moving to and fro on the glittering terraces of black diamond. One can also see small wagonettes crawling up the smooth wall. Human dust mixed with the black dust of the coal. All along the huge wall of rock, from top to bottom, there is strange and sorrowful life teeming and toiling.

"This is not the only mine. There are many more, along other slopes, overhanging the sea, or deep in the jungle, spread over an area of 20,000 hectares. And everything—the quarries, the forests, the railroads, the roads, the villages, the houses—belongs to the Hongay Mining Company. The Hongay mines, I believe, are among the few and, I am told, the richest, open work mines in the world. At one time they employed 40,000 workers; today there are only 23,000 left\*. . . The wages of the workers: men, from 3.50 to 4.50 francs a day; women, from 2.20 to 2.80 francs; children—for children work there as well, and, unfortunately, but too many of them—from 1.50 to 1.80 francs.

"These are the maximum earnings; or, to be more precise, even when the company pays these wages, the workers do not always get them. For they are the slaves of their overseers, the *cais*, who recruited them and to whom they belong body and soul. The *cais*—brutal individuals for the most part—are the intermediaries between the European engineer and the workers, whom they rob and tyrannize at will. As a result, many workers never get more than from about 1.25 to 2 francs out of their daily wage; and ten-year-old children have been seen pushing wagonettes 12 hours a day and getting

\* This number refers to November, 1931. Today, as a result of the war, there are 50,000 workers slaving in Hongay.

75 centimes for it. Although the official working day is fixed at ten hours, the actual hours are much longer; for the overseers undertake to deliver a definite amount of coal every day, and the workers are compelled to work as long as it is necessary to deliver the whole amount, very often 12 and even 14 hours a day.

"There is no social legislation designed to relieve the crushing burden. There is no rest day! Days on which the worker is absent from work because of illness are not paid for. In case of accident, there is no hope of any pension. All the worker may expect to get is a meager compensation, and even that only if 'the accident cannot be ascribed to carelessness or lack of discipline on the part of the worker.' The worker is entitled to a ration of one kilo of rice a day, but its price is deducted from the monthly wages. Wages are paid on the 21st of the month following—October wages, for instance, being paid on the 21st of November—so as to prevent attempts at desertion on the part of the unfortunates. The workers have no living quarters other than those provided by the company. The latter rents out small straw mattresses to the *cais*, the recruiting agents. They, in their turn, rent them out at a big profit to the coolies who are herded in the barracks under conditions that defy all the rules of hygiene and humanity." (Andrée Viollis, *Indo-China's S.O.S.*)

But—

"... this company has been making and is still making unparalleled profits. During the war and in the years following the war its dividends reached extraordinary proportions, growing at an unprecedented rate. Net profits, which in 1913 amounted to 2,500,000 francs,

had reached 136,200,000 in 1925, or twice as much as the initial capital. Today the stock of this company is quoted at a hundred times its face value." (*Ibid.*)

In addition to mining, Indo-China has a considerable manufacturing industry, based primarily on agriculture, such as rice-processing, sugar refineries, vegetable oil factories, silk mills and dye works. To this should be added the exploitation of quarries, salt works, fisheries, a woodworking industry, a match industry, brick kilns and the production of tiles and ceramics, electrical engineering works, a refrigeration industry, and mechanical repair shops of which there are a large number thanks to the widespread development of railroads and highway and water transport.

In all these industries the workers, including the children, live under conditions which are at best about the same as the conditions of the miners in Hongay described above.

### "Red Earth"

French imperialism has invested enormous capital in its colonial empire (covering an area of 11,811,000 square kilometers,\* twenty-one times the area of France proper) in order to turn it into its main source of agricultural supplies. It was due to this that French imperialism succeeded in staving off the crisis of 1929-32 for three years and in considerably mitigating its effects. Agricultural development made rapid strides in the French colonies. Thus, for instance, the area under grain

\* One square kilometer equals .3861 of a square mile.—*Ed.*

crops in Morocco increased from 624,000 hectares\* in 1909 to 1,500,000 hectares in 1933, thus having more than doubled. The area under cotton, in all the French colonies, increased from 1,854 hectares in 1909 to 26,128 hectares in 1918 and to 238,640 hectares in 1929. The cultivated area in French Equatorial Africa increased from 187 hectares in 1918 to 15,000 hectares in 1929 and 70,000 hectares in 1934.

In Indo-China, where tea, coffee, cane sugar and cotton are grown, French imperialism concentrated its attention on the production, primarily, of rice, maize and rubber. The output of maize rose from 110,000 tons in 1913 to 570,000 tons in 1938. In that same year Indo-China supplied three-quarters of France's requirements of feed for poultry (700,000 tons).

*Bloodstained rubber*—without it the electrical industry, automobile transport and the aircraft industry would be paralyzed. That is why the area under rubber-bearing plants in Indo-China was increased from 23,000 hectares in 1923 to 126,000 hectares in 1932. The rubber plantations started at the end of the past century supplied the entire rubber requirements of French imperialism in 1938. Their output mounted in value to over 1,000,000,000 francs. Indo-China ranks fourth in the world output of rubber—after British Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and Ceylon.

These plantations are situated on the "red earth" of Cochin-China, Cambodia, Southern Annam and Laos—red because of its fertility,

but also because it is drenched with the blood of thousands of Indo-China's inhabitants who inhale its poisonous vapors and are subjected to a system of exploitation more savage than the worst forms of slavery in antiquity.

"You can believe me," writes Andrée Voilles, "because I lived on such plantations in the capacity of a clerk. . . . I lived in Kratie, down in Cambodia, in Thudaumot, in Phu-Quoc. I saw these unfortunates. I saw the sober and brave peasants of Tonkin come there, recruited by those bandits, the *cais*. I saw them come in high spirits, hoping that they would get enough to eat and succeed in saving a few pennies to bring back home. After three or four years they are mere shadows of their former selves, human wrecks, consumed by malaria and the beri-beri sickness. They are hardly able to stand straight on their swollen legs festering with the sores caused by that horrible insect, the *san-quang*. Their wages are constantly reduced, because their strength fails them. And if they dare voice their protest against the intolerable misery, they are tied by the *cais* to tree stumps or whipping posts, where they are kept the whole day long without food and drink, their withered bodies lacerated, have been beaten with bamboo sticks or flogged with whips.

"In the early morning, at the very break of day, when they are fettered by fatigue to their miserable bunks on which they have tried to fall asleep despite the stings of deadly mosquitoes, they are driven from the barracks in which they are herded. In driving them the overseers treat them worse than they would treat cattle.

\* A hectare equals 2.37 acres.—Ed.

"During lunch and in the evening, when they are given their ration of rice, from which, as a rule, a hundred grams have been stolen, they must prepare food for the *cais* before they are allowed to eat themselves. They are hardly given a chance to swallow their last bite before they are again driven to work, even if they are covered with wounds, pestered by swarms of flies, or shaken by fever. All this work for from 1.20 to 2 francs a day, which they never receive in full, because of the numerous deductions, fines and debts for goods. . . . The wives of the *cais* grow rich by selling them indispensable articles at ten times their actual cost. And if those who survive conceive the idea of escaping from their prison they merely land in another prison. They cannot live in the forests which teem with beasts of prey and reptiles. Their documents, or rather their identity and work certificates, are kept by the *cais*. All that remains to a fugitive is thus to enter the service of a European or native official in the capacity of a slave, often without any wages whatever. Should he be discovered, it means new slavery and the whipping post.

"Their correspondence is read, translated and often held up. They receive little news from their families. Most of them never see their families again. When one does get back to his village in the end, it is only as a wreck, without strength or money, to lie down and die. But before he dies he spreads disease, anger and hatred. That is how revolutions ripen.

". . . I have also learned that in the plantations, particularly the rubber plantations, which are mostly situated in frightfully unhealthy districts, 15 to 16 hours of work a day are paid for at the rate of 1.20 to 2.20 francs!" (*Ibid.*)

In 1938 the developed area planted in rubber amounted to 127,000 hectares with 38,000,000 rubber trees. (Eighty per cent of this area—100,000 hectares—is accounted for by Cochin-China.) The output of rubber in Indo-China reached 59,000 tons in 1938, as against 7,000 tons in 1922; and an output of 85,000 tons is envisaged for the year 1945. The value of the rubber output in 1938-39 amounted to 1,000,000,000 francs, exports amounting to 800,000,000 francs in value, or one-fifth the total export of the country.

*"Two Baskets of Rice at the Ends  
of a Rod"*

How appropriate is this national symbol of Indo-China! Annam is the rod, Cochin-China and Tonkin the rice baskets. So immensely rich are the fertile rice fields of the two deltas that they produce more than enough to feed the entire population of Annam.

Four-fifths of Indo-China's cultivated land are planted to rice. In 1913, 3,900,000 hectares yielded 5,400,000 tons of rice; in 1939, 5,500,000 hectares yielded 7,150,000 tons.

But the imperialists never intended the rice to feed the people. It is grown for export. In 1938-39 rice exports amounted to 1,700,000 tons, of which one million tons went to France and the rest to Japan. In 1937 rice exports amounted to 1,548,000 tons, which netted the imperialists 1,000,000,000 francs.

