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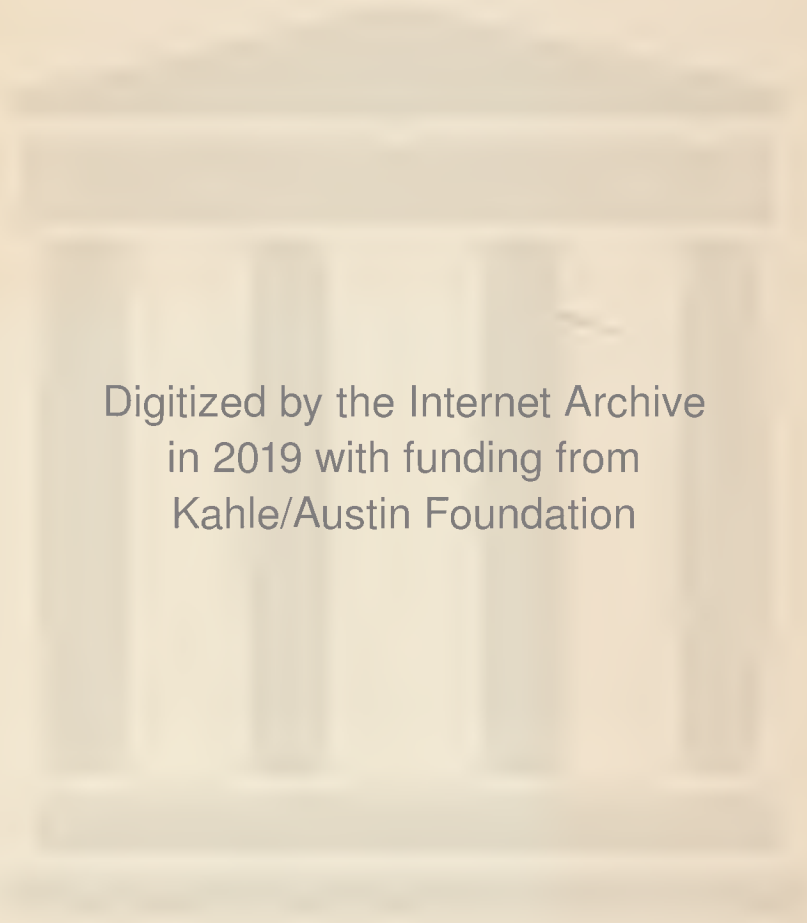




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THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

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E A R L B R O W D E R



# THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

BY

EARL BROWDER

GENERAL SECRETARY

*Communist Party of the United States*



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## FOREWORD

THIS volume is a collection of reports, speeches and articles, written during 1936 and 1937. It is thus a companion volume and continuation of *Communism in the United States*, published in July, 1935, a similar collection covering the previous two years. The dividing line between these two volumes is the epochal Seventh World Congress of the Communist International and Georgi Dimitroff's historic report on the People's Front.

In this and the preceding volume, the development of Communist policy in this country can be followed through five years, the most eventful and pregnant with the future of any period since the Civil War. Together with the book, *What Is Communism*, written in 1935 and published in January, 1936, they cover all important developments of Communist policy in the United States during this period.

When my first volume was published, it met with a very mixed reception from the non-Communist critics. Curiously enough, the only reviews predominantly favorable were those of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, and of *The American Political Science Review*. The daily newspapers seemed at a loss how to handle it; the *World-Telegram* of New York, for example, thought it important enough to have a special article, but the anonymous "Staff Writer" was struck, above all, by the "contradiction" of the Unemployed Councils being also referred to as "Unemployment Councils," which seemed both to disturb and console the reviewer. The *Brooklyn Eagle* scribe, on the other hand, took a "serious" tone, concluding a long review with the judgment that "it is romantic in its fundamental approach." The "liberal" *Nation* turned the book over to an avowed Trotskyite, whose review proved beyond any doubt that my book was a collection of absurdities and contradictions unworthy the attention of any serious person.

Harold J. Laski of the British Labor Party and the London School of Economics, reviewed the book for the *New Republic*. He gave it the most intelligent treatment among all the non-Communist reviewers. Mr. Laski, however, writing immediately after the Seventh World Congress, reproached the book for not fully or sufficiently expressing the People's Front policy of that Congress; at the same time he accused it of "ignoring the time-factor as an element of the program involved."

Now Mr. Laski is a critic not to be lightly dismissed. I have given

his criticisms long examination, especially because their expressed motive—the desire for quick accomplishment of unity of all anti-fascists—is so sound and laudable. It is impossible for me to reply by asking him to name any other political group in America which produced anything half so valuable toward the desired end. Such a reply would be a rejection of his implied compliment that only the Communists are really expected to give the answers to the problems of the masses, and would constitute a refusal of the responsibility. Inasmuch as we Communists do accept responsibility, I must therefore accept his first criticism. It is true that, prior to the Seventh World Congress, we Communists of America were not fully conscious of the possibilities and necessity for the anti-fascist People's Front, even though we were struggling in that direction and made our own contribution to the Seventh Congress decisions. It is my hope that it will be impossible for any honest critic to make a similar criticism of the present volume.

As to "ignoring the time factor," it seems to me this charge applies against our critics rather than against us. Especially is this true of those like Norman Thomas, for example, who reflect more or less the influence of Trotskyism. These people specialize in such "devastating" arguments as the "exposure" of our "inconsistency" in fighting against the League of Nations at one time and later advocating cooperation with it; in opposing Roosevelt's policies and then later supporting them; in supporting independent trade unions at one time, later advocating their merger in the American Federation of Labor, and still later helping bring them into the Committee for Industrial Organization. In the opinion of such critics, it is sufficient to discredit both past and present policies to show that they were "contradictorily" advocated by one and the same person or group, without reference to time or circumstance.

Of such contradictions, the critic will find a rich crop in comparing the present volume with the first one, and even within the present volume alone. Far from wishing to hide such contradictions, it is the author's wish to emphasize them, to point out the constant movement of the Communist position in relation to particular issues, parties, groups and individuals. To trace this movement, this change, is the first condition of understanding the *line of policy* of the Communist Party, to see *where we are going*. To understand the laws of motion underlying such changes, is to grasp the fundamentals of dialectical materialism.

The world is changing most rapidly. The relationship of forces between the various class groupings in society is shifting from day to day. Political parties and programs are all, without exception, in a state of flux. Everything which lives and grows is changing; everything which decays and dies also changes, though in a different way.



It is only the petrified, the mummified, that remains the same through these days of feverish change. In the United States the single political phenomenon in which no essential change can be seen is the old but little-known Socialist-Labor Party (not to be confused with either the Socialist Party or Labor Party), which carries on the pure tradition of Daniel De Leon without so much as the change of a comma. But the "purity" and "consistency" of the Socialist-Labor Party have gained for it only the position of a sort of museum-piece and the role of a horrible example.

Our Communist policy represents a constant struggle to meet more adequately the problems of a rapidly changing world. Every step we make in this direction is a "contradiction" of the position from which we stepped. Far from wishing to hide these "contradictions," we would push them forward for the more serious student as the highest lesson we have to teach—the cause of change, its technique, its timing—the why, how, and when—in short, the process of history in the making and the role of political consciousness therein.

Examine, for instance, the change in the Communist attitude toward President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Today we are emphasizing that Roosevelt's programmatic utterances of 1937, when combined with the legislative program of the C.I.O. (his main labor support), provides a People's Front program of an advanced type, that the organization of the majority of the people for struggle to realize this program is the main road today to the creation of the People's Front. This is a profound change from 1933-34, when the Communists were in stubborn opposition to Roosevelt, the only vocal opposition. Between these two distinct positions, there was an intermediate one, that of 1935-36, when we found little to support in Roosevelt but when our main fire was directed against his enemies.

Norman Thomas, constantly though not consistently our critic, finds this course of the Communists intolerable and unprincipled, perhaps because it is in exactly the opposite direction to his own course. In 1933, when Roosevelt headed a national coalition (symbolized by the Blue Eagle of General Hugh Johnson) including the most reactionary and fascist-minded elements, Norman Thomas climbed on the Roosevelt bandwagon, which he proclaimed was headed straight for socialism with all its occupants, Wall Street and all. That was when the Communists intransigently opposed Roosevelt. When the du Pont family and Al Smith launched the bi-partisan Liberty League opposition to the President, that was the moment chosen by Norman Thomas to move away from Roosevelt into violent opposition, and later, in 1936, to establish friendly contacts with Alf M. Landon, candidate of the Liberty Leaguers. That same moment was the point when the Communists turned their main fire away from Roosevelt and toward his

enemies. And in 1937, when around the issue of reform of the Supreme Court, Roosevelt engaged in battle with the reactionaries on a wide front, Norman Thomas was the reliable echo of every Tory slogan raised against him; while the Communists came out in open support of the President, criticizing him only for not fighting consistently enough.

Here we have a record of fundamental and rapid change, on the part of Norman Thomas and his socialist groups and the Communist Party, as well as all other political groupings. But it is strange indeed to hear from Thomas and his friends the cry of "inconsistency" directed against the Communists; the charge applies equally to himself and all other groups, if to change is to be inconsistent. Of course, for adult political minds, it is no argument for or against the positions of either Thomas or ourselves that these positions have been constantly changing. The only serious questions that can and must be asked are: What has been the direction of the change, has it helped to unite the workers and the poor people and democrats generally against their worst enemies, or has it helped our worst enemies to divide us even more and thereby threaten to defeat us? The worst accusation that we, the Communists, place against Thomas is, not that he has changed, but that he has *changed for the worse, in the wrong direction*. He has not even been able, with such a line, to unite his own Party, but on the contrary has wrecked it; while we, the Communists, by our line helped to unite labor and the democratic front, and built our own Party as never before, uniting it more solidly than ever.

The decay of the Socialist Party in the past few years and the rise of the Communist Party furnish a neat test, even according to the pragmatic philosophy so dear to Thomas, of the relative validity of these two contrasted courses. The Socialist Party since 1932 dropped 90 per cent of its voter-followers, most of its leaders and membership, split into a dozen warring sects, and became completely isolated from the labor movement. In the same period, the Communist Party multiplied its followers, decisively surpassed the Socialist Party vote in the greatest city, New York (by three and one-half to one), registering 20 per cent of the total Labor Party vote; grew to 65,000 members (while the Socialist Party went down to 5,000) on a national scale, and became a recognized and powerful collaborator in the progressive labor movement which is rising upon such a vast scale. We can only regret that our past criticism of Norman Thomas' pragmatic philosophy seems to have knocked out his pragmatism without giving him any Marxism to replace it. If he had only retained some of his old pragmatism, and would begin to test policies by their results, we might have more hope, not that he would become a revolutionary socialist, but that he might at least join in building the People's Front against

fascism and war before our American fascists give him a post-graduate course in the dialectics of history in a concentration camp.

Some of our readers ask: Why polemize against Norman Thomas? Is he so influential, or his Party so strong, that this is necessary?