But with what misery and even degeneration the unfortunate peasants of Cochin-China, Tonkin and Cambodia have had to pay for this wealth! In 1932, in Cochin-China

alone, which accounts for more than half the rice area of Indo-China, 516,000 out of three million hectares planted in rice were in the hands of French concessionaires. Of the rest the greatest part belongs to rich native concessionaires, and only 20 per cent of the entire area remained at the disposal of the vast number of peasants and farm laborers, including rich peasants.

The province of Mytho (Cochin-China), one of the most parcelled in the country, gives an idea of the distribution of wealth. From the report of the Government authorities of Cochin-China to the Colonial Administration for the official year 1929-30 (p. 395) we get the following information:

Out of 240,000 hectares of cultivated land, 33,985 represent the inalienable land of the village communities, and 19,248 the property of the colony. The remaining 186,767 hectares are divided among 51,834 landholders, of whom 49,322 own less than ten hectares each, and 1,989 own from ten to twenty hectares each. The two groups together hold 45,756 hectares. The rest—141,011 hectares—is in the hands of 523 landowners, French and native, who obtained their estates for a mere song. Seventeen of them own from 500 to 2,000 hectares each.

Apart from everything else, the Annamite peasant does not really own his rice field. He is actually a sharecropper, a tenant-farmer, who is *responsible for the harvest* and therefore, "is given full freedom to cultivate the land as he sees fit." That is why scientific methods of farming are entirely unknown. No selected seeds are used, fattening

fodder is used only in exceptional cases, fertilizers are unknown.

The Annamite peasant, who is not always sure of his daily bread, has to pay a host of different taxes: a poll-tax, labor service, community taxes, church taxes (maintenance of church buildings and the holidays of patron saints), a land tax, a market tax, a road tax, imposts for the use of forests, imposts for licenses to small artisans in the villages and to small farmers on the pretext that they are selling their products, etc.

These taxes and imposts consume at least two months of the average income of a peasant or an artisan. To this should be added the fact that the peasant has to pay his taxes in the administrative center; furthermore, there are the exorbitant indirect taxes on spirits, tobacco, pepper, matches, and, above all, on salt. The salt tax, which was introduced after the conquest, is the most hated of all. For the Annamite peasant consumes a lot of salt. He eats his fish salted, and seasons his rice with a special salt sauce called *nuoc-nam*. No rice without *nuoc-nam*! But a kilo of salt costs as much as a kilo of rice!\*

In addition to the state salt monopoly, there is the state monopoly of spirits (rice whiskey), coupled with compulsory consumption, and the state opium monopoly. Every village and every district in the big cities is obliged to consume a specified amount of the poisons—alcohol

\* The administration purchases the salt from the Salt Works Company (belonging to the Homberg group), paying double the price demanded by the small native salt producers. Now it is selling the *nuoc-nam* in bottles (!) in order to provide a market for the products of the glass works recently started by the Homberg group.

and opium! *L'Humanité* once published a verified copy of a circular letter sent out by Governor-General Albert Sarraut (the man who issued the slogan: "Communism—that is the enemy!") to all the local government Residents\* with a "list of retail shops which are to be opened in the enumerated villages, most of which have so far been entirely deprived of spirits and opium."

There is a note of pride in the report of the Governor-General of the Protectorate of Cambodia (for the official year 1929-30) as it emphasizes that the consumption tax on local spirits yielded 1,680,588 piasters, the output for the year in Cambodia alone amounting to 40,000 hectoliters.\*\* (An Indo-Chinese piaster is worth ten French francs.) The Governor-General lists among the "splendid results of the period under review" the consumption of 3,439 tons of spirits worth 1,135,000 piasters and of 66 tons of opium worth 13,909,560 piasters. The company in control of the distilleries of Indo-China reported a net profit of 21,000,000 francs in 1932. The state opium monopoly has an annual income of 18,000,000 to 20,000,000 piasters.

Nor is that all. The taxes are collected by special tax collectors recruited among the local mandarins—the big landowners—who are all corrupt and for sale. The Annamite peasant is thus made to pay from three to five times as much in taxes as fixed by the colonial authorities. He has to maintain not only the mandarin himself, but also his door-

man, the sub-prefect and the mayor. A bad harvest, a typhoon, or a flood spells utter ruin for the Annamite peasant.

The peasant is ever in the clutches of the usurers. They advance him loans against the harvest for three or four years, and thus become the actual masters of his field, his buffaloes, his copper utensils and, in the long run, of his last pig. All that remains for him to do is to sell his daughter, or his small children. And the mother is happy if a buyer is found; for then she knows at least that her child will not die of hunger.

That is how the colonial masters and the big mandarins round out their possessions. To speed up the process they often avail themselves of the custom of denouncing as Communists all those who try to resist them. When the denounced person is arrested they obtain his land and buffaloes for next to nothing.

Further, any crisis and any dislocation of economic life brings with it automatically a rise in the indirect taxes.

One of the results of this regime is the physical degeneration of the peasant of Indo-China. He is a prey to contagious and epidemic diseases. The plague and cholera are ever present in the villages of Cochinchina. Two-thirds of all cases of the plague and cholera end fatally. Thus, for instance, in 1930, out of 3,205 recorded cases in Cochinchina 2,728 ended in death. (Annual Report of the Governor General for 1930.) Small-pox is also fatal in at least two-thirds of all cases. Dysentery and typhus take a

\* Residents Superior—heads of protectorates in Indo-China.—*Ed.*

\*\* A hectoliter equals 26.417 gallons.—*Ed.*

big toll in human lives, and leprosy is quite widespread.

Many peasants of Cochin-China suffer from congenital syphilis. This disease was brought here by the first colonial settlers, the Portuguese. Many children are born with it; they come into the world half-blind, their eyes always running with pus.

In contrast to this misery of the peasants, the rich colonizers live in arrogant luxury, as exemplified in the orgies of Saigon, which Claude Farrers—when he was still honest—stigmatized in his famous book, *The Civilizers* (1903), which is banned in Indo-China.

All this explains why, despite the swarm of colonial parasites and mandarins preying on it, Indo-China, due to her mineral resources and agricultural wealth, yielded the French treasury an income which in 1936 amounted to 4,131,000 piasters, apart from the following revenues provided for in the French budget for that year:

“Reimbursements of the expenditure on police, prisons and courts,\* and on the defense of Indo-China (the later item consists of 928,000 piasters), 35,208,000 piasters.

“Payments on capital invested by the state in Indo-China (total state investments amounting to 8,000,000,000 francs), 70,000,000 piasters.

“Commercial profits from imports (one-tenth the total trade turnover with France), 15,180,000 piasters.”

This totals up to an equivalent of 1,203,830,000 francs, which Indo-China had to contribute to the

treasury of the “mother country” in 1936.

And that was why the various imperialist governments of France always boasted that Indo-China was “an unquestionably profitable” colony. It is easy to understand how this rich loot has been whetting the appetite of Tokyo!

### *The Carrion Kite and the Octopus*

What are the results and consequences of such exploitation and poverty?

In July, 1929, a typhoon of extraordinary intensity swept through the Southeastern part of Tonkin, one of the richest and most densely populated of the districts, with from 500 to 750 inhabitants per square kilometer. Two hundred thousand *mau*\* of rice fields were devastated by sea and rain. Six hundred lives were lost according to the official report. This event coincided with the drop in the price of rice as a result of the world economic crisis. The Government retaliated to the widespread unrest by condemning the protestors to prison and penal servitude. But this did not stop the famine! Here is one of the scenes of horror in the Province of Vinh in North Annam, painted by Andrée Viollis:\*\*

“What I saw there I shall never forget. In a huge enclosure surrounded by a wooden fence, some three or four thousand human beings in brownish rags were crowded together, so densely as to form one single undulating mass, from which numberless gaunt lath-

\* The oppressed are actually made to pay the expenses for maintaining the apparatus that oppresses them.

\* A *mau* equals 1.32 acres.—Ed.

\*\* And this was as recent as November 27, 1931.



like hands projected holding wicker baskets. These beings bore the signs of every disease. Faces swollen or emaciated; gaps in place of teeth, extinguished or running eyes; festering wounds. Men or women? Twenty years old or sixty? It was impossible to tell. Here there was neither age nor sex, only misery, appalling misery, emitting from thousands of mouths frightful, animal-like cries. . . .

"Native women, doubtless the wives of the indigenous agents, were pouring rice from a wooden measure of roughly one kilogram into each basket. Native children, who were constantly being driven off flung themselves hungrily on the earth to dig fallen grains of rice out of the mud. As each received his portion, these creatures would flee, like animals to their dens, pressing their baskets to their sides. But still they came, endlessly. . . .

"I was shown into a hut. A dozen forms or so, enveloped in brownish rags, lay stretched on plank beds. Swarms of flies hovered over them. Some were already stiff and cold, others still lived. Some were swollen monstrously.

"This swelling is general *oedema*, the last stage of physical disintegration,' the doctor said. 'Nothing can be done for them. All the roads and byways are strewn with such corpses. For many of the people you have seen have come over forty kilometers by foot to receive their portion of rice.'

"At what figure do you estimate the number of dead?"

"Not less than ten thousand,' replied the doctor unhesitatingly. 'But sixty thousand more will remain nothing but wrecks, without strength enough to work or resist disease. Yet these unfortunates could have been kept alive on 40

centimes a day and the produce of their gardens! . . .'"