The answer is, that the very fact that Norman Thomas is rapidly losing his influence and his Party is disintegrating, only goes to show how dangerous for the working class is the policy he follows. And the danger of this policy comes not from Thomas and his closest associates; they are largely victims of the disease and only half-conscious carriers of its germs. The real power behind it is the power of the class enemy, an enormous destructive power, which aims to break up and scatter the whole labor movement even as it breaks the Socialist Party. Its most malignant expression is found in the camp of the open Trotskyites, an international band of spies and wreckers in the service of fascism, who seek to carry into the labor and democratic ranks the slogans of the so-called "Anti-Communist Pact" which unites Hitler, Mussolini and the Mikado. We will be glad to hear the news when Norman Thomas and his Party break with this unholy alliance, and join all progressives in the fight to defeat its efforts to rule the world.

This book, like its predecessors, is in the broadest sense a collective product, arising directly out of the work of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and of its Political Bureau. To the degree that, in giving form and expression to this collective thought, I have been performing also an individual task, I must especially acknowledge a fundamental indebtedness to the stimulation and criticism of my wife, Raissa Irene Browder, whose help has far transcended the personal.

EARL BROWDER

New York City, December 15, 1937.



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PART ONE

PARTIES AND ISSUES

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# I

## Democracy or Fascism

### 1. STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM AND FOR PEACE

THE world is torn between two main directions of development: on the one hand stand those forces striving to maintain the rights and living standards of the masses in the midst of capitalist crisis and decay, and to maintain world peace; on the other side are the forces of fascism, striving to wipe out popular rights and throw the full burden of the crisis onto the masses, and driving toward a new world war.

The camp of fascism, of the war-makers, is mighty and menacing. It is headed by Hitler fascism, the most bloody and bestial reaction the world has ever seen. It contains Mussolini, whose hands drip with the blood of Italians and Ethiopians alike. It includes the military-fascist government of Japan, which is carving a new empire out of the body of the Chinese people. In every capitalist country its forces are organizing, backed and inspired by the monopolists of finance capital, and, where not already in power, are preparing with all energy, ruthlessness, and demagogy, to seize control of government. In the United States, this camp is headed by the dominant leadership of the Republican Party, with its allies of the Liberty League, Hearst, Black Legion, Ku Klux Klan, Coughlin, and others.

The camp of progress and peace finds its stronghold in the Soviet Union, the country of socialist prosperity. To its banner are rallying all the growing armies of those who would resist fascism and war. Relying upon its mighty strength, the French people were able to gather in the great *Front Populaire*, which threw back the first assaults of French fascism and warded off the first threat of war by Hitler, and advanced the living

standards of the masses and their organized strength. Seeing in it a powerful protector, the small nations of Europe whose existence is threatened, who find less and less assistance from the great capitalist powers, turn to the firm peace policy of the Soviet Union as their reliable refuge. Even those great countries ruled by the imperialist bourgeoisie, like the U.S.A., who for their own special reasons are not ready for war, who want to maintain the *status quo*, at least for a time, must turn, even though hesitatingly, toward collaboration with the Soviet Union. The oppressed nations look to it for inspiration and leadership. Within each capitalist country, all forces for peace, and especially the workers and farmers, are beginning to see in the policy of the Soviet Union the chief hope of peace and progress in the world.

There are voices which shout of the menace of fascism and war, even in radical and "revolutionary" phrases, but which cannot find anything to say about the mighty and growing forces for progress and peace. Such voices come from confusionists and panic-mongers, who consciously or unconsciously are the advance agents of fascism, spreading defeatism and demoralization among the masses, disarming them before the enemy.

It is possible to defeat the fascists and war-makers. It is possible to move toward progress, to maintain peace. But to do this requires that we recognize and make full use of all factors, even the smallest, that work toward this end, even temporarily. It requires a drive toward *one united international policy*, around which is rallied the growing armies of progress and peace. It requires the recognition of the role of the Soviet Union, and full utilization of this great power.

The confusionists and panic-mongers all have one common starting point for their defeatism, fatalism and hopelessness. They reject the Soviet Union as a great power for progress and peace; some of them, like the Trotskyists, are moved by definitely counter-revolutionary theories and hatreds; others, like Norman Thomas, because they are filled with doubts, reservations, hesitations, misconceptions. Wherever this influ-



ence, in whatever degree, prevails among the masses, there we have more division instead of more unity, more confusion instead of more clarity, more defeatism and demoralization instead of the growth of a militant united movement against fascism and war.

But the united People's Front is winning the masses more and more in every country. It is overcoming the demagogic slanders of the counter-revolutionists, it is dissolving the doubts and hesitations of the confused people. It must, it can, and it will win the majority of the toiling people of every country.

We will have a special report to this Convention \* on the detailed problems of the fight to maintain world peace, and the role of the Soviet Union and its peace policy. My report will therefore not go into the details of this subject. I must, however, before I pass on to the problems of the struggle against reaction in the United States, say just a few words about the latest historic achievements of socialism in the Soviet Union, which have made possible its rapidly enlarged role in world affairs.

The new Soviet Constitution, published in the last days, gives us some measure of the greatness of these achievements. For the first time in human history, a government can write into its basic law the guarantee to every citizen of education, work, and leisure. That is the outstanding feature of the new Constitution, which is unique, which has no counterpart or forerunner. That is the fruit of socialism, of the rule of the working class, of the First and Second Five-Year Plans for socialist industrialization, of the collectivization of agriculture, of the great Stakhanov movement for increase of socialist productivity. That is the fruit of the genius of Lenin and Stalin.

It is upon this solid foundation of working class rule and socialism that it was possible to erect the superstructure of the most complete democracy ever seen. Complete adult suffrage, beginning at the age of 18; equality of representation for all voters; guarantee of the right of self-determination of the con-

\* Ninth National Convention, Communist Party, U.S.A., June 24, 1936.—*Ed.*

stituent nationalities; direct election to all offices, including judiciary, by secret ballot; full guarantee of individual rights, including the rights of personal property resulting from individual labor; free speech, press and assemblage made concrete by providing the masses with printing presses, halls and possession of the streets; and freedom of worship—here, indeed, is a democracy which already, only 19 years since the revolution in a most backward country, surpasses the dreams of the great Utopians.

This is why the Soviet Union can come forward as the organizer of all the forces of progress and peace everywhere in the world.

## 2. ISSUES AND PARTIES IN THE ELECTIONS

There are two chief and opposite directions of possible development in American political life in the 1936 elections. All parties and groups must be judged by their relation to these two fundamental political tendencies. One stems from the most reactionary circles of finance capital, Wall Street; its direction is toward fascism and war. The fundamental aims of this camp can be summarized in five points:

1. Restore capitalist profits by cutting wages, raising prices, checking the growth of trade unions, subverting them, and eventually wiping them out; squeeze out the poor farmers from agriculture, transforming them into propertyless workers.

2. Wipe out social and labor legislation, balance the budget by eliminating unemployment relief, cutting taxes of the rich and throwing the tax burden onto the poor by means of sales taxes.

3. Remove all remnants of popular influence upon the government, by vesting all final power in the hands of an irresponsible judiciary—the Supreme Court; drive toward the curtailment and eventual destruction of democratic liberties and civil rights; create the storm troops of reaction, Black Legions, Ku Klux Klans, etc.

4. Seize control of all governmental machinery, moving

toward a full-fledged fascist regime, in "American" and "constitutional" ways.

5. Develop extreme jingoistic nationalist moods among the masses; drive toward war under cover of "American isolation" and "neutrality"; support to and alliance with Hitler and other fascists, preparing the new world war.

The other chief direction of possible development, insofar as it becomes effective, moves and must move toward an opposite set of fundamental aims, which can be stated as follows:

1. Restore and raise the living standards of the masses, by higher wages, shorter hours, lower prices, extending the trade unions to the basic industries and all workers, through militant industrial unionism; secure the farmers in possession of their farms, with governmental help and guarantee of a minimum standard of life.

2. Consolidate and extend social and labor legislation, with guarantee of a minimum standard of life for all, financing this with sharply graduated taxes on incomes, property and accumulated surpluses, abolition of sales taxes, balancing the budget at the expense of the rich.

3. Curb the usurped power of the Supreme Court; maintain and extend democratic rights and civil liberties; dispersal of reactionary bands, abolition of the use of legal machinery to suppress the people's movements; extension of popular control over government.

4. Restore control of the government to representatives of the people's organizations, through a broad People's Front.

5. Unite with the peace forces of the whole world to restrain the war-makers, to keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world.

How do the various parties and groups stand in relation to these two opposite and fundamental sets of objectives?

The Republican Party, headed by Landon and Knox, is unquestionably representing the full reactionary program. William Randolph Hearst has formulated that program with greatest clarity, has pursued it with the most vicious and obstinate energy. Hearst named the Republican ticket already

in August, 1935. Morgan, the du Ponts, Mellon, all the most reactionary circles of Wall Street, are fully behind Landon and Knox. The platform of the Republican Party, behind a thin smoke-screen of tepid liberalism, contains all the essentials of Hearst's program, including its demagoguery.

The Communist Party declares without qualification that the Landon-Hearst-Wall Street ticket is the chief enemy of the liberties, peace and prosperity of the American people. Its victory would carry our country a long way on the road to fascism and war.

Roosevelt and his administration are trying to pursue a middle course between these two opposite fundamental directions of policy. On the one hand, they try to keep mass support by certain small concessions to the needs and demands of the people. On the other hand, they answer the pressure and attacks of the reactionary forces by greater concessions in that direction. Especially in the last year, Roosevelt's course has been a series of retreats before the offensive of reaction. His administration is allowing itself to be dragged more and more onto the path of Hearst.

The Communist Party declares that it is a fatal mistake to depend upon Roosevelt to check the attacks of Wall Street, or to advance the fundamental interests and demands of the masses of the people.

Where, then, can the people turn to find protection against the reactionary forces that assail them?

With full knowledge that the great majority are not yet prepared to turn to socialism, as represented either by the Socialist Party or the Communist Party, we Communists come forward with an immediate program which the masses are ready to support, to point out the path along which the people can maintain and advance their fundamental interests and rights. That immediate program arises out of the five fundamental aims of the masses of the people (which I outlined as the opposite of the reactionary program), which is the program of a People's Front, a program for democratic rights, for prosperity and peace.

This is not a program of revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. It can be realized within the framework of the present economic system by a people's government backed by the organized masses, determined to fight to keep Wall Street and its fascism out of power.

This program is essentially covered by the platform adopted by the Farmer-Labor Party National Conference, held in Chicago on May 30-31, on the call of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and Governor Floyd Olson. Our Central Committee gave its full support to that Conference, its decisions and platform. That action should have the unanimous endorsement of this Convention. The Chicago Conference laid the foundations for a National Farmer-Labor Party in 1936, the foundations for the People's Front which can halt the forces of fascism and war in America.

The Farmer-Labor Party in 1936 will concentrate on state and Congressional elections, in an effort to send a bloc of real people's Congressmen to Washington, to fight for the fundamental program of progress.

It had long been the hope of our Party that we would be able to go into the Presidential elections this year with a Farmer-Labor national ticket. Already in May it had become clear that this was impossible. The great majority of organizations composing the Farmer-Labor movement, while breaking with the old parties, had decided to follow the policy of the big progressive unions of the Committee for Industrial Organization, in supporting Roosevelt for re-election.