When this calamity afflicted this mild and peaceable people the storehouses of Cochin-China were bursting with stocks of rice. But no one dared touch them, for they were destined for export, and were only waiting until prices in France and Japan rose. Why? Because the colonial masters and landlords were determined to hold fast to their huge profits, even if the people perished.

The result was revolt, the three big movements of 1930.

The first was the mutiny of the soldiers of Yen-bay on February 9 and 10, 1930, an attempted putsch of the Annamite nationalists who started a powerful terrorist movement in the province. But this was accompanied by two big revolutionary movements for rice, land and freedom, led by the Communists. One was the peasant movement in Cochin-China, especially in solidarity with North Annam. It took the form of strikes and demonstrations; food warehouses were raided, offices of mayors and the sub-prefects of the colonial masters attacked, and taxation and land records destroyed. The Residents of Tri-Huyen and Tri-Thu retaliated with fire and sword. The peasants and coolies defended themselves. There were casualties.

Simultaneously the whole province of Vinh in North Annam, which had always been revolutionary, revolted. This was a powerful revolutionary peasant movement, supported by the workers, by those of the match factory of Ben-Thuy, for

example. The movement continued for five months, from April to September, 1930. For six weeks the starving peasants were masters of the land they had seized.

There followed savage reprisals that constitute one of the bloodiest pages in human history. Robin, the Resident Superior, answered the starving people with machine guns and bombing planes.

"I was shown several huge graves bordering the rice field.

"They date back to September 13, last year,' I was told. 'On the morning of that day, a crowd of from five to six thousand men suddenly appeared marching in serried ranks towards Vinh.'

"Were they armed?"

"I cannot rightly say. It was said that they had come to complain to the Resident about the taxes, which they considered too heavy. That is why revolts always start. They were ordered to stop; but they paid no heed and broke through all obstacles. Bombing planes had to be called out against them. About 100 or 120 of the good people were struck down.\* The others fled like hares. As ill-luck would have it, a party of inhabitants from villages which had remained peaceable came to bury the dead. This was believed to be a new demonstration and the bombers were again sent out. The result was another fifteen killed. A deplorable error which made a rather bad impression. . . ." (Andrée Viollis, *Indo-China's S.O.S.*)

The Fifth Regiment of the Foreign Legion, hurriedly summoned from Morocco, was dispatched to the district. The atrocities that followed, the massacres in cold blood, sur-

passed the most shameful episodes in the history of colonial conquest. When, in June, 1933, the criminals responsible for them were brought to trial, they were acquitted! Nevertheless, a verdict was uttered, a verdict for history; it was Commandant Lambert, one of the men most responsible for the frightful torture and massacre of this peaceable population, that uttered it. Together with other Legionnaires, he deposed in open court: "We had verbal orders from Governor Robin. The Resident gave instructions to the Legionnaires: 'Strike down, kill, take as few prisoners as possible!'" (*L'Ami du Peuple Indochinois.*)

But the horrors of the punitive columns of the Foreign Legion paled before those perpetrated by the Residents, the mandarins and, above all, of the police. The refined methods of torture they used—including electricity and red ants in the genital organs of women—surpassed for their cruelty the worst tortures of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages.

Carrion kites—the vultures of Indo-China that prey only on carrion—was the name given to Robin, Pasquier and those monsters, the police commissars Hennequin and Roche.\*

The Communist Party of France and its organ, *l'Humanité*, supported by numerous trade unions, leading intellectuals, the *Secours Populaire* and other labor organizations carried on an extensive campaign of solidarity with the people of Indo-China. Under the pressure of the masses, question after question was put in parliament. Huge workers'

\* Actually 157.

\* The latter was again mentioned for his cruelty in the trial of the Communist deputies.

and popular demonstrations demanded that the tortures and massacres in Indo-China be stopped. Numerous books were written, some of them very moving ones, in which leading intellectuals gave expression to the anger of the French people.

Nevertheless, nothing was done. The terror went on, "without alleviating the misery," as one official report stated. In May, 1933, two years after these events, a big trial of 120 Indo-Chinese was instituted, all accused of being Communists. The appalling sentence was: eight death sentences (six of which were carried out), to which should be added one death from torture during the preliminary investigation, nine sentences to life-long imprisonment, and 79 others totalling 970 years of imprisonment.

The criminal courts redoubled their fury. The mandarins were again invested with full powers of trial, and were now enabled to pass sentence of death. The police continued their ghastly, scientific tortures. The guillotine worked without pause, supported by execution squads and wholesale deportations to the frightful convict prison of Poulo-Condor, where as in olden times the prisoners wear a heavy ball and chain all their lives. In addition, 6,000 Indo-Chinese were deported to Cayenne. It was only with difficulty that a few lives were saved. The octopus would not unwind its tentacles.

This was the octopus of which Simoni wrote:

"The banks, private transport companies, plantations, industries,

mines and commerce have swallowed up roughly two billions, and represent approximately a value of about eight and one-half billions to the companies, counting even those that have not succeeded."\*

This monster, this octopus, which has seized everything in its tentacles, is called the Bank of Indo-China. It is the nerve center of the capitalist organism in this colony; which, however, does not prevent it from reaching out as far as Djibouti and French West Africa.

The Bank of Indo-China has the right of note issue, and its notes are legal currency, not only in Indo-China, but also in the French colonies in Oceania, the New Caledonia, in the Indies, and on the Somali coast.

The manager of this bank (Rene Thion de la Chaume) is at the same time manager of the Land Mortgage Bank of Indo-China, the Water and Electricity Company of Indo-China, the Rubber Company of Indo-China, the Railway Company of Indo-China and Yunan, the Street Car Company of Indo-China, the Indo-China Electricity Company, the coal mines of Tonkin, the Mining and Metallurgical Company of Indo-China, the distillery company of Indo-China, the Indo-China Portland Cement Company, etc. In other words, the Bank of Indo-China is the proprietor, and the sole proprietor, directly or through its branches, of the mineral resources, the land, the plantations,

\* Capital investments in Indo-China: 1889-90—3,800,000 francs; 1899-1900—16,550,000 francs; 1909-10—34,920,000 francs; 1919-20—319,458,000 francs; in 1929 alone—606,200,000 francs.

the transport services and the banking institution of Indo-China, of the life of the peoples of Indo-China and of the peoples themselves. It is the sole and unchallenged ruler of the country. This monster, with its numerous tentacles, fastens on its prey, crushing it and sucking the life blood out of it; and its prey is the land of Indo-China, the produce of its soil, its mineral wealth and its waters!

But who is the brains of this gruesome beast? He is a very high official in the world of finance, former Governor of Indo-China and manager of the Bank of Indo-China—Paul Baudoin. He also personally directs the French Society of Drainage and Public Works, whose role in Indo-China is considerable. M. Baudoin is a member of the Board of Directors of the Water and Electricity Company of Indo-China, the Indo-China Electricity Company and the French Street Car and Lighting Company of Shanghai. This Paul Baudoin, a member of the Laval-Pétain Government, was Georges Bonnet's successor as Minister of Foreign Affairs. More, as manager of the Bank of Indo-China, he works in the service of Raymond Bergougnan (director of the Bergougnan Tire Company) in the Rubber Company of Indo-China, and in the Indo-China Company of Tropical Plants, in which M. Octave Homberg is the ruling figure.

In a word, M. Paul Baudoin is the agent of the Homberg-Bergougnan-Michelin capitalist group. This group was politically branded in a letter published in 1928 in a Paris newspaper which caused a sensation. This letter, written by the

Socialist Pierre Hamp, explained to M. Homberg how he could secure election from Raincy (Seine) to the Senate, so that he might personally keep closer watch on the affairs of Indo-China.

“The Senator is guided by very simple principles: Don't tie yourself to any party and have your threads everywhere; that is the best way to get on in the world. . . . Municipal councillors will evidently need a little greasing, but the Senator undertakes to arrange the affairs without any difficulty. . . .”

The Senator in question was M. Pierre Laval.

Poor peasants of the rich lands of Annam! Poor coolies of the plantations! Poor Annamite workers! You weep over your children who have died of starvation; you bewail your executed brothers; you clench your fists in anger at the police and mandarins. Your hatred sometimes even extends to the president. But, as our fraternal party of Indo-China tells you, you must look higher still for the monster that is sucking the blood of your beautiful country—it bears the name Homberg-Michelin-Bergougnan, three names that are cursed by their slaves, the French workers.

This monster is now sucking the life blood out of the French people and the French proletariat who have done so much for you. The tentacles with which it operates bear two names which are equally hated and detested by the French people, the names of men who have sold the French people into slavery in order to preserve their own selfish and monstrous privileges—Laval and

Baudoin. This octopus wants to go on sucking the blood of your people with its tentacles—that gang of governors, Residents, rascally police and big capitalist traitors. And since it does not feel strong enough to do so any longer, it is calling another octopus to its aid—Japanese imperialism. That is why Laval and Baudoin have called down the Japanese locusts on your country. What will they leave you?

### *A New Day Is Dawning*

But French Indo-China is not only a land rich in minerals and with a fertile soil. It has not only the sad privilege of being the most profitable of the French colonies for the imperialists and bankers of Paris. It is also a colony where the slaves are becoming more and more conscious of their slavery.