The Communist Party declared that it seriously disagreed with this policy of dependence upon Roosevelt. We did not, however, withdraw from full participation in this rapidly growing movement for the Farmer-Labor Party. We are fully prepared to continue and develop our united front relations with those who support Roosevelt, reserving our disagreement on this question. Our united front with these organizations and groups has the solid foundation of complete agreement with them that the Republican Party, with its Hearst-Liberty

League allies, is the main enemy that must be defeated at all costs.

The Farmer-Labor Party movement is a rapidly growing national political force. The Chicago Conference was thoroughly representative of it, with the exception of the Wisconsin movement, and some national trade unions which refrained from participation because of their tie-up with the new Labor's Non-Partisan League for support of Roosevelt. Even in this latter case, however, the Chicago Conference showed its influence and vitality by the friendly connections with the progressive trade unions exhibited in the greetings and good wishes sent the Conference by John L. Lewis, Sidney Hillman and David Dubinsky. There is every reason to expect the Farmer-Labor Party to emerge in the 1936 elections as a major influence in American political life.

If we can record with pleasure the increasingly progressive role being played by the trade unions of the Committee for Industrial Organization, in political life as well as in trade union questions, the case is the opposite with the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, representing the craft union forces, and led by Green, Woll and Hutcheson. These gentlemen are following the logic of their reactionary opposition to industrial unionism, and move to the Right also in politics. One of the most shameful pages in American labor history was the appearance of William Green at the Republican Convention to urge inclusion in the platform of such openly reactionary planks that even the Republican Party, which will surely follow that line, considered it bad politics to openly admit it now before the elections. Green's advocacy of deportations, of breaking relations with the U.S.S.R., his opposition to curbing the power of the Supreme Court and to minimum wage laws, constituted an acceptance of the most reactionary course in American political life.

In view of the absence of a Farmer-Labor Presidential ticket this year, an additional importance is assumed by the question of developing our united front relations with the Socialist Party. Our fundamental conception of the Farmer-

Labor Party is that it will include also the Socialist and Communist parties. Wherever it is developing on a mass scale, it does include both parties in one form or another. Where the Socialist Party has stood aside and resisted its growth, the Party has been isolated and reduced to the smallest of sects. In spite of these lessons, the Socialist Party is still confused in its attitude toward the Farmer-Labor Party. The resolution on this question adopted at its convention \* was a half-hearted compromise, and even against this a substantial minority voted on grounds of opposition in principle. This opposition to the broad political united front against reaction is a dangerous feature of Socialist Party development, threatening to shunt it on to a sectarian sidetrack.

The Socialist Party convention registered some advances. It defeated the worst section of the Old Guard, which has now split away. This was a defeat of Hearstism, of anti-Sovietism, of resistance in principle to the united front. That means progress, movement to the Left, towards a working class policy. It tends to improve our relations with the Socialist Party. The convention, while approving a united front with the Communists on separate and isolated questions, rejected, however, any move towards a more systematic development of united action on the most important questions of the day. At the same time it took a most reactionary step in accepting organic unity with the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites.

We must warn our Socialist comrades: Be careful, you are about to swallow a deadly poison, which we know from sad experience. Better prepare an emetic, for surely you will soon be in convulsions from severe internal political disturbances. We hope you will recover from the illness which you are guaranteeing for yourselves.

We proposed to the Socialist Party, since the broader unity of a Farmer-Labor Presidential ticket was no longer possible, that our two parties should try to attain the next most desirable unity in the elections, with a joint Presidential ticket. Our Socialist friends, however, rejected our proposal with-

\* Held May, 1936.—*Ed.*

out even a discussion. Their sharp internal struggles, and the deep differences of opinion in their ranks, make it difficult for them to face and discuss any policy except rigid adherence to established formulæ, while drifting with the winds of political circumstance.

From all this it is clear that it is not our choice if this Ninth Convention of the Communist Party has no other conclusion to make, in the Presidential elections, except to place in the field its own independent ticket for President and Vice-President.

We would gladly sacrifice the advantages of our own independent ticket, in favor of the ticket selected by a broad People's Front against reaction, fascism and war. We were prepared to sacrifice it even for the narrower gain of a united front with the Socialist Party. Our own independent ticket is not a matter of rigid principle with us; we can maintain and advance our views even more effectively, under the conditions now prevailing in America, in face of the threat of rampant reaction and war, within the broader unity of a working class and People's Front.

That means that our independent ticket will be placed in the service of creating that broader unity, the people's front. It will promote the Farmer-Labor Party in every way possible. It will base itself upon the growing mass movement in the states and Congressional districts for Farmer-Labor tickets. Our campaign will be primarily on behalf of the program of the People's Front. At the same time we will carry on a mass campaign of education, on a scale never before attained, to teach the broad millions the meaning of socialism, of the working class revolution, of the full Communist program which is the only final solution of the problems created for the population by a dying capitalist system.

#### DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN LANDON AND ROOSEVELT

We must frankly face and answer the question as to why, if the Landon-Knox ticket is the chief enemy, we do not come



out in support of Roosevelt as the practical alternative this year. When Major Berry of Labor's Non-Partisan League was asked by the newspaper reporters if he was inviting the Communists to go along in their support of Roosevelt, he answered: "Let their conscience be their guide." Well, we have consulted both our conscience and our understanding; both join in counseling rejection of any reliance upon Roosevelt to defeat the reactionaries. Let us be very clear on this question. Our answer is not dictated by dogmatic rejection in principle of the idea of supporting a bourgeois candidate under any and all conditions. Lenin long ago taught us that such doctrinaire policies are not revolutionary. He taught us when, how, under what conditions, Communists could not only vote for but even enter into alliances with bourgeois candidates and parties—as against a threatening attack of overwhelming reactionary forces.

Let me give you a quotation from Lenin, written in the early years of the century, which contains one of the best clear formulations of our guiding principle on this question. Lenin said:

Can a class-conscious worker ignore the democratic struggle for the sake of the socialist struggle, or ignore the latter for the sake of the former? No, a class-conscious worker calls himself a Social-Democrat [that was when the Communist Party was called Social-Democratic Labor Party.—E.B.] precisely because he understands the inter-relation between the two struggles. He knows that there is no other road to socialism but the road through democracy, through political liberty. He therefore strives for the complete and consistent achievement of democracy for the sake of attaining the ultimate goal—socialism. Why are not the conditions for the democratic struggle the same as the conditions for the socialist struggle? Because the workers will necessarily have different allies in those two struggles. The workers wage the democratic struggle together with a section of the bourgeoisie, especially the petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the workers wage the socialist struggle against the whole of the bourgeoisie. (*Selected Works*, International Publishers, Vol. III, p. 153.)

Applying these principles to the United States in 1936, we

reach certain conclusions on which our policy is based. We will review some of these conclusions in detail.

First, workers are interested, it is not a matter of indifference to them, as to which of two bourgeois parties shall hold power, when one of them is reactionary, desires to wipe out democratic rights and social legislation, while the other in some degree defends these progressive measures achieved under capitalism. Thus, we clearly and sharply differentiate between Landon and Roosevelt, declare that Landon is the chief enemy, direct our main fire against him, do everything possible to shift masses away from voting for him even though we cannot win their votes for the Communist Party, even though the result is that they vote for Roosevelt. This is not an example of the policy of the "lesser evil," which led the German workers to disaster; we specifically and constantly warn against any reliance upon Roosevelt, we criticize his surrenders to reaction and the many points in which he fully agrees with reaction; we accept no responsibility for Roosevelt.

Second, while we are not indifferent to the practical result of the election, we cannot support Roosevelt even as a means of defending democratic rights and social legislation which are seriously threatened, because Roosevelt himself is either unwilling or unable to conduct a serious struggle to this end. He is retreating before the attacks of reaction within his own party, as well as from the Republicans. He is bound within the limits of the reactionary Southern landlord interests, which control the Solid South, base of the Democratic Party. He yields most to reaction when he has the most support from the Left; he fights reaction only to the degree that he thinks necessary to hold labor and progressive forces from breaking away. Therefore, even from the narrow viewpoint of using Roosevelt against Landon, it is absolutely necessary to build the independent organization of labor and progressive forces for independent action—the Farmer-Labor Party; to support Roosevelt is to invite him to make even further retreats.

Third, in order to have an alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie against the reactionaries, to preserve democratic rights,

it is necessary for the workers and their more permanent allies (farmers and impoverished city middle classes) to have their own independent party, which at the same time prepares and conducts the struggle toward socialism. The two sides of the struggle must be developed together, or both are lost in a swamp of opportunist confusion or a desert of sectarianism.

That is why we do not support Roosevelt, although we direct the main fire against Landon. We have nothing in common with the approach to this question of the Socialists, of Norman Thomas. Our friend Thomas sees the world through peculiar spectacles; he cannot see the fascist direction of the Republican Party, but rather accepts at its face value the crudely-staged "liberalization" of its Cleveland Convention. He thus renders unwilling but nonetheless effective aid to Hearst's demagoguery. At the same time he proclaims the main issue of this election is socialism, and says of Roosevelt that he is probably the best thing possible under capitalism, that "if you want reforms, better stick to Roosevelt." From these premises he concludes it is a matter of indifference to the workers as to what kind of regime results from the election. We must describe such confusion as nothing but opportunist sectarianism.

#### THE ISSUE: DEMOCRACY OR FASCISM

Fourth, we must clarify the question, is socialism the issue that will be decided in this election? The war-cry of the reactionaries is that Roosevelt's New Deal is socialism or even communism. Norman Thomas gave some aid to this idea in 1933, during the honeymoon of the New Deal. Carried away by his enthusiasm, he hailed it as "a step toward socialism," as "a revolution." Now he swings just as far in the opposite direction, and sees little difference between Roosevelt and Landon, even while praising Roosevelt's liberalism. We must declare Roosevelt's policies as not socialism, nor a step to

socialism. He at most tries to smooth out some of the worst abuses of capitalism, in order to give it a longer life. The reactionary cry of "socialism" is directed to two ends: first, to alarm all people of property to stampede them toward fascism; second, to discredit socialism among the masses by identifying it with the failures of the New Deal.

Before the two major parties, "socialism" is not an issue, but merely a demagogic war-cry of reaction. For the broad masses also, socialism is not the issue today, but rather the issue is, whether to move on the reactionary road toward fascism, or to struggle to maintain democratic rights, living standards, and peace. For the Farmer-Labor Party movement the issue is not between socialism and capitalism, but whether to move on the reactionary or progressive roads. We Communists, throwing our lot in with the Farmer-Labor Party movement, agree to fight for the road of progress under capitalism, together with those who are not adherents of socialism as we are; while at the same time we point out that the only final guarantee of progress is to abolish capitalism and move to socialism.

Thus, we conclude that the direct issue of the 1936 elections is not socialism or capitalism, but rather democracy or fascism. At the same time we emphasize, and will always emphasize, that a consistent struggle for democracy and progress leads inevitably, and in the not distant future, to the socialist revolution.