When, in 1898, at the demand of the French banks, the payments by the Annamite peasants in kind and in small coin was converted into a land tax and other taxes, this helped at the same time to convert the nationalist movement, which up to then had been confined to the intellectuals, into a popular movement, which the struggle of the Chinese people—the Boxer War of 1900—directed against the French colonizers.

The internment of the Emperor Thanh-Thai in 1907 and the coronation of the young student Bao Dai undermined the principle of loyalty to the crown in the minds of the Annamite people which until then had been the foundation of the political and social (and feudal) structure of the nation.

And scarcely had the beheadings and executions of the year 1908 served to retard the revolutionary movement for a time, when the Chinese revolution of October 6, 1911, and the principles of Sun Yat-sen lent the national movement a popular orientation.

This movement was never more to be halted. In the post-war years it united the peoples of Indo-China in a profound spirit of discontent, active and latent. The development of modern agriculture and industry cast a few crumbs steeped in the sweat of the peoples to a few Annamite intellectuals and bourgeois—but in vain. As they grew fat and were covered with honors, they shook off their “national” spirit and won the good graces of the conquerors, but they lost their ancient prestige among the people. For, two forces were at work stirring up and educating the people of Indo-China.

During the first imperialist war, thousands of Indo-Chinese were forcibly dispatched to France as workers and soldiers. The workers (48,981 in number) became highly skilled operatives, especially in the engineering and aircraft industries. But they learned from the French workers what the class struggle means. They saw how the workers often succeeded in wresting important gains from the French bourgeoisie by collective action. Suffering equally with the French workers in the great industrial hells, they also learned what proletarian solidarity means. In the French worker, as one of the accused in the big Saigon trial declared, they found a brother, and not a representative of a superior race.

As to the Annamite soldiers,\* they too learned that the French worker in soldier's uniform was a man like themselves, and they too had many times witnessed the marks of his solidarity. When the soldiers and workers returned to Annam after the first imperialist war, still under the strong impression of the revolutionary movement of 1918-19, they brought with them the conviction that a fight against the exploiters and oppressors was possible, and were strongly imbued with a sense of the equality of races. What is more, in France they had learned about the great October Socialist Revolution and how the enslaved peoples of old Russia had gained their freedom. Since then they have held the great Soviet Union in high esteem. And in succeeding years, the same thing invariably happened with all Indo-Chinese workers and soldiers sent to France.\*\*

So it went on for twenty years. The Annamite workers and soldiers fructified the ideas of emancipation and the hopes of freedom of the peoples of Indo-China with the great lessons of the active struggles of the French proletariat and people. No wonder that these men, returned from France, are regarded with such suspicion by the police.

But there was another factor that contributed largely to making the Annamite people conscious of their servitude.

The Government of Indo-China was obliged to open a number of schools, in which instruction

was given in *Quoc-ngu*\* and in French, in order to impart to their slaves the minimum knowledge required for the operation of modern machinery and for the extension of colonization itself. As such schools are demanded by all the villages of Indo-China, there should have been thousands more of them. But scandalously small as the number of these schools was, nevertheless in recent years 350,000 to 400,000 children have received some sort of education in them. Thus these schools have given the Annamite people the opportunity to understand the reasons for their slavery and even the means of escaping from it. This all the more because, as the trials and the complaints of the Residents in all official reports show, a vast number of the Annamite school teachers, male and female, are revolutionary-minded.

It is clear that the influence of the Chinese revolution, all the more since it was always supported by the Soviet Union, was bound to weld together the revolutionary movement, and, to develop it.

Now, the years 1928 and 1929 were marked by flood, crop failures and unemployment. Add to this the ruthless exploitation, aggravated by the tyranny of the mandarins, who were embezzlers, thieves and informers almost to a man. The capitalist economic crisis broke out: exports of rubber, rice, coal and minerals came to a standstill. Famine crushed hundreds of thousands of poor peasants and workers, many of whom had no other alternative but to sell themselves like human

\* They numbered 48,922 in all (seventeen battalions, two at the front and fifteen in the depots), in addition to 5,000 men in the automobile transport corps and 8,000 in the medical corps.

\*\* An average of 15,000 soldiers annually.

\* The Annamite language in Latin script.

cattle to the New Hebrides. All over Indo-China, but especially in Tonkin and North Annam, peaceful demonstrations were held in which the famished people demanded the abolition of the salt tax, the spirits monopoly and the pepper monopoly, as well as a reduction of taxation. The answer came in the form of machine guns and bombing planes.

The revolutionary nationalist party (*Viet-Nam Quoc-Dan-Khang*, or the Annamite Kuomintang), which consisted principally of intellectuals, did not understand the character of the movement. It launched into putsches and acts of terrorism. It was immediately annihilated, despite the heroism of its leaders, not so much because of the action of the government, as because it held aloof from the demands of the workers and peasants.

On the other hand, in the mass movements that had begun, in the strikes that broke out on the plantations and in the factories, the various Communist groups succeeded in uniting their forces, and in October, 1930, the Communist Party of Indo-China was formed, which, at its Unity Conference, pointed to the necessity of uniting all the forces "that are struggling against the imperialists, the feudal lords, the big landowners and the clique of mandarins, thieves and oppressors."

Thus the mass movement of the people of Indo-China for rice, land and freedom at last acquired a real leader. And ten years of terrible persecution, of massacre and torture, of calumny and crafty maneuvers, have not succeeded in crushing it.

And this Communist Party of the workers, peasants, coolies and teachers, supported by an ardent Young Communist League, which by its heroic deeds has proved itself worthy of its parent, is again today standing up alone against the new campaign of rapacity that has been launched against the people of Indo-China.

\* \* \*

For the octopus that is crushing and sucking the life out of the peoples of Indo-China can see its only salvation in an appeal to the Japanese imperialists. The recent pacts between the men of Vichy and the men of Tokyo are nothing but a continuation of the policy of the Bank of Indo-China. It was M. Paul Baudoin who was in effect the promoter of the great "Consortium of Chinese Affairs," which has its agencies in Peking, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Canton, Hankow, Yunanfu and Tientsin and half of whose business is done in China. This explains the whole policy of the Two Hundred Families against the people of China; it also explains the whole policy of the various governors of Indo-China, including their policy of supporting the traitor puppet, Wang Ching-wei, while the press of Indo-China systematically suppresses or falsifies all that comes from the Chinese national government in Chungking, all news of the successes of the Chinese national army.

The policy of men like Baudoin (Bank of Indo-China) and of the Laval-Hombert-Michelin clique has always been hostile to national China, for they fear the "great dan-

ger" of her example. And there has not been a single French government which has not supported this policy of the Bank of Indo-China. This was true even of the governments headed by the French Socialist Party. The people of Annam will never forget the first action of Varenne, the Socialist Governor of Indo-China. In order to win the confidence of the colonial masters, he demanded emergency credits to fortify the frontiers against revolutionary China. Varenne was Member for Clermont-Ferrand, where Michelin, the patron of the "yellow" groups, reigns supreme.

And never will the people of Annam forget that Louis-Oscar Frossard, in 1928, when he was still a Socialist, hailed "the various and not inconsiderable advantages conferred on the natives by the colonization"—the guillotine and bombing planes in place of the axe! Nor will they forget that the Socialist Federation, affiliated to the Socialist Party of France, was the first organization in Indo-China to demand, after the events of Yen-bay, through their organ, the *Petit Populaire du Tonkin*, that the "guilty persons"—that is, the starving—be "tracked down and executed without pity."

With the formation of the first Blum government in 1936, the people of Indo-China were inspired with new hopes. But, alas, the thousands who had been condemned to life-long deportation to Cayenne were not even reprieved! And, lo and behold!, one of the "experts" appointed by Vincent Auriol, the Socialist Minister of Finance in the first Blum government, was M. Paul Baudoin of the Bank of Indo-China!

The Indo-China policy of those who govern in Paris on behalf of the Two Hundred Families (to which the plutocrats Baudoin, Homberg and Michelin belong) and of their governors in Indo-China has always been the same—a policy of colonial rulers and slave-owners. The pacts of September-October, 1940, with the Japanese imperialists are nothing but a continuation of this policy.

Why have they thrown open Tonkin to the Japanese militarists? Why, following the method of Laval in France last June, have they stabbed in the back the French and Indo-Chinese soldiers fighting in Lang-son and Dang-Dang? Why have they surrendered the aerodromes of Tonkin to the Japanese imperialists? Why will they tomorrow surrender Cambodia, Upper Laos and Cochin-China directly to them or to their puppets in Thailand (Siam)? Why is the big naval base in Cam-ranh already sheltering the Japanese battle fleet? In a word, why is the grim and brutal military and police machine of Japanese imperialism being imposed upon the people of Indo-China, who are ardently yearning for land and freedom?

Because Messieurs Baudoin and Laval hope by these bandit transactions to save a part of their booty; for they would rather share it with their confederates in Tokyo than see the people of Indo-China taking their affairs into their own hands and winning happiness, peace and freedom.