This leads us to a concrete phase of utmost importance in the fight to defeat fascism in America, namely, by what means to combat and overcome the influence of the reactionaries among the broad masses. We identify the fascist trend with Wall Street, the Liberty League and the big capitalists; that is absolutely correct. At the same time, these fascist forces, playing upon the most backward instincts and moods among the masses, and even utilizing some of their more positive characteristics, exert tremendous and growing influence precisely among some of the most suffering and desperate strata of the population. Hearst, with his chain of

demagogic newspapers, is the classic type. Father Coughlin, with his radio appeals to the common people and his Union for Social Justice, apes closely the technique of Mussolini and Hitler. Huey Long, before his death, was a veritable American Hitler in embryo, with his Share-the-Wealth Clubs and wild demagoguery. All appeal to very real grievances among the masses, they touch the sore spots of a suffering population, they rouse popular passions—only to direct them away from the real criminals, the Hearsts, du Ponts, Morgans, and against “the Jewish bankers,” against the foreign-born workers, against the Negroes, against “the Reds,” the Protestants against the Catholics and vice versa, and now above all they cry out against the “communistic New Deal” and Roosevelt, until the election is over.

One of our sharpest criticisms against Roosevelt is that he has time and again given ammunition to the reactionary demagogues. Today, there is the greatest danger that the Townsend movement for old-age pensions, whose aspiration for security for the aged is socially progressive, may be swung into the most reactionary channel, into support for Landon, precisely because Roosevelt followed up a miserly “security” law by allowing without protest the shameful attack against the old-age pension movement in the Congressional investigation committee. How eagerly Hearst, the *Chicago Tribune*, the Republicans, sprang forward to comfort Dr. Townsend, and inspire his denunciation of the “communistic dictatorship” in the White House, his slogan, “Anyone but Roosevelt” which really means “Nobody but Landon.” The fire that puts steam into Father Coughlin’s reactionary engine is built of real grievances against Roosevelt, and his retreat in face of that very reaction that Coughlin serves.

#### UNION PARTY—STOOGES FOR LANDON

The self-styled “Union Party,” secretly manufactured in the laboratory of Coughlin and Lemke, and sprung upon the world full-grown, bears all the earmarks of a Hearst-Landon-

Liberty League intrigue. Lemke is clearly but a stooge for Landon. His program is a typical half-fascist hodge-podge of radical sounding phrases without any definite commitment on a single concrete issue before the country. It is even more dishonest than the Republican platform. It is a great mistake, however, to dismiss Lemke as a bad joke, just as it was a mistake to consider Hitler only a stupid clown in the Germany of 1931-32. When millions of people have burning grievances, when Roosevelt retreats from even his own inadequate and miserable relief and security standards, when the Socialist Party is only repeating sectarian formulæ instead of helping organize a broad Farmer-Labor Party, when the big progressive unions hesitate to organize politically the discontented masses—then all these things make the masses desperate and place them at the mercy of the fascist demagogues who are free with promises of all things to all men, but who are really in the pay of Wall Street and the Liberty League, in the service of the Republican Party. What is necessary to head off the Lemke-Hearst-Coughlin Union Party is a more serious movement toward unity of all the truly progressive forces, a unity that will give tangible promise of an effective Farmer-Labor Party this year, laying the basis for making it a major contender in 1940. The Communists will support every serious effort to unite the progressive forces against threatening reaction.

The only way to save these masses from the reactionaries is to go among them with a program of immediate struggle to remedy their grievances now, to show them that the real progressives and the revolutionists are the best fighters for their immediate interests. Norman Thomas has rebuked us, because we followed such a course with the Townsend movement. We reply that it is there where we Communists established sympathetic contacts with Townsend's followers, where the movement toward Republican reaction is being blocked, where they are being won to the Farmer-Labor Party. Thomas' slogan, socialism *instead* of old-age pensions, only drives them more quickly into the arms of the reactionaries who promise something now.

A tremendous ferment is going on among the masses. Only a small part of it is already organized in the Farmer-Labor Party movement. By no means is the rest of it all in the Coughlin and Townsend movements. Look, for example, at the famous EPIC movement in California, started by Upton Sinclair. After its first spectacular success in "capturing" the state Democratic Party, the EPIC movement went through a year and a half of varied and bitter experiences. Out of this, and out of the advice and criticism of the Communists who adopted a correctly friendly but critical attitude to the movement, EPIC has learned lessons that have gone deep. It is moving rapidly toward a Farmer-Labor Party in California that will be a major party in the state. In Washington the same process is going on; the Commonwealth Federation in that state (not to be confused with the small group of the same name in New York headed by Bingham), has now captured the state Democratic Party and at the same time is establishing links with the Farmer-Labor Party movement in the rest of the country.

The slogans of these varied movements, "production for use," "economy of abundance," "social justice," "economic justice," "share-the-wealth," "social security," etc., all reflect a strong mood of disillusionment with and criticism of the capitalist system; they show an understanding that our country has abundant material resources for a good life for all; they show a desperate searching for a new way of life and a willingness to try out new paths. They are all potentially revolutionary, they can be and must be won for socialism. But this can be done, not by abstract preachments about the glories of a new society, but by the struggle today to improve life, by organization of the masses for this struggle, by systematic education through experience, and by the concrete example of a real socialism successfully built in the Soviet Union.

Let us summarize this examination of parties and issues in the 1936 campaign.

1. The chief enemy of the peace, freedom and prosperity of the American people is the Republican Party and its reac-

tionary allies. Defeat the Landon-Hearst-Liberty League-Wall Street alliance!

2. Roosevelt and his administration are retreating before the attacks of reaction and surrendering position after position to the main enemy. Stop the surrender of our rights and interests in Washington!

3. The Socialist Party, after breaking loose from its reactionary Old Guard, is moving into the backwater of doctrinaire sectarianism, drifting out of the mass currents of American life. Win the Socialists for the people's united front, for the Farmer-Labor Party!

4. The Farmer-Labor Party is rapidly growing in states and localities, it is organizing itself on a national scale. Support the program and platform of the Chicago Farmer-Labor Party Conference, build the Farmer-Labor Party!

5. The Communist Presidential ticket is the only banner in the national elections rallying and organizing all the forces of the people against reaction, fascism and war, building the People's Front in the United States. Vote the Communist Presidential ticket!

### 3. THE UNITED FRONT AND TRADE UNION UNITY

What we have said about parties and issues in the election campaign, and our policy of the united front therein, already gives us our main line of policy toward all other problems of the united front. It will be necessary briefly to review some of the most important of these problems, however, and especially the problems of the trade union movement.

Since our Eighth Convention a little over two years ago, there has been a profound transformation in the trade union movement and in our Party's position in relation to it.

For years before our Eighth Convention, the trade union movement seemed to be frozen in a paralysis of reactionary policies and leadership. Stirrings, movements, struggles, seemed to be impossible under the dead hand of the American Federation of Labor leadership which stood like a blank wall in



the path of progress. The masses which entered into battle despite this, almost always had to find their organization and leadership outside the officially recognized trade union movement of the American Federation of Labor. The result had been the rise of a series of independent unions, in most cases comparatively small in membership, of which the most significant group were united in the Trade Union Unity League. It was in these independent unions that most of the Communist activity had been concentrated for several years.

At our Eighth Convention we already signaled the dawn of a new day in the trade union movement. The first year of the New Deal had witnessed a great influx of new members into the A. F. of L. unions, mostly from the mass production and basic industries and containing a high proportion of semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The pressure of unemployment and crisis conditions, the change in the composition of the membership, and the political upheavals taking place among the masses, had finally broken the old paralysis of reaction in the unions. Our Eighth Convention signaled this fundamental change taking place, shifted the center of gravity of our trade union work with great emphasis to work within the mass unions of the A. F. of L., and raised sharply the question of bringing the independent unions to an amalgamation with the American Federation unions.

This deep-going change in the direction of our trade union work could be carried out all the more successfully, because the rebirth of the A. F. of L. unions had been accompanied by a great expansion of the independent unions to many times their former size, strength and effectiveness. We therefore entered upon the new path with important weapons in the struggle for unity and militant policies.

It is true, however, that even in our Eighth Convention we did not fully foresee the rapidity and completeness with which the trade union movement was to be transformed. That is why, together with our entirely correct general policy, we also envisaged the possible rise of an independent federation of labor which did not take place. Very soon after the Eighth Con-

vention we saw that the new currents were so strong and deep as to involve the entire trade union movement, and therefore dropped the idea of the possible rise of an independent federation.

Now, at our Ninth Convention, only a little more than two years later, we have such a new, and such a promising development in the trade unions as few would have dared to predict in their most optimistic moments. What has taken place is truly a revolutionary transformation of trade union life in our country.

Powerful, dynamic forces have arisen, have found a leadership and a program above and below, have broken loose from the old paralysis of the reactionary A. F. of L. Executive Council, have struck out on new paths which open up great perspectives of power and progress for American labor.

#### A NEW PAGE IN TRADE UNION HISTORY

At the head of this renaissance movement in the trade unions stands the Committee for Industrial Organization, with its group of ten important unions, including three of the most powerful in the A. F. of L., the United Mine Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and the International Ladies Garment Workers.

While we meet, the Committee for Industrial Organization is launching the second great crusade to carry trade unionism into the open-shop citadel of monopoly capital, to the half-million slaves of the Steel Trust. Nothing so heartening has been seen in the labor movement since 1919, when the chairman of our Party, Comrade Foster, carried through the first great organizing campaign in steel which culminated in the great steel strike.

With the aid of the C.I.O. the automobile workers have overcome the sabotage of the A. F. of L. Executive Council, wiped out the divisions in their own ranks, and built the United Automobile Workers Industrial Union, already with

50,000 members and driving forward to organize the entire automotive industry.

With the aid of the C.I.O. the rubber workers have broken the bureaucratic regime set over them by Green, established their own elected leadership, won a great strike struggle, brought the majority of rubber workers into their union.

Soon we may expect to see the United Textile Workers, backed by the C.I.O., make a great drive to organize the hundreds of thousands of cotton slaves of the reactionary Solid South, and establish in life by their own power that trade union organization that was promised and then stolen from them at the conclusion of their great strike in 1934.

The marine workers of the whole country, responding to the lead given by the Pacific Coast and its example of unification and militancy, have emerged as one of the major progressive forces in the labor movement. They are demonstrating what can be done, even in craft unions ridden by corrupt and reactionary officials, to win better conditions and move towards industrial unification.

Truly, these developments open an entirely new page in the history of trade unionism in America.

And just as truly we can say that this transformation would have been impossible without the energetic, persistent, well-planned and well-directed participation of the Communist Party and its followers in this movement. This great mass movement needed our still small Communist Party in order to achieve these results, just as we needed this great mass movement to find scope for our program and energies, to bring us once and for all out of our isolation into the broad streams of the mass life of America.

Some people unacquainted with the situation may think we are boasting when we speak of decisive contributions by our Communist Party to this great mass movement. We will not spend much time to prove the point. I am sure the other reports and discussions in this Convention, the very character of our delegations here, all leading fighters right out of the heat of the class struggles in all industries and all parts of the land,

will give overwhelming evidence of our honorable and effective role. Let me cite only one example to establish my point.