From the very outbreak of this war our fraternal party in Indo-China pointed out what this war would mean to the peoples of that



country. It has meant the loss of the little they had gained during these past years of struggle; it has meant unrestricted power for the local puppets and shadow kings to intensify exploitation and oppression; it has meant wholesale unemployment of workers and employees, lower wages, longer hours, higher taxes and forced loans—even going so far as the exaction of a day's "earnings" from the prostitutes of Cholon; it has meant the plunder of the communal lands and compulsory "volunteering" for work or military service in France. And since then things have gone still further. "Subversive" organizations under "Communist influence," like the Committee of Workers' Delegates of Saigon-Cholon, the seamen's aid society, the mutual aid society of the laundrymen of Tonkin and the Democratic Youth League have been dissolved. And it goes without saying that all the newspapers have been suppressed, even those of the most timid constitutionalists. Add to this hundreds of arrests and sentences.

While the Communist Party of France, which alone has fought and is fighting undaunted for the rights of the peoples of Indo-China, had to witness the savage sentences passed on the courageous Communist deputies, the Communists of Indo-China were also being hailed in numbers before the military tribunals and the Court of Saigon. At the same time the action of the police revealed the provocateur anti-Communist role of a handful of Trotskyites, as, for example, in the indulgence extended to Professor To-Thu-thau, whom the Governor congratulated for his "fine conduct,"

and who was summoned by Albert Sarraut to France for his own anti-Communist provocateur purposes—being arrested on the way "by mistake" by the military police, the traditional rivals of the civil police.

Meanwhile, the French imperialist government collapsed. Laval and Baudoin immediately took every precaution to save their moneybags. But as they are no longer masters of the sea, they have called in the Japanese gendarmes to aid them against the people of Indo-China—which at the same time makes it possible to cause difficulties to national China by the danger of an attack on Yunnan.

That is why our fraternal party in Indo-China is denouncing the aims of the Japanese imperialists and of their puppets in Siam: the tentacle of the octopus, the Bank of Indo-China and its imperialists, is to be replaced by the tentacle of the Japanese octopus. And it is again the Indo-Chinese people who are to foot the bill. And the bill is to be doubled. For the frightful exploitation already prevailing is to be supplemented by the exploitation of other imperialist robbers. Therefore, our courageous fraternal party of Indo-China quite rightly calls upon the peoples of the peninsula to prepare to defend themselves, above all, by carrying on a more intense fight than ever for the recovery of some of their elementary rights, for the cancellation of the debts of the peasants, for the abolition of compulsory labor and of the detested salt, spirits and opium monopolies, and for the free distribution of the common lands among the poor peasants.

Our fraternal party of Indo-China rightly demands the termination of the frightful exploitation of children and of the traffic in women and coolies. It demands schooling for all in all the villages, and in the national languages. It demands equal pay for equal work. Above all, it calls for the formation of an anti-imperialist national united front of all the peoples of Indo-China and of the immigrant workers against oppression and exploitation, "in order to repulse the penetration of Japanese imperialism," as it already declared at the beginning of the year. "Let everyone contribute to the struggle in accordance with his strength and means."

In a few impressive sentences, our heroic fraternal party of Indo-China calls attention to the fact that not all the Frenchmen in Indo-China are imperialists. It calls to mind that in the midst of the Foreign Legion's sadistic orgy of suppression in North Annam, some French and foreign soldiers of the Legion proved themselves heroes; for example, Adjutant Egloff, who was punished for refusing to carry out the order to fire on a demonstration and commanded his men to fire in the air; on the French sergeant Lemoine, who did not carry out orders to shoot eight prisoners and later allowed them to go free; or the sailors of the cruiser *Primauguet*, who were told to take a dozen Indo-Chinese workers into custody, but allowed them all to escape and even gave them money. Our fraternal party of Indo-China is right in praising the French savants who in Angkor-Vat and Quinhon revived the great civilizations of Khmer and

Cham, and in spite of the ridicule by the colonial officials of M. Baudoin.

Our fraternal party is right in praising the French physicians, the great majority of whom have rendered inestimable service to the Indo-Chinese, like the doctors of the Pasteur Institute in Saigon who prepare seven million doses of human microbiological serum a year, and whom the colonial masters hamper in their humanitarian work; or Dr. Yersin, modest director of the Pasteur Institute in Nha-Trang, the conqueror of the plague.

Our fraternal party quite rightly points out that, side by side with the bandits of the political police, and of the mining and rubber companies, there is another France, which is really a force of civilization, the France of her savants and her people, as the French Communist deputies proudly declared before the military tribunal.

Although accurate information about events in the Far East is scarce, one thing is clear—that the Communist Party in Indo-China, ideologically schooled in difficult problems, and tested by the martyrdom of many of its best functionaries on the scaffold and under gruesome torture, continues to hold firmly aloft the banner of struggle for the welfare of the people of Indo-China and for their liberation from all imperialists.

"Are they making demands? Then they are Communists!" a chief of police once exclaimed, thereby involuntarily admitting that our fraternal party is the only one that is able to defend the immediate demands, even the smallest, of the

various sections of the working people of Indo-China.

"The Communists? At bottom, the same people who used to wave the black flag are today displaying the red flag with the hammer and sickle." With these words, a Resident of Tonkin involuntarily admitted that the banner of struggle for the independence of the Indo-Chinese during the first twenty years of the occupation has now passed into the hands of the Communist Party of Indo-China.

In the recent battles against the Japanese imperialists in Lang-son and Dang-Dang, the soldiers—Communists and sympathizers—of the Third Tonkin Rifle Regiment could even be seen fighting shoulder to shoulder with that very Fifth Regiment of the Foreign Legion which

nine years earlier had carried the punitive expeditions into the Province of Vinh. It was only their leaders who compelled them to cease fighting.

The Japanese imperialists, the butchers of the Chinese people, have been called to Indo-China by Baudoin and Laval. Anxious for the safety of their booty, these blood-suckers have already sacrificed to them hundreds of French and Annamite soldiers. But the Japanese imperialists will not save the mines of Hong-gay, the plantations of Homberg-Michelin and the rice fields of Tonkin and Cochin-China for them. The marvelous wealth of Annam must again belong to its great people, allied by ties of solidarity with the Chinese people. And it will belong to them!

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## SOME EFFECTS OF WAR ECONOMY IN THE U.S.A.

BY GIL GREEN

*"We know that vast armaments are rising on every side, and that the work of creating them employs men by the millions. It is natural, however, for us to conclude that such employment is false employment; that it builds no consumer goods for the maintenance of a lasting prosperity.*

*"We know that nations guilty of these follies inevitably face the day when either their weapons of destruction must be used against their neighbors or when an unsound economy like a house of cards will fall apart."—Franklin D. Roosevelt, Philadelphia, 1936.*

*"It is quite gratifying to learn of the President's decision that all public works expenditures, except those directly connected with munitions production will be 'cut to the bone.'"—The New York Times, November 28, 1940.*

### I.

**W**HEN the *New York Times*, this outstanding spokesman of finance capital, thus finds the budgetary proposals of President Roosevelt "quite gratifying," it is not because the budget is at long last going to be balanced. Actually, it will be less balanced. Nor was this editorial applause prompted by a contemplated reduction in government spending; for none is contemplated.

The truth is, that Big Business and its reactionary press—*The New York Times* included—never really opposed government spending and pump-priming as such, despite all their predictions of national bankruptcy. What they opposed, is, to use the words of the National Association of Manufacturers, "unnecessary and undesirable" expenditures, i.e., unnecessary and undesirable from the standpoint of the class interests represented by the N.A.M.! Even though they aimed their shafts at spending *in general*, their real target was spending *in particular*. For in the long since gone progressive days of the New Deal, there were those in Washington who believed that new blood could be injected into the national economy by increasing the purchasing power of the masses. It was to the extent that government spending was used for *this* purpose and with this objective that it aroused the determined enmity of the economic royalists. The monopolists, of course, reaped immense benefits from government spending. But they opposed those aspects of the spending program which rested on the principle of giving assistance to the needy, of raising the standard

of living of the immense majority and of curbing the power and taxing the wealth of the finance oligarchy.

### *Spending for What?*

But the huge government expenditures program of today is approved by Big Business; for, as compared to it, the program of yesterday is as similar as is a shovel to a gun. Government spending yesterday was primarily for peace-time construction; that of today for war-time destruction. Spending then was aimed, in large measure, at increasing the purchasing power of the masses; spending now seeks to fill the coffers of the monopolists, to increase the power and wealth of finance capital. Already, corporation earnings in the first nine months of 1940 have increased by 40 per cent over the same period a year ago. And as for the monopolies in basic industry, their profits are soaring at even dizzy heights. The U.S. Steel Corporation, for example, earned \$69,000,000 during the first nine months of 1940 as compared to \$12,000,000 during the same period in 1939—an increase of more than 450 per cent.\*

Pump-priming in the period prior to the war played an important role in bringing about a degree of industrial recovery, but it never reached such volumes or assumed the sustained character as was necessary to pull the economy of the nation out of its depression.

\* "For the nine-month period, earnings of 154 companies totalled \$518,841,935, compared with \$370,532,250 in the corresponding months of 1939. That's a gain of 40 per cent." *Business Week*, Nov. 2, 1940.

In fact, when in May, 1939, Earl Browder proposed a twenty billion dollar low-cost housing program to be financed and constructed over a period of five years, as a means of checking the new economic crisis which had hit the country in 1937, this proposal was met with derision and denounced as fantastic. Yet, one short year later, Congress, with the plaudits of Wall Street, appropriated or authorized some sixteen and one-half billions of dollars for "national defense." And this is admittedly but a bare beginning, since present estimates of Government economists indicate that at least thirty-five billions of dollars will be spent for "defense" in the next five years. What miracles hast thou wrought, O Mars!

The "national defense" program will therefore affect the volume of national production in a qualitatively different fashion than did the more modest public works program of the past. From a secondary and subordinate influence on production it is fast looming as the primary influence. As Walter Lippmann, in the *New York Herald Tribune* of September 19, foresaw: "The time must come when the defense program passes from being a gigantic pump-primer into being the main engine. . . ."

Great jubilation is to be found in Wall Street circles over this perspective. The *United States News*, of November 15, indulging in superlatives and exaggerations, predicts: "It [the "defense" program] spells the greatest sustained boom in the history of this or any other country—as far as industrial volumes are concerned."

Separating fact from fancy, it is undoubtedly true that we have entered into a period of industrial boom. Not, mind you, a normal cyclical boom, but a boom "of a special kind," a *war boom* occurring under conditions of the ever sharpening general crisis of world capitalism. The imperialist war and America's preparation for entrance into the armed struggle for the re-division of the world have therefore artificially altered and distorted the normal course of the economic cycle. This is understood even by the bourgeois economists who admit that "the recent recovery has been in the main a war boom and an armament boom." (*The New York Times*, October 25.)

## II.

One of the characteristics of this boom "of a special kind" is that the masses of this country—the workers, farmers and toiling middle classes—will not even be indirect beneficiaries of the rise in industrial production. Nor are we referring to the inevitable, ultimate effects of "these follies" that President Roosevelt warned against in 1936. At this point, we refer solely to the *immediate* economic consequences for the masses of the transition to war economy.

This is of great importance; for it must be admitted that many workers, although they fear that the so-called defense program is in reality a war program, at the same time believe that it may usher in a period of relative prosperity for themselves. They see it as an ill-wind blowing some good.

Roosevelt and his labor flunkeys have fostered these illusions. During the last weeks of the election campaign, Roosevelt did not mention the word "sacrifice" once, although he has since made up for that omission. Instead he promised the "right to work for all" and an extension of progressive social legislation. His satellite Hillman played the same demagogic tune, improving on Goering by promising both butter and guns. Nor was the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. to be outdistanced by Hillman. It followed with some variation the same pattern even as late as the recent sixtieth annual convention. Forced to take cognizance of the dangers facing the labor movement from the "defense" program, it, however, sought to mollify the rising fears of the rank and file. The council admits that, "In Europe [read: capitalist Europe], nations building up great military forces and equipment have done so at the cost of drastic reductions in their living standards." But says the report, "In America, we can avoid reduction of living standards, because of our superior productivity!" (*Executive Council Report*, p. 59.)

### *The Enigma of Butter or Guns*

These promises will now come home to roost, for since the end of the elections the real meaning of the "defense" program from the viewpoint of living and labor standards is becoming ever more apparent. The Hillmans and Greens, groveling at the feet of their masters, dare not admit what the capitalist press and its bourgeois scribes are

making rather plain—that butter and guns do not go together in capitalist war economy—not even in America. *Business Week* of November 9, in an editorial on “The Presidential Problem Ahead,” strikes the following somber note:

“But the times ahead are not nearly as promising as the statistics. The country faces a tremendous task: to produce more and more and consume less and less. That is the economic paradox of a war economy. As we turn out airplanes, and tanks, and battleships, and armored cars, and cannon, and ammunition; as we turn out the men and things necessary to carry on a war, industrial energy—plant, man-hours, and brains—are diverted from production of goods that the civilian population can consume.” (Our emphasis—G.G.)

This enlightening editorial concludes:

“Thus, no matter how the defense program is financed, the end result is that ultimately people may have to work harder without a compensating increase in consumption goods. That situation calls for delicate handling from the White House.”

And well it does—if the temper of the workers means anything!

Walter Lippmann places the question even more succinctly:

“Once it [the defense program] begins to be the dominant factor in the sense that defense orders have priority in all the chief markets, we shall be at the stage of sacrifices. It will be necessary to tax for the purpose of reducing civilian consumption, to ration commodities of which there is an insufficient supply, to in-

crease the hours of work when there is insufficient skilled labor, and to bring in apprentices more rapidly. No one is telling business men the truth who leaves them with the impression that ‘total defense’ can be had by ‘free enterprise,’ and no one is telling labor the truth who leaves them with the impression that ‘total defense’ can be had without modifying for the period of the emergency many ‘social gains.’” (*The New York Herald Tribune*, Sept. 19.)

How does Big Business through the Roosevelt Administration propose to impose these sacrifices?

President Roosevelt has indicated the first step, namely, that of cutting to the bone all Government expenditures which go in the direction of social benefits. Already the campaign is on to create the impression that the armaments program is absorbing the unemployed and bringing prosperity to the masses, thus eliminating the need for government assistance. In fact, four professors of the University of Chicago, displaying a surprising alacrity and imagination equalled only by their callous indifference for the truth, have written a booklet, entitled *Economic Mobilization*, which sets out to prove that “defense” production will provide jobs for all and bring about a “general improvement in the workers’ lot.”

There is not a single fact to substantiate this contention, but ample evidence proves the very opposite. Let us take the question of unemployment. The volume of industrial production has already surpassed the highest peak reached in the banner year 1929, but the vast army of unemployed still remains intact.

As *Business Week* of November 9 points out, employment is higher today than at any time since October, 1929, yet "there are actually more unemployed today than in September, 1937." *Business Week* estimates the number of unemployed as 6,829,000; the American Federation of Labor's figure is 8,130,000 for October; the National Industrial Conference Board finds eight to nine million unemployed; and the calculation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations shows ten million. Clearly, whichever of those figures is taken as most accurate, no one can deny that mass unemployment is still a reality.

#### *The Reason for Continued Unemployment*

Two factors go to explain the great disparity between production and employment levels. First, the tremendous increase in labor productivity.

"Since 1935 production per man-hour in American factories has increased 25 per cent . . . for in 1940 American mines and factories are producing 6 per cent more than they produced in 1929, with a work week ten hours shorter, and 800,000 fewer persons at work. Labor output per man-hour has increased by 52.3 per cent since 1929!" (Executive Council, A. F. of L., *Report to Sixtieth Convention*, p. 59.)

Second, the increase in the available labor force, due mainly to the increase in population. In 1929, the estimated total labor force was 48,056,000; in August, 1940, it was 54,098,000, an increase of slightly more than six millions (*Ibid.*)

Nor is there any sound basis for believing that a further spurt in production will take in the slack. First, industrial output is already extremely close to capacity level. As this is being written, steel ingot production, for example, is at 96.9 per cent of capacity. Hence, even if production continues to rise, it cannot possibly reach levels capable of absorbing the bulk of the nation's unemployed. Secondly, even if a degree of plant expansion is envisioned, this will be a limited expansion, except for the aircraft industry. Thirdly, new plant equipment will be based upon the most modern industrial technique; meaning, the most effective labor-displacing machinery. The effects of the "defense" program on labor productivity has already been noted by the conventions of both the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. The A. F. of L. convention called "public attention to the fact that since the start of the defense program productivity is increasing at three times the pace of the last ten years. From August, 1939, to June, 1940, output per man-hour rose 14 per cent, compared to the average rise of less than 4 per cent per year since 1929." Incredible, but true! That is one reason why production in the past year increased 15 per cent but employment only 7 per cent.

These facts amply prove that those who put forth the claim that unemployment is diminishing as a problem for the nation engage either in willful distortion for sinister political purposes, or know not whereof they speak. Especially is this true for the Negro workers, who have not shared even in the limited



increase in employment of the recent period.

Let us therefore return to the President's proposal to slash all but "defense" expenditures. It would seem that this brazen attempt to place a large portion of the armaments burden on the backs of the most unfortunate, the needy and destitute, would call forth a cry of dismay from all the "liberals," the "friends" of the downtrodden and oppressed. But no, the New Deal "liberals," including those of the *Nation* and *New Republic* stripe, were and are in complete agreement. Their hearts may bleed for the poor, but their pay-triotism comes first.

Yes, Big Business has every reason to view the new course of the Roosevelt Administration as "quite gratifying." This does not mean that it is satisfied. Oh, no! *The New York Times* makes this crystal clear. It not only applauds the President for his gallant and humane promise to "cut to the bone" all expenditures for social benefits, but proceeds to demand more.

"All this is an excellent first step," says the *Times*. "But much more must be done if the Government's financial house is to be set in order and if we are truly to concentrate on national defense. Every effort must be made to achieve now a budget fully balanced for all items *except the increased defense costs themselves.*" (Our emphasis—G.G.)

The shadow of a bone balanced against the weight of a cannon! Such is the demand of the "liberal" *Times*.

This likewise is the extent of the

Administration's "loyal opposition" led by the Republican knight of Wall Street, Wendell Willkie. Sir Wendell, boldly dashing to the fray, unsheathes his sword against the Administration's fiscal policy. But this is no real duel; it is but a friendly scuffle.

It was Willkie in his speech on November 12, who called upon the President to cut all expenditures but those for defense "to the bone and below the bone." Alarmed as he professes to be about the increasing Government debt, he is none the less ardently in favor of increased appropriations for armaments. But he demands that the masses foot the bill. He believes that "taxes should be levied so as to approach the pay-as-you-go plan," but insists: "Taxes and Government restrictions should be adjusted to take the brakes off private enterprise." Poor, persecuted private enterprise!