The greatest impetus given to the organizing campaign in the steel industry, in its first days, has been the unexampled series of elections in the company unions of the very leaders of the drive for real trade unions, from the rank-and-file workers in the mills. Some people may think this is spontaneous. That would be a great mistake. It is the first large crop of the fruits of the Communist Party work to win the company unions for real trade unionism. This work we started for the first time in a systematic fashion at our Eighth Convention two years ago. We had to overcome the prejudices and traditions of years among the trade union leadership. We had to combat the hostility or skepticism of almost everyone outside our own ranks. The Communist Party was the only organization that took up this task, stuck to it through years, and from small beginnings brought forth the great movement that greeted the decision of the C.I.O. and the Amalgamated Association to finally open the great organizing campaign. We are transforming the company unions, designed by the great Steel Barons as the citadels of the open shop, into the first strongholds of the new steel workers' union that is rising before our eyes. And by this we are teaching the whole American labor movement a lesson that it will never forget.

The Committee for Industrial Organization has taken up the task of organizing all the mass production industries of America in industrial unions. The success of this effort is a basic necessity upon which depends the future of the American labor movement in all other respects. The Communist Party unconditionally pledges its full resources, moral and material, to the complete execution of this great project.

#### REACTIONARY GREEN-WOLL-HUTCHESON CLIQUE

It was inevitable that the sharp division within the official leadership of the A. F. of L. over the question of industrial versus craft unionism for the mass production industries should

lead to a general polarization within the labor movement. That is exactly what we see happening. With craft unionism goes a whole system of reactionary policies in all fields, including subordination to the most reactionary bourgeois political circles. Thus we saw William Green appear at the Republican Convention with fascist political proposals. With industrial unionism logically goes a tendency toward a progressive political platform, moving in the direction of the Farmer-Labor Party. Thus we see the C.I.O. forces, while still supporting Roosevelt, yet organizing themselves independently, conducting a sharp struggle against the Republicans, not endorsing the Democratic Party, keeping friendly contact with the national Farmer-Labor Party movement, and in many cases throwing their forces actively into local, Congressional, and state Farmer-Labor efforts.

The struggle for a united, strong American Federation of Labor requires today a concentration of all forces to halt the splitting plans of the Green-Woll-Hutcheson group heading the Executive Council. Their desperate determination to suspend the progressive unions, more than one-third of the Federation, to deprive them of the right to vote in the Convention, and thereby secure the necessary two-thirds vote required to expel them, is clearly a violation of the Constitution of the A. F. of L., as well as a reactionary crime against the working class. If the progressive forces stand steadfast, if they call up the support of all those in the craft unions who are progressives, then surely a smashing defeat can be given the splitting reactionaries, and the unity of the labor movement be maintained and extended to new millions of workers long outside.

One lesson that is vital to the progressive leadership in the C.I.O. unions, already partly learned but still neglected in some quarters, is the necessity of democratic procedure and methods of work in the inner life of the unions and in dealing with the unorganized. Only if the progressive unions become models of working class democracy can their full power be thrown into the fight to defeat the undemocratic and reactionary Executive Council.

The united front of all progressive forces in the trade union movement is the foundation and the driving force for all forward movement in American social life. It is the force that can draw around itself all other strata of the toiling population, making possible the building of a real People's Front against reaction and war, composed of the great majority of the American people.

#### FARMERS AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

*Farmers* constitute the largest and most important group which must be won to alliance with the labor movement. To do this requires that the labor movement take up and advance the demands of the farmers which are not inconsistent with the interests of the working class. That is why the Communist Party, which will try to win the farmers to support its ultimate program of socialization of agriculture, today can give its full-hearted support to Section III of the Chicago Farmer-Labor platform, which was written by representatives of the farmers' organizations and endorsed unanimously by the Conference. This Section reads:

III. Farmers: Recognizing that a farm family's labor constitutes a prior claim to his farm, home, chattels and livestock, we propose securing farmers against evictions or property seizure by long moratoriums; government refinancing of farm debts so as to reduce the interest rate to one and one-half per cent. We stand opposed to the policy of crop reduction and advocate an increase in the production of farm products to meet the food requirements of the nation with government guarantees of average cost of production. For the widest possible extension of democratically controlled farm cooperative enterprises under a program which protects the interests of farmers and consumers alike.

Around this program it is possible to rally a growing number of the farmers' organizations and quickly win the majority of farmers, especially the most impoverished farmers. This must be the central idea in our work on the countryside and among the various farm organizations. The growing agricul-

tural workers' trade union movement should be more closely linked up with the progressive movement among the farmers, thus strengthening its political activity, and serving as a link between city and country. In every state there is a considerable agricultural population; it is the duty of our Party organizations everywhere to establish connection there, and proceed to build most seriously the united front.

#### THE YOUTH AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICA

*Youth* occupies the country's attention as never before in history. That is because, as never before, the young people are in revolt against the conditions imposed upon them by the crisis. It is a great satisfaction to record that in the U.S.A., contrary to the experience in some countries, fascism has made relatively less inroads among the youth than among the older strata of the population. It is precisely among the younger generation that we witness the broadest progressive united front, which has risen under the banner of the American Youth Congress, involving the majority of important youth mass organizations from church bodies to Communists.

The Declaration of Rights of the Young Generation, adopted at the Second Youth Congress last July, is a basic program to organize the youth of our country against fascism and war.

A cornerstone of this broad program is the American Youth Act, a legislative proposal which the Youth Congress drew up and caused to be introduced in Congress by Senator Benson of Minnesota. This Youth Act contains eight basic features, with which our whole movement should thoroughly familiarize itself. These features are:

1. Providing a system of vocational training and employment on public enterprises for the youth from 16 to 25 years, at regular wages.

2. Wages in such public enterprises shall be equal to prevailing trade union rates for the work performed, but in no case less than \$15 per week.

3. All needy high school students are to receive govern-

mental assistance for living expenses, at a rate not less than \$15 per month.

4. A system of academic projects is to be established for needy college students, paying not less than \$25 per month.

5. The Act is to be administered by joint committees composed of representatives of labor, youth, and consumers' organizations.

6. The benefits of the Act extend to all youth without discrimination because of nativity, sex, race, color, religion, or political opinions or affiliations.

7. No youth shall be disqualified because of past or present participation in strikes or refusal to work for less than trade union wages.

8. These measures are to be financed by taxes on inheritances, gifts, and incomes, corporate or individual, of over \$5,000 per year.

The Young Communist League, with the assistance of the Party, has from the beginning played an important part in building the Youth Congress movement and formulating its program and activities. Working modestly, loyally, and energetically, the Young Communists have won a myriad of friends and a secure place in the movement. Their work can serve as a model for the older generation.

In this great movement of the younger generation, the progressive forces got the jump on the reactionaries and fascists. We must sound a note of warning to our young people, however, that their path will not be so smooth in the next period as in the last. The reactionaries are organizing their forces for a big drive to win the youth. Only in struggle can the youth organizations be kept on the progressive path, a struggle that will affect the inner life of every mass organization. The leading personnel of the youth movement must gird itself for the battle, sharpen its weapons of social and political understanding, train itself organizationally, consolidate its forces.

Another great victory for the united front among the youth was the successful unification of the National Student League



and the Student League for Industrial Democracy into the new American Student Union.

In both these youth organizations, various political affiliations are united on special youth problems. There is now being felt more and more the need for a united political movement of the most advanced youth, a united youth league standing on the political platform of the People's Front, the Farmer-Labor Party. Experiences in many places, especially in Minnesota, suggest that such a united youth league may arise as the junior section of the Farmer-Labor Party. This should receive serious examination and discussion.

The rise of a broad youth movement has served to awake the trade unions to the necessity of special work among the youth. The resolution on this question at the last A. F. of L. convention was an important step in this direction. It must be followed up systematically.

Our Eighth Convention placed the youth question as the concern of the entire Party. The results since then, even with inadequate attention by the Party committees, have been most valuable. Tenfold progress will be made when every Party committee takes up this question, giving guidance and aid to the young people. This Convention must begin an even brighter period in the youth movement. Who wins the youth wins the future of America.

#### POSSIBILITIES FOR A WOMEN'S MASS MOVEMENT

*Women* are at least half of the population, and a very energetic and active half. Yet we do not see this recognized fully. Among the youth, there is an awakening to this fact, with the girls playing an important and growing part in the movement from top to bottom. Elsewhere we lag behind. In work among the women we must admit, to our shame, that the reactionaries are more active, and work more intelligently than do we and our friends.

Yet we have examples that could teach us, if we are willing, of the enormous importance and great achievements possible in

organizing the women, in developing leading people among them. Examine, for instance, the great political victory of the election of Mary Zuk to the city council of Hamtramck, Michigan. Mary Zuk became an important political figure, not only in her industrial suburb of Detroit, but nationally; she leads a movement that plays a decisive role in the life of her community. The starting point of this achievement was a movement of the women to struggle against the high prices of meat. The women acted on a small issue of daily life; they did not allow their action to remain isolated; they reached out and involved the trade unions, the fraternal orders, the whole community.

Why has our Party not taken this outstanding example of achievement among women, in drawing women into leadership of a great mass movement, to study it and apply its lessons everywhere? Why do we continue going around in the same old circles, repeating the old magic formulæ, when we have such rich experiences to guide us to more fruitful activity?

There are hundreds of thousands of women in the trade unions, there are multiplied numbers in industry still unorganized, there are millions of women in mass organizations of varied sorts. Their problems are growing more difficult, they are searching for answers, for a new way out, just as we have seen among the youth. All the possibilities exist for a women's movement on the same scale as the youth movement. It is the task of our Party to find and develop those women with the capacity of creating and leading such a movement.

#### THE PARTY OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE

*The Negro people* are an important section of the workers, the farmers, the youth, the women. But they have another characteristic, in that they are an oppressed nationality, suffering double oppression. We can never allow this to be overlooked in any field of work. It creates a special task, to rouse and organize the Negro masses for their own protection, and

win the white masses to firm solidarity with the Negroes in this struggle.

Significant progress has been made in building the united front of struggle for Negro liberation. The National Negro Congress, which met in Chicago in February and established a permanent organization, found the correct road to a broad unity of the varied progressive forces among the Negro people and their friends. It is a broad people's movement, which at the same time has a firm working class core of Negro trade unions and working class leaders. Communists and all progressives can well continue to give it their energetic and steadfast support.

Communists, while a small minority in this big movement, have earned an unchallenged place in it by their services in the struggle for Negro rights. What Negro in America is there who does not know of the Scottsboro boys, of their defense by the I.L.D., of what the Communists have done to save them, of our part in bringing into existence the broad united front that now promises to tear them from the clutches of the Alabama lynchers? What Negro in America has not become acquainted with the name of Angelo Herndon; who does not know something of the heroism and clarity of vision and understanding of this exemplary Communist?