The Republican "opposition" is likewise against raising the debt limit the full twenty billion dollars by one magnanimous act of Congress. It favors instead a more gradual, piecemeal sort of increase, to be granted by Congress stintingly and grudgingly after first making positively sure that such increase is solely meant for "national defense" and cannot be procured through the further paring of other expenditures. Its concern is therefore with making doubly sure that the reactionary course of the Roosevelt Administration is ruthlessly pursued come hell or high-water.

Disagreements on fiscal matters? Of course! But only to the extent that the marauders, having selected

their victims, quarrel over how best to fleece them.

### *Increased Payrolls and Decreased Buying Power*

But the paradox of war economy is not resolved solely by cutting government spending for social benefits. Much more must be done if the masses are to *produce more and more and consume less and less*. Yet, this is no simple problem at a time when increased employment has led to increased payrolls (14 per cent during the past year) which in turn has meant increased demand for goods of mass consumption. How to undo with the right hand what is being done with the left: that is the problem.

The solution that lies closest to the heart of monopoly capital is undoubtedly that of unleashing a wage-cutting and union-busting *blitzkrieg* which would with one blow destroy labor organization and labor standards and thus slash the purchasing power of the working class. But this kind of an offensive, while advocated by some, would hardly be wise at this juncture. First, labor is more highly organized than at any time in American history and for the first time has a strong base in the most important war industries. Secondly, the past few years have witnessed a rising militancy in the ranks of labor, which it would not be safe to challenge. Thirdly, uninterrupted production is a prerequisite for fulfilling the quotas of the war program. A policy of direct wage-cuts, even if successful in the end, could be achieved only after serious and prolonged interruptions of the produc-

tion process. For all of these reasons, discretion becomes the better part of valor. The cat must be skinned in another way.

This is to be accomplished, first of all, by freezing nominal wages at their present levels and by cutting real wages through a rise in the cost of living and a form of controlled inflation. A steady rise can already be noted especially in wholesale prices, but moving rapidly in the direction of higher retail prices. The *United States News* of November 22 reports: "Commodity prices have been rising at the rate of 2 per cent a week" and observes that these "*would double in a year.*" *Business Week* of October 26 comments on the steady price rise and sees this trend as "inevitable," although not in any disparaging sense, for it concludes: "A rising commodity-price level will tend to produce a rising profit level."

### *High Prices and Speculation*

As yet, production for "defense" has not created a shortage in either durable or non-durable commodities. The present price rise is therefore mainly due to speculation, based on anticipation of a future shortage. Even if the Government were to intervene to check such speculation, it might slow up but would not halt the trend towards rising price levels. This is so, because:

1. War economy stimulates the production of durable products of a non-consumption character in such quantities as to create a growing shortage in durable consumption products. This will hold doubly so as soon as the much discussed

"Priorities System" is put into effect by the Administration. Once the Government undertakes to *command* raw materials and production to the extent of limiting the manufacture of non-"defense" products, prices of durable consumption commodities will rise steeply.

2. While the prices of durable products will move upward at a faster tempo and will reach higher peaks than those of non-durable, *both will climb upward*. First, because production for war is intimately tied up with the preparation of manpower for war. This means—food, shelter, clothing, in immense quantities. Secondly, as production and profit levels rise in the war industries, there will be a shift of both capital and labor power from the light to the heavy industries. Thus, as the war economy proceeds to devour more and more of normal production, the gap between the price levels of durable and non-durable goods may slowly contract. This process will hold far less for agricultural products than for manufactured or semi-manufactured goods since the war has not affected the chronic farm crisis in the United States.

Another factor of considerable importance in influencing the purchasing power of the masses and the cost of living is the tax structure adopted by the Government to pay for the armament program.

#### *Profits for the Rich and Taxes for the Poor*

There has been much shouting in "liberal" New Deal circles against war profiteering and about taxing

excess profits, but this din and clamor has only amounted to what is known in warfare as "a diversion." The so-called Excess Profits Tax adopted by the last session of Congress is a fraud. Through the medium of this Act large corporations will receive what is tantamount to Federal gifts under the guise of expanding plant facilities for "defense" purposes. Instead of taxing excess profits, this Act provides increasing loopholes for tax evasion. This measure, for example, grants corporations 8 per cent annually on their total investments when the average yearly rate of profit from 1926 through 1937 was only 1.7 per cent. Nor were the large corporations facing bankruptcy in those years, for the average rate of profit is in no way indicative of actual profits. During these same eleven years, at even such a low rate of profit, business succeeded in averaging \$2,365,000,000 yearly in net earnings.\* (*Business Week*, Nov. 2). It must be borne in mind that as capitalist industry develops it demands an ever higher proportion of constant capital. That is why under monopoly capital, there is an inevitable fall in the *rate* of profit, which of course has nothing to do with the *volume* of profits.

Now that the Government has succeeded in taking the teeth out of the excess profits tax the next logical step is, of course, to lay a heavier tax burden on the masses of the people. And so, in addition to the sales and luxury taxes that confound the American people wherever they turn, new taxes, both

\* After taxes, includes interest on tax-exempt securities, but excludes intercorporate dividends.

direct and indirect, are being prepared to eat away at their income and purchasing power.

The Scripps-Howard press, that acme of liberal journalism, asks how it is possible that close to fifty million citizens voted in November, and yet but three million pay "visible income taxes to the Federal Government"? "Visible," is right, but what about the "invisible"? John L. Lewis in his report to the recent C.I.O. convention observes that 55.6 per cent of Federal taxes come from the taxation of consumer products. (*Report of John L. Lewis*, p. 35.)

Ignoring this minor (!) fact, the *World-Telegram* of November 29 continues its editorial with the plea for "an income-tax law under which at least 10,000,000 citizens meet the collector face to face." Besides such a downward revision in the income-tax structure, the Government is likewise contemplating "the sale of defense certificates directly to the public, after the manner of Liberty bonds." (*Time*, December 9.) Thus, despite all the demagogic talk about "drafting wealth," the Government has engulfed upon a program to undermine the purchasing power of the masses and to place the entire burden of the war program on their backs.

#### *Speed-Up and Long Hours*

Another aspect of Wall Street's drive is taking the form of a campaign for lengthening the working week and abolishing the provisions of the Wages-and-Hours Act in relation to overtime. Alfred Sloan, speaking before the Academy of

Political Science, called for just such sacrifices from labor. Big Business is so desirous of lengthening the work-day, not because it expects a labor shortage, but because it fears that the influx of new workers into industry may result in reducing labor productivity per man-hour, thereby limiting its profit squeezing. It therefore is taking every precaution to ensure an increase of labor productivity per man-day. The campaign to lengthen the work-day and work-week is likewise tied up with a drive for general rationalization and speed-up. We have already shown how labor-saving machinery has increased the productivity of labor. The employers, while ever ready to accept Government subsidies for plant expansion, nevertheless intend to increase plant production in most industries, not, in the main, through this means, but through an intensification of the rate of exploitation of human labor power.

Ever so subtly is this thought expressed in the program adopted by the National Association of Manufacturers on December 4. The N.A.M., it goes without saying, is opposed to wage increases, but for the sake of piece-work speed-up it favors, "the practice of paying, wherever feasible, workers according to their individual or group accomplishment, thus giving the most return to workers who produce the most for national defense." This speeding-up process has already taken its toll in human life and limb and is the main cause for the numerous explosions which have occurred in the chemical, powder and mining industries these recent

months, as well as for the general rise in the total of industrial accidents.

Furthermore, in those industries or sections of industries where the workers have not yet won the right of collective bargaining, the employers and the Government will do all in their power to keep the workers from becoming organized. That is why the N.A.M., once again in the name of patriotism and national defense, insists that "the status quo in bargaining relationships should be maintained so long as the preparedness program is a major national policy." What this means in plain language is that the employers want the Government to declare all attempts to organize the Ford, Bethlehem and aircraft plants as unpatriotic and contrary to the interests of "national defense."

#### *Class Collaboration and Intimidation*

These reactionary objectives are to be imposed upon labor and the people through a combination of two well-tried methods: (1) Intimidation; (2) Class collaboration. Some believe these two methods to be mutually exclusive. They are not. They are complementary. The former cannot succeed in this period without the skillful use of the latter, and vice versa. *The New York Times* understands this duality perfectly. Bristling with hatred of the Vultee strikers who dared demand a higher minimum wage, the *Times*, in its editorial columns of November 20, threatens labor with "legislation to apply to the defense industries something of the same sort of

machinery that is provided for in the Railway Labor Disputes Act." This does not mean that the *Times* is for coercion. Heaven, no! And the way it proposes "to avoid Government coercion" is by establishing the "equivalent of the old War Labor Boards." (!) But if these are to serve their purpose, says the *Times*, "the most important requirement will be to appoint men to such boards whose names and records will carry the greatest possible prestige and will have the confidence of both industry and labor." Page Sidney Hillman!