The position won by our Party among the Negro masses carries with it corresponding responsibilities. The Negro people have learned to expect and demand from Communists the greatest sensitivity to their problems, the greatest energy in their defense, the closest solidarity in their struggles. We are proud of this position, we are proud of our pioneering work in the dark regions of the Solid South, we are proud to be spoken of as "the party of the Negroes." We will defend and advance this position at all costs.

#### FOR UNITY OF THE UNEMPLOYED

*National unification of the unemployed organizations* is one of our outstanding achievements of the united front since our

Eighth Convention. We Communists were the pioneers in this, as in many other fields. The unemployed movement dates from the great nationwide demonstrations of March 6, 1930, called by our Party, for which we paid the heavy price of prison terms for Comrades Foster, Minor, Amter, and Raymond. These demonstrations gave birth to the National Unemployed Council movement in July, 1930. When later other forces entered the field, notably the Socialists, and a multiplicity of organizations sprang up, it was the Communists who raised the slogan of national unification, fought for it consistently, and finally brought about the merger of all into the Workers Alliance which is now a broad, all-inclusive national organization of the unemployed movement.

Let us remember the central role played in this unification by the fight for the Workers' Unemployment, Old-Age and Social Insurance Bill. This Bill was first worked out by the Communists, introduced in Congress by the Farmer-Labor Congressman Lundeen, and later amplified and perfected in its present form, the Frazier-Lundeen Bill, by the Inter-Professional Association and the Joint Committee for Social Insurance. The Congressional hearings on the Workers' Bill, which won a favorable report from the Labor Committee of the House and 52 votes for the Bill on the floor of Congress, will for long stand as the authoritative handbook on unemployment insurance problems in America. The campaign for the Workers' Bill taught the whole progressive movement its most basic lessons in effective mobilization of the masses for social aims.

This report will not deal with the multitude of practical problems now facing the unemployed movement. There will be a special report on this subject. It will suffice at this point to emphasize the importance, the central role, of the unemployed movement, the necessity of constant attention to help work out its problems, to strengthen the leading personnel in this work, and constantly to maintain its vital connections with the whole labor movement, with the whole People's Front.

The next stage of the movement, which will involve the whole

People's Front, will add to the issue of unemployment insurance a more concrete campaign to provide jobs, to open up the factories, to put America back to work at trade union wage rates.

#### FOR A UNITED LABOR DEFENSE

*A united labor defense movement* is becoming a pressing necessity with the growing attacks upon the democratic rights and civil liberties of the toiling population. The International Labor Defense is unquestionably the outstanding and most effective organization in this field. It has a fine record of achievements. But it is still too narrow to meet the needs of the day. Many forces which must be united do not yet accept the I.L.D. as their common organ. I am sure the leading comrades of the I.L.D. will agree with me when I declare that we are willing to meet all groups interested in a united labor defense movement, and work out a platform and plan of organization acceptable to all, upon which all can unite. I am sure that such a united movement will have the enthusiastic endorsement of Tom Mooney, J. B. McNamara, the Scottsboro boys, Herndon, the Alabama and Arkansas sharecroppers and tenants, the Sacramento prisoners in California, and the thousands of workers everywhere who are suffering longer or shorter prison terms, who feel the daily need of united forces in the fight for civil rights.

#### ORGANIZING THE FORCES FOR PEACE

*The American League Against War and Fascism* \* is one of the outstanding examples of a broad People's Front organized around issues affecting the whole population. Its Third Congress, held in Cleveland last January, registered a representation of mass organizations of the most varied kind with a membership of over three millions. This included trade unions, mostly A. F. of L., comprising about 20 per cent of the organized labor movement, over 600,000 members. Its local com-

\* At its fourth congress, held November, 1937, its name was changed to American League For Peace and Democracy.—*Ed.*

mittees and district conferences have involved even broader masses. Its program has brought the beginnings of clarity and unity into the chaotic peace movement of the United States.

It is impossible to speak of the American League and its work, without noting the outstanding contribution of its tireless and devoted Chairman, Dr. Harry F. Ward. Such selfless and consistent service to a progressive cause, as Dr. Ward has given, will always receive the unstinted recognition and support of the Communist Party.

It is a matter of regret to us that the Socialist Party, nationally and in most states, is still outside the American League, and indeed outside of any organized movement against war and fascism. This can hardly be caused by the issues standing between Socialists and Communists on the war question, as the American League program does not attempt as yet to answer these controversial issues. Indeed, the Socialists have not seriously criticized its platform. Within the League, the Communists are a very small minority. We can hardly be expected to take seriously the proposal, from Socialist and Lovestoneite sources, that the League should dissolve itself in the dim hope that something broader would thereupon magically spring upon the scene. The League is already a great mass movement. We will be glad to co-operate in making it even broader than it is. The Third Congress in January adopted a special resolution to this effect. There are reasons to hope that in the next period serious re-enforcements will join with the League. We ask our Socialist friends, can they afford to continue their isolation from this great movement?

The coming World Peace Congress, called for Geneva in September, to which the American League Against War and Fascism is sending a delegation in common with most of the other peace societies in the country, including the National Peace Conference and the League of Nations Society, should be the occasion for an all-round strengthening of the League in every locality, in organizational support, in activity and personnel. The World Peace Congress movement comprises

the bulk of the peace movement of Europe, including the great trade union federations and the most important Socialist and labor parties. It is an unexampled opportunity to face and solve the problem of working out a single united international peace policy, in which the special American angles can be brought forward and solved in consultation with the rest of the world.

Summarizing this outline of the most important problems of the united front and trade union unity, we can say:

Since our Eighth Convention,\* the mass movement for unity against the forces of reaction, fascism and war has registered a great upsurge. In most fields, especially in the trade unions, our Party correctly foresaw this movement, placed itself at the head of the struggle for unity, and can record substantial progress in that direction. But the movement is only in its beginnings. Hundredfold progress must be made. There is no room for satisfaction, for resting on our oars. Weaknesses and shortcomings in our methods of work, clumsiness and routine handling of problems, remnants of sectarianism, still hold back the movement. The solution of these problems and weaknesses lies, for the Communist Party, in the building, strengthening, and political development of our Party members and leading personnel.

#### 4. BUILDING THE COMMUNIST PARTY

In what direction are we moving and what is our tempo in the question of building the Communist Party as the mass party of the American toilers?

We can obtain a rough measurement by a comparison of our position, in numbers and certain indices of the quality of our work, at the Eighth Convention in 1934 and today at the Ninth Convention.

At the Eighth Convention, the membership of the Party was approximately 25,000; of the Young Communist League about 5,000, or a total of 30,000 organized Communists.

\* April 2-8, 1934.—*Ed.*

Today at the Ninth Convention, the Party membership is around 40,000, the Y.C.L. about 11,000, or a total of over 50,000 organized Communists. This is an increase of 66 per cent in two years, or 500 per cent increase since 1929.

The first test of the quality of our Party work is the unity of the Party. At our Eighth Convention we could already speak of the final liquidation of past divisions and factionalism which had cursed the previous history of the movement. This Ninth Convention registers a unity of higher quality, forged in the fires of two difficult and complicated years in which rapid and fundamental readjustments of policy and tactics, carried through successfully with great gains, have created among our members and supporters a deep confidence in the Party line and our ability to execute it in life. Our Party today not only understands the value of its unity and discipline; it knows how to guarantee that unity in the spirit of Lenin and Stalin.

In this year of political ferment and upheaval, it is of interest to record the fact that every important (and many an unimportant) political party and grouping has suffered serious inner struggles and splits—with the single exception of the Communist Party.

The splits in the Republican, Democratic, and Socialist parties are well known. The A. F. of L. leadership has lost even its formal unity of past years and is openly grouping in two fundamentally opposing camps. The Townsend movement is going through serious convulsions, and its leadership is sharply divided. Father Coughlin thought it necessary to expel the majority of the first group of district leaders elected by the National Union for Social Justice. The EPIC movement in California has serious divisions and desertions. The kaleidoscopic splittings and reunifications among the Trotskyite groups defy description. Even that old mummy, the Socialist-Labor Party, revived sufficiently to suffer a major split that give birth to a new baby mummy. But the unity of the Communist Party has become ever more solid and fundamental. Even the most incorrigible gossips have ceased of necessity to speculate about divisions in our ranks.



This is because Communist Party unity is based on the teachings of our great leaders Lenin and Stalin.

#### UNITY AND DISCIPLINE OF THE PARTY

There are people who profess to find in our unity and discipline an argument against the Communist Party. They describe it as mechanical uniformity and an inner-party dictatorship. We can only smile at such lack of understanding.

The Communist Party has iron unity and discipline. This is based upon an inner-party democracy, of a richness and completeness which no other political party can even dream about. It is based upon an active membership, fully participating in shaping every angle of Party life, of which there is no counterpart in any other existing organization. It is based upon that confidence which grows out of the experience of finding the Party emerge successful from every testing in struggle of its policies.

This principle which underlies the unity and discipline of our Party was expressed in the following words of Stalin:

Iron discipline in the Party is impossible without unity of will and without absolute and complete unity of action on the part of all members of the Party. This does not mean, of course, that the possibility of a struggle of opinions within the Party is thus excluded. On the contrary, iron discipline does not exclude, but presupposes, criticism and struggle of opinion within the Party. Least of all does it mean that this discipline must be "blind" discipline. On the contrary, iron discipline does not exclude but presupposes conscious and voluntary submission, for only conscious discipline can be truly iron discipline. But after the discussion has been closed, after criticism has run its course and a decision has been made, unity of will and action of all Party members become indispensable conditions without which Party unity and iron discipline in the Party are inconceivable.\*

The same thought is further elaborated by Lenin:

How is the discipline of a revolutionary Party of the proletariat maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the

\* *Foundations of Leninism*, by Joseph Stalin, Little Lenin Library (International Publishers), pp. 116-117.—*Ed.*

class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard, by its devotion, by its firmness, self-sacrifice and heroism. Secondly, by its ability to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain degree if you wish, *merge itself with the broadest masses of the toilers*, primarily with the proletarians, *but also with the non-proletarian toiling masses*. Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard and by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broadest masses become convinced of this correctness *by their own experience*. Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party that is really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to transform the whole society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions all attempts to establish discipline are inevitably transformed into trifling phrase-mongering and empty gestures.\*

What our critics have in mind, when they attack our Party unity and discipline, is usually their opposition to decisive action to carry out the Party policy. When they speak for "democracy," what they really defend is the unlimited freedom of discussion without ever coming to a binding decision, the freedom of factions and faction struggle, and the right of irresponsible gossip—three characteristics of the inner-party life of the Socialist Party, which we do not envy them, which we have no wish to take over. Our discussions must always be directed toward a decision which binds us all; without this there is no true democracy. We tolerate no factional organization within our Party which destroys the Party's capacity for action. We burn out any tendency to irresponsible gossip with a red-hot iron; criticism means the right openly to raise questions in the Party units and committees, it excludes the gossip of the small cliques, the cafeteria tables, and mutual admiration circles.

#### HIGH QUALITY OF LEADING PERSONNEL

What is the central weakness in our work of building a mass Party on these principles of Lenin and Stalin?

It is the insufficient number of politically trained and tech-

\* "*Left-Wing*" Communism: *An Infantile Disorder*, by V. I. Lenin, Little Lenin Library (International Publishers), p. 10.—*Ed.*

nically skilled leading people, the shortage of adequately prepared officers to lead the mass army which we are recruiting.

The best policy in the world turns out in life to be no better than the people who must execute it, who must apply it to the thousand variable conditions of daily life. Application of policy among the masses is first of all a problem of securing a high quality of leading personnel.

This becomes our central problem in Party building, at a moment when great masses are swinging over to our side, when in the shortest possible time we must transform these masses into an iron army of the revolution.

We are not adequately providing a leading personnel to these masses who are coming to us. We attack this problem in a desultory, unorganized, and mechanical fashion, without thinking out the problem fundamentally. The result is the too slow growth of our Party, and the still high losses from among our new recruits, the still low quality of much of our work among the masses.

Is there any shortage of potential leading forces which can meet all our needs? Not at all. Among the new tens of thousands coming into our ranks we have all the forces we need. *But we are not using them adequately.* Our leading forces tend to petrify in closed circles of the oldest Party comrades. The new active elements, potential leaders, are not systematically brought forward and trained for their tasks.

Unless we remedy this weakness in our work, we will be unable to accomplish the next task, that is, the building of a Party of a hundred thousand members of even higher quality than our present Party of fifty thousand.

What are the main points of a consistent personnel policy? Comrade Dimitroff gave the four leading thoughts on the question of the standards to apply in selecting and promoting leading personnel. These points are:

1. Absolute devotion to the working class, loyalty to the Party, tested in struggle and under the enemy's persecution.

2. Closest possible contact with the masses; only if the masses accept a person as a leader can the Party do so.

3. Ability to make decisions, to find the correct course independently, to take responsibility and initiative.

4. Discipline and steadfastness in the struggle against the class enemy, as well as against all deviations from the Party line.

Some of our comrades, who in the past have thought of the qualities of leadership largely in terms of speaking and writing, will be astonished to find these qualifications not mentioned in these four main points. We must finally learn, throughout the Party, that speaking and writing well are of importance *only* when developed upon the foundation of the four points of Dimitroff.

To select and promote leadership upon this basis, we must first of all study the human material with which we are working. We must know our people, their qualities, their strength and their weakness, their capacities of development.

At the present moment, a first consideration in promoting new forces is to find capable *native Americans*. From top to bottom of our Party the predominance in leading personnel must belong to the native people most closely corresponding to the composition of the masses of the population among whom we are working in each particular city, factory, neighborhood, or mass organization.

Systematic guidance, assistance, and training must be given to the leading personnel selected for promotion. Every leading Party member must assume this task as part of his daily life, not only in Party schools, but in all our work. The special problems of each person must be considered, his preferences and qualifications must be considered in assignment of work, and special help given to overcome special difficulties.

Finally, the whole Party life must be organized on the principle of making every Party member into a leader among the masses. Every member must assume the task of leading and educating at least *one* worker outside the Party; he shall consider himself a real Bolshevik only when fifty to a hundred workers regularly look to him for guidance and leadership in the problems of the class struggle.

We must do away with the reluctance to advance new forces to leadership. We are in a revolutionary epoch which, Lenin said, is to a Communist Party what wartime is to an army. Lenin told us:

We must extend the ranks of our army, transfer it from a peace to a war strength, mobilize the reservists, call up all those on furlough, organize new auxiliary corps, units and services. We must not forget that in war it is inevitable and necessary to fill the ranks with less trained recruits, very often to put rank-and-file soldiers in the place of officers, and to speed up and simplify the promotion of soldiers to the rank of officers.

We must guide the great recruitment which is now beginning of new members into our Party, to insure that it shall especially strengthen the Party among workers in basic and key industries.

To better adjust our Party to its mass work, there is now required a simplification of our Party structure. Districts must be based upon state lines; Sections must conform to the established political subdivisions within the state. The units must be formed with a view to the conditions and tasks confronting them. The dues system must be changed to eliminate unnecessary bookkeeping and routine, and to lighten the burden on the members; monthly instead of weekly dues must be the rule, and the amount to be paid by those in the lower categories of wage-rates shall be reduced. The international assessment, now paid monthly in a sum equal to the weekly dues, shall be changed to a quarterly assessment equal to the monthly dues.

We now must popularize our press and literature, in contents and circulation, more decisively than we have done heretofore. We have made certain improvements, but not enough. Our *Sunday Worker*, with a regular circulation of 120,000, is our greatest single achievement. But it is far from sufficient. The number of local papers is increasing, and their quality improves; but this also does not keep pace with the developments among the masses. Circulation of books and pamphlets in 1935 reached almost two and a half million

copies, compared to slightly more than a million in 1934; but clearly the five million mark must be the minimum for 1936. Press and literature are the fundamental weapon of mass education.

Above all, in our speeches, leaflets and literature, we must more and more learn to speak the language of the masses. We must speak in terms of the concrete current problems, of the immediate struggle for a better life.

The Communist Party must use the opportunity of this election campaign to smash once and for all the superstition, which has been embodied in a maze of court decisions having the force of law, that our Party is an advocate of force and violence, that it is subject to laws (Federal immigration laws, state "criminal syndicalism" laws) directed against such advocacy. The Communist Party is not a conspirative organization, it is an open revolutionary Party, continuing the traditions of 1776 and 1861; it is the only organization that is really entitled by its program and work to designate itself as "sons and daughters of the American revolution." Communists are not anarchists, not terrorists. The Communist Party is a legal party and defends its legality. Prohibition of advocacy of force and violence does not apply to the Communist Party; it is properly applied only to the Black Legion, the Ku Klux Klan, and other fascist groupings, and to the strike-breaking agencies and the open-shop employers who use them against the working class, who are responsible for the terrible toll of violence which shames our country.

We are going into the 1936 election campaign to win the masses to the people's front against reaction, fascism, and war. Our program is directed to maintain peace, and to advance the economic interests and democratic rights of the workers, farmers, and impoverished middle classes.

This is a fight for liberty for the masses of the people. We are the party of socialism, of the proletarian revolution, of Soviet power. The doctrinaires of all shades shout against us that to take up the fight for liberty is to abandon the fight for socialism; such people would make of socialism a product

of the study room and laboratory. But socialism will come out of life, out of the class struggle. Only by rousing and organizing millions of people in the fight for liberty can we bring these millions to the fight for socialism; only that Party which is the vanguard of millions in their first struggles will lead these millions to the final struggle of the socialist revolution. Our slogan is the slogan of Lenin: "Through liberty to socialism!"

Forward in the struggle for a new and better life for the masses!

Forward to a free, peaceful, prosperous and happy America!

##### 5. SPEECH IN REPLY TO DISCUSSION

The Ninth Convention of the Communist Party has demonstrated that our Party is winning the confidence and respect of great masses of the people. Outstanding is the proof given in the Convention of the unshakable unity of our Party. We can be proud of the spirit of confidence, energy and enthusiasm shown at the Convention, but it is necessary to sound a word of warning not to think that our problems are solved. We are only beginning.

Our present membership of 50,000 looks good, but how small it looks compared with 40,000,000 American toilers who must be won to our Party. We have to win the great masses who do not know us, who do not know the correctness of our Party policies, who have to be convinced of them, and we must learn how to work among them convincingly. That cannot be done merely by proclaiming that our Party is correct. We have to prove it by patient, persuasive, stubborn, systematic work. We cannot take our policy to the masses as an instruction to them. We cannot hand it down to them from above as the wisdom from on high. For the masses, this policy must seem to arise right out of the logic of life. They accept the policy and then they accept us because they see the policy is correct, and because they see us as the best and the most modest workers, developing these policies in life.

In this way we will be able to win hundreds of thousands and millions. In this way we will become a mass Party. What we say about our relation to the masses is true within our Party and within our organized movement of the relations between the leading personnel and the larger body of members. Our Party does not function through arbitrary and blind discipline. The authority of our leadership is never arbitrary and the responsibility of our membership is never blind. Our leading forces deserve their position and will strengthen that position to the extent that they convince, to the extent that they prove their actions in life, to the extent that they give by example and teach by example and lead by example. Without this, we cannot move forward one inch in carrying through these policies which have appeared so clearly and indubitably correct to this Convention.

The best policy in the world means nothing more than the people who carry it out. That means we must improve our people. Each and every one of us must assume the task of improving his own work, raising himself to a higher level, getting a greater command of the problems of the movement in which we deal. Every one of us must assume the task of helping someone else to accomplish the same purpose. That is the essence of what we mean by the Party policies directed toward developing the leading personnel.

We want no boasting. We want no inflated egos in our movement. We want no self-satisfaction, no resting on our laurels. We want confidence, determination, skill, pride in the great honor of Party membership; we want hard work to win confidence and respect of the broadest masses of workers and toilers in the determination to create around our Party such a great body of people with firm confidence in us that no enemy can attack us without rallying millions to our defense.

Now I must say a few words about some of the political developments of these past few days while we have been in session. Certain things happened in connection with the Democratic Party Convention in Philadelphia. I have in mind, in particular, the Democratic platform that was adopted the



night before last. I suppose you comrades have all read the statement on this platform that I gave to the United Press, published in the *Daily Worker* this morning [June 27]. I think the comrades should study that statement and develop that point of view in explaining to the broad masses of workers the meaning of the Democratic platform. I don't want to take our precious time here by repeating what I said in that brief interview. Let me add one or two points of emphasis to you.

We must emphasize that the progressive features and the progressive tone of the Democratic platform are to a great extent the result of the fight that was put up by John L. Lewis, representing Labor's Non-Partisan League and the Committee for Industrial Organization, with the support of certain progressive elements in the Democratic Party. It is clear that this platform represents certain further concessions to the workers and toiling people. It is also clear that the intervention of John L. Lewis to a certain degree met the criticism which we have been directing against him for giving Roosevelt a blank check. It is also clear that this fight of Lewis and the progressives not only improved their own record but compelled certain promises to the masses in the Democratic platform. This indicates the voice of the progressives which makes itself heard more loudly in the Democratic Party than heretofore.

We must answer the question: is this a sufficient guarantee that the promises to labor, to the farmers, to the middle classes, will actually be fulfilled in the event of a Democratic victory? We must say: no, there is no guarantee at all. Even though we do see that the progressives exert more influence than formerly in the Democratic machine, we cannot forget the past so quickly. Especially we cannot forget the most recent past which has been marked by retreats and capitulations on point after point to the reactionaries. We cannot forget that even the promises extracted from this latest platform contain a certain little joker that in case they cannot carry through these things within the Constitution, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, then these things will be postponed until the

Constitution is amended—and we know how long it takes to amend the Constitution. We cannot forget that the Democratic Party is a capitalist party and that the dominating influences there stand for the class interests of big business, that same big business that is trying to drive them out of power. This party cannot be a guarantee that the promises of this platform will be fulfilled and certainly there is no guarantee that the Democratic Party can become what Governor Earle of Pennsylvania said it had already become: "Our party is the main bulwark against the advancing forces of big business fascism." Where can we find the guarantee for the carrying through of progressive measures? Only in the independent organization and action of all progressive forces under the leadership of labor—the guarantee of progress comes only from concentration of these progressive forces in a further step in the direction of a mass Farmer-Labor Party, which is the only secure bulwark against reaction and fascism.