This same thought is expressed even more pointedly by Dr. Horst Mendershausen, in his recent book, *The Economics of War*. Basing himself on the American experiences in the last war and upon British and French experience in this war, the author warns (p. 107) that "the Government's labor policy should be directed by men who hold the confidence of the country's working class [!] and who realize the requirements of war economy. They should obtain the necessary concessions from labor by means of persuasion [?] and secure cooperation of the important labor organizations for this purpose." Page William Green, who has already promised no strike "for any reason" and who is working hand in glove with those ultra-reactionaries who aim to make strikes illegal and treasonable.

In this connection, Wall Street's sudden interest in "labor unity" would be both touching and pathetic were it not that the real interest lies elsewhere. David Lawrence, Washington columnist and editor, tells us where:

"Thus the real reason for the active drive to try and bring the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. together is to endeavor to find some means of dealing with unwarranted strikes and indiscriminate interruptions to production on defense contracts." (*New York Sun*, November 20.)

*The Workers Will Have to Be  
Reckoned With*

The hysteria which manifests itself over the Vultee strike, both in the daily press and in the august halls of Congress, is symptomatic of the growing fear in the ranks of the bourgeoisie that labor may not be so ready to sell its birthright for a mess of Hillman pottage. They need only recall that during the last war "neither public opinion nor patriotism prevented strikes when workers found that their real wages were being diminished by rising prices while, as they believed, their employers were making huge profits." (*Editorial Research Reports*, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 22.) And this time, labor is far better organized, prepared and partially led.

The demands for higher wages, for no reduction in the work-week, for the right to organize and strike, against speed-up and for adequate labor protection and compensation—these are the issues around which labor must defend its rights and its living standards. *Especially the demand for higher wages is the very keystone to whether labor can maintain its present standards or whether these will be eaten away by the pending wave of price inflation.*

These demands and the struggles that they precipitate will be at-

tacked by the employers, the Government and the labor bureaucrats as unpatriotic and "Communistic." Attempts will undoubtedly grow to prohibit strike struggles, to make arbitration compulsory, to tie labor's hands through long-time contracts, to use forced labor camps and the draft to "discipline" youth and labor; in short, to lock labor and capital in holy matrimony, even if through the medium of a shotgun wedding with Minister Hillman of the church of Social-Democracy holding the Bible and chief executive Roosevelt wielding the gun.

But it is precisely in the struggle for its demands, in the struggle to defend its living standards, that labor will emancipate itself from the Roosevelt myth, will learn who are its true friends and who its sworn foes, and will move in the direction of independent political action.

*The Middle Classes Are Hard Hit*

Capitalist war economy will not only tend to deteriorate labor standards, but will also adversely affect the living standards of the other toilers, the farmers and lower middle classes. We can already note that while production for war has boosted the prices of manufactured goods, the peculiar character of this war as against World War I, has destroyed America's export food market. Therefore, the disparity between the prices of manufactured goods and those of agricultural commodities is now considerably wider. Here labor faces a special problem. Big Business is trying to explain the rise in industrial prices as due to rising labor costs and excessive labor demands. In the coming period,

with an increased demand on the part of labor for wage increases, this argument will be used even more than in the past to turn the farmers against labor, especially its most militant sections.

This same will be true of the lower middle classes and the large number of salaried employees, governmental and otherwise, whose wages are already frozen on a yearly salary basis. These too must be kept from placing the responsibility for rising prices upon the labor movement.

#### *A People's Program*

The economic program which can rally and unite these strata will emerge from the struggles of the period itself, but its outline already exists in the report of John L. Lewis to the recent C.I.O. convention and in most of the resolutions and documents of that convention. This program consists of five planks:

"1. The proportion of all income which goes to wages must increase." In other words: [*Higher wages!*]

"2. The cost of living must be protected by the maintenance of a stable and reasonable price structure." [Therefore: *Lower the cost of living!*]

"3. Profits must be kept at a reasonable and just level." [Hence: *Stop war profiteering!*]

"4. The national tax structure needs a vigorous reversal. . . ." [Thus: *Tax the rich! For a real excess profits tax!*]

"5. A further expansion in purchasing power must be made available to beneficiaries under the Social Security program and to the unemployed." [This means: *Increase*

*Government aid to the unemployed, poor farmers, the aged and the youth!*]

These economic planks when indissolubly connected with the broader issues of keeping America out of the imperialist war and defending the democratic and civil liberties of the American people, provide the foundation for a real people's struggle against the ravaging effects of war economy.

### III.

What will be the effect of war economy on American capitalism? Here we can but note briefly some of the principal effects:

#### *Impoverishing the Nation*

First, contrary to normal peacetime production, production for war does not add to the material wealth of the nation. This is especially true for countries directly involved in the war which face wholesale destruction of property and wealth plus an accelerated falling off of production due to shortage of manpower, plant destruction and general depreciation. But it is likewise true, although to a lesser degree, for countries not directly at war but whose economy is geared to the piling up of war materials and war profits, such as the United States today. This is so, because war materials "never return to the process of production either in the form of means of production or of means of consumption." They "are definitely lost."

"The larger the share of the total products of the country that assume

the form of war materials, the more must production diminish in every circulation of capital, and the more impoverished the country becomes." (E. Varga, *The Communist International*, 1940, No. 4.)

Secondly, the bourgeoisie therefore enriches itself not by increasing the total wealth of the nation, but by concentrating a larger portion of the existing wealth into its hands, especially into the hands of monopoly capital. War production therefore accentuates the tendency for the concentration of capital in fewer and fewer hands. Professor Mendershausen takes note of this tendency in his study of war economy.

"Experience in a sort of business as collectivistic as war production quite naturally strengthens the tendencies toward concentration and centralization which are constantly at work in our industrial system." (*The Economics of War*, p. 157.)

How this operates can easily be seen: (a) Finance capital endeavors to put the cost burden of armaments on the masses through taxation and through cutting their ability to consume. (b) The war-producing industries are the most highly centralized and trustified; therefore, it is the monopolies which reap the lion's share of the profits. (c) Through the granting of munitions orders and the utilization of the priorities system, the Government favors the larger and more efficient production units of monopoly capital, thus further weakening, if not completely eliminating, the small independent manufacturers.

### *Tendencies Toward State Monopoly Capitalism*

Thirdly, the transition to capitalist war economy intensifies the tendencies towards state monopoly capitalism, in which the Government plays a more direct and decisive role in the national economy and in which finance capital plays a more direct and imposing role in the Government.

It is both interesting and instructive to note the change of heart that has occurred in certain Big Business circles towards Government interference in the national economy. This, as will be recalled, was branded but a few months ago as nothing less than "socialism." But when Wendell Willkie, forgetting the needs of "national defense," challenged the right of the Government to command industry, he was properly spanked in public by some of his most influential backers. Boners of this kind were not to be tolerated. On this subject as on that of Government spending, it all depends on: *for whom*, and *against whom*. Why not give the Government the power even to run industry, as long as monopoly capital has the power to run the Government?

Of course, monopoly capital wants to be absolutely certain of the latter before it embraces the former. That is why the National Association of Manufacturers still speaks in favor of "free enterprise," even though it knows that *laissez-faire* capitalism is as dead as the nineteenth century. It wants to be absolutely sure that the Knudsens and Stettiniuses will have the final word to say on "national defense" and that labor will be put and kept "in its place."



Within the last weeks, influential Wall Street circles have begun to press the Administration for swifter and more decisive action in regard to priorities, for firmer control over imports and exports, for special legislative measures and executive action to prohibit strikes and to curb labor stoppages and even for the declaration of a state of complete national emergency.

Thus are the tendencies towards state monopoly capitalism developing in the United States, as they already have in Germany, Italy, Japan, France and England. The outcome of this development is highly uncertain for the bourgeoisie; for state monopoly capitalism cannot be fully achieved without intensifying all internal and external contradictions, without ushering in a period of prolonged and intense class conflicts, not only between capital and labor, but between various groupings of the bourgeoisie itself.

That is why finance capital takes its steps in this direction hesitatingly and fearfully, finally being propelled towards this goal as a matter of dire necessity. For state capitalism expresses the inability of the bourgeoisie to rule in the old way. It reveals to the masses the fundamental truths: that capitalism cannot solve the contradiction between the social form of modern production and the private ownership of the means of production; and that the state, which has hitherto appeared as above classes, is but the executive committee of the ruling class. No wonder the closer the bourgeoisie comes to state capitalism, the more haunted it is by the

specter of socialism. For:

“... socialism is nothing but state capitalist monopoly *made to benefit the whole people*; by this token it ceases to be capitalist monopoly.” (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, Book I, p. 211, International Publishers, New York.)

In other words, socialism has nothing in common with state monopoly capitalism; it is its final negation—the dialectical transformation of a decayed system to its very opposite.

\* \* \*

Finally, production for war, arising from the preparation for participation in the imperialist scramble for world empire, in turn, becomes an additional incentive and cause for war. Having distorted the normal economic cycle; having created an artificial boom; having shifted industry from the production of articles of consumption to instruments of destruction; having lowered the purchasing power of the masses; having done all these things, then, in the words of the Roosevelt of 1936, our weapons “must be used against our neighbors,” or, “an unsound economy like a house of cards will fall apart.” This is the inexorable logic and meaning of war economy.

Irreconcilable struggle against monopoly capital, its government, and its Social-Democratic agents in the ranks of the working class: this is the only path which lies open to the working class and the people if they are to avoid the horrible consequences of capitalist war economy and imperialist slaughter.

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