The policy of giving a blank check to Roosevelt means no guarantee. Failure or hesitation to build the independent political strength of labor, farmers, and all progressives, means no guarantee. Our Party must do everything in its power to help create this guarantee, to help bring about the broadest possible unity for independent political action of all the progressive forces. This cannot be done within the limits of the Democratic Party.

The newspapers in the last few days, and especially the Hearst press, have been making a serious attempt to arouse a new Red scare in connection with our Convention. They are trying to create a panic within the bourgeoisie that the Communists are launching in this Convention a great crusade, in organizing "strike, strike, strike, for strike's sake," and they are especially trying to make it appear that we are trying to disrupt the steel and auto industry. The very discussions in our Convention here explain the role of our Party to improve the conditions of the workers in these industries—and they are trying to picture us as irresponsible trouble-makers. This is especially what Hearst is carrying on to represent the situa-

tion in France in the same way, to picture France as in the grip of a reign of riots and Red terror, and to show that Roosevelt's policies will lead to the same thing in the United States, thus hoping to stampede all elements afraid of riot and Red terror to Landon. A very specific purpose is involved in this also—to try to stop the organizing drive in the steel industry with a wave of anti-Red hysteria. It is necessary for us in this Convention to brand this fakery for what it is. When American workers go on strike, it is not because Communists are stirring up trouble, but because in those places the forces of big business are denying these workers the right to organize and bargain collectively and denying it by force and violence. Workers do not lightly go on strike. A strike is a difficult struggle, requiring heavy sacrifices. Communists do not lightly advise workers to strike. To strike is a weapon of last resort, to which the workers turn only when the capitalists have blocked every other road of redress for their grievances. And when strikes occur—and when bloodshed takes place in connection with them, that is not the result of Communist policies, or Communist activities. That is the work of the reactionary capitalists and their agents who are directly responsible for the strike and for troubles that arise out of the strikes. It is the Morgan-du Pont gang, the backers of Landon, that are preparing and provoking violence and bloodshed to stop the organization of the steel and auto industries and other basic industries of this country.

It is these capitalists who are storing up arms and ammunition inside their plants against the workers to prevent that right to organize that the Democratic platform says Roosevelt guaranteed to them.

The Communist Party is not stirring up strikes. The Communist Party is helping in every way possible to organize the workers. The Communist Party will do everything to help the workers use their organizations to get better wages, shorter hours, better working conditions; and when there is no other way, when the capitalists refuse to deal with the workers and try to break up their organizations, then the workers have the

right to strike. That is a fundamental American right which the American workers will never surrender and the Communists will advise and help the workers of America to preserve their right to strike under all circumstances and to use it whenever it becomes necessary.

Now, comrades, one can say a great deal in summing up the discussions we have had. But, after all, is it necessary? There has been such complete unanimity in this Convention. Our enemies may say that opposition was suppressed in this Convention. I want to ask: is there anyone in this Convention who has one word of opposition to any single feature of the policy worked out in this Convention [*cries of "No"*], who has not had an opportunity to speak. I am prepared, if there is a single person who wants to present opposition to any angle of our Party policy, I will surrender the microphone to him right now [*cries of "No" and applause*]. We have had complete freedom of discussion. I think that we can say there is no other political organization in America that has one small fraction of the freedom of discussion and inner democracy that we have and practice in the Communist Party. And, precisely, we have that freedom and democracy as a regular practice of our Party, that is the reason why unity and strength, solidarity and enthusiasm of the Communist Party are greater than that of any other political party or grouping. That is why the Communist Party and its program not only continue the past traditions of revolutionary America but embody the revolutionary future of the United States. [*All delegates rise and sing the "Internationale," followed by long ovation.*]

*Report of the Central Committee to the Ninth National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., June 24, 1936; and Speech in Reply to Discussion, June 27, 1936.*

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## II

### Our Enemy Is Wall Street

You have placed upon me a heavy responsibility. You call me to carry the standard of the Communist Party and the platform which alone, of all parties and platforms in this election, gives the correct answer to all the most burning problems of the people. Our enemy is Wall Street—the reactionaries, the enemies of the people. The battle is difficult and complicated. The enemy is strong, ferocious and unscrupulous, an octopus with a thousand poisonous arms. The battle calls for all our strength and wisdom. We are organizing an army of the liberation of the people. No person can hold a responsible post in it, unless he is ready to subordinate himself to the collective will and wisdom of the whole army. It is in this spirit that I accept the nomination which you offer me.

We have weighed our tasks frankly and realistically. We see that the chief enemy of the peace, freedom and prosperity of the American people is the Republican Party and its reactionary allies, Hearst, the Liberty League, Wall Street.

Roosevelt and his administration have been retreating before the attacks of reaction, surrendering position after position. Even the Philadelphia platform, with its progressive note and ringing promises, accepts as final the Supreme Court's usurped power to block the realization of progressive measures until three-fourths of the states have ratified a Constitutional amendment.

The self-styled Union Party of Lemke and Coughlin is the product of a Hearst-Liberty League intrigue. Lemke is clearly but a stooge for Landon. His platform is even more dishonest than that of the Republicans, standing for essentially the same policies.

We regret to see that the Socialist Party, refusing all co-operation with other progressive forces, is moving into the backwater of doctrinaire sectarianism, out of the mass currents of American life.

In this situation the Communist Party has decided to come forward with its own program and its own candidates.

We Communists would prefer to have associated ourselves with other progressives for a united ticket and platform. The need is great for the broadest possible united front. We have done everything we could to bring this about. We say that the rising danger of fascism and war calls for a united People's Front—for the trade unions, farmers' organizations and all progressives to unite in a Farmer-Labor Party. The growth of the Farmer-Labor Party is the most promising thing in American political life.

But the largest organizations of the Farmer-Labor Party movement are supporting Roosevelt. The big progressive trade unions have formed Labor's Non-Partisan League for the same purpose.

We Communists cannot agree with this reliance upon Roosevelt to defeat the reactionaries. Too often we have seen that the more Roosevelt is supported from the Left the more he compromises with the Right. We declare that the progressive forces must create a strong political organization, an independent force, before they can even force Roosevelt to stop surrendering their rights and liberties.

But, despite this disagreement, the Communist Party fully agrees with the labor and progressive forces supporting Roosevelt that the victory of Landon and Knox, the creatures of Hearst, would be a major misfortune for the American people. We call for their defeat at all costs. But we warn the leaders of the big progressive unions, and the progressive group in Congress, that their present reliance upon Roosevelt does not guarantee the defeat of Landon. On the contrary, it is this policy which has brought the imminent danger of Landon's victory. It was the failure of these progressive leaders to join in a Farmer-Labor Party movement with all their strength

which left the field open for the reactionary conspiracy of Coughlin-Lemke-Hearst. It is their continued hesitation to even call a national conference of all progressive forces to unite the fight against reaction that increases the chances of a reactionary victory.

We Communists have declared, we declare again now, that we will support with all our strength every serious effort to set up a united progressive front against reaction, fascism and war. There is still time—but the time is growing short.

The issue of the 1936 election is not a choice between socialism or capitalism. It is a choice between progress and reaction, between democracy and the path toward fascism.

(Hearst, the Liberty League and the Republican Party have issued the war cry against Roosevelt that the New Deal is socialistic and communistic.) That is only their campaign demagoguery. It is addressed to the middle classes and propertied people to frighten them into accepting fascism as the alternative to a non-existent threat of socialist confiscation. It is addressed to the masses, in the hope of discrediting socialism by identifying it with the failures of the New Deal. There is nothing of socialism in Roosevelt's policies or in the Democratic platform. The platform's progressive democratic note is a grudging concession to the big trade unions and the rebelling masses of the suffering people. It is an unwilling testimony to the correctness of the Communist Party, which declares that the main issue is democracy or fascism in America.

The Democratic platform takes a gratuitous fling at the "despotism of Communism." It would have been the part of wisdom, not to speak of good taste, at least to be silent on this point, when the same platform complains that our American institutions are defeating the expressed will of the people, through the Supreme Court, at a moment when Communism in the Soviet Union has just proclaimed a Constitution, the most democratic in all history, which guarantees to every citizen a job at union wages, with full social insurance, paid vacations and opportunity for education, leisure and culture. When America, the richest country in the world, gives its workers

half of what Communism gives in the Soviet Union, it will be time to boast.

The Communist Party and its platform are in this election campaign for one purpose, and only one—to unite the broadest masses of the toiling people effectively around a program which, if carried out, would bring about a better life; would relieve the present suffering of millions of men, women and children; would preserve our democratic rights and civil liberties; would keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world. In accepting this nomination, I pledge to fight for the achievement of this program.

The realization of these progressive and democratic demands would preserve the rights and liberties of the people; they will learn and find in struggle the best way to the final solution of their problems. We are firmly convinced that the majority of the American people will finally choose the way of socialism, which is the common ownership and operation of the mills, mines, factories, railroads, banks—our whole highly organized economic plant—through a government really of, by and for the people. This is the full program of the Communist Party, which causes Wall Street and Hearst to hate us so much. This is socialism, that is revolution, which the reactionaries want you to fear.

The majority of the American people are not this year ready for this revolution toward which the full Communist program leads. But the American people must and will always retain the freedom to choose that road when they are ready. Americans will never permit the victory of fascism in our land. We must join hands, millions of us, to smash this menace. There shall be no American Hitler.

Hearst and the Liberty League carry on a campaign of incitement against the Communist Party, trying to make the people believe that because we are a revolutionary party we are something horrible and shameful. But thereby they only dishonor our American revolutionary traditions which are the heart of Americanism. Our country was born in revolution and preserved by revolutionary war. Hearst's diatribes against us



are only bad copies of the incitements of the Slave Power against the great Lincoln. Americans have always been among the most revolutionary peoples of the world. Americans will not shrink from a new revolution, when they understand that only by this road can they once and for all break the corrupting power of Wall Street over our land.

The Communist Party shows the way to a better life now, and to the future of peace, freedom and security for all.

As the candidate of the Communist Party, I will carry its program to the country—the fight for a united people's front in the Farmer-Labor Party, the fight for organizing the basic industries into industrial unions, in a united and powerful American Federation of Labor, the fight for unity of all progressive forces in America to defeat the threat of reaction, fascism and war.

The Communist Party banner is the only consistent banner of progress, of liberty, and through liberty to socialism.

I accept your nomination as a charge to carry this banner to the great masses of the American people.

Forward to a progressive, free, prosperous and happy America. Vote Communist!

*Speech Accepting the Nomination as Presidential Candidate of the Communist Party, broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, from Madison Square Garden, New York, June 28, 1936.*

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### III

## Foreign Policy and the Maintenance of Peace

THE sinister shadow of war hangs over the entire world. The war dogs are becoming bolder, and the pack led by Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese militarists are getting ready to tear down civilization itself, in their mad attempt to perpetuate their rule and conquer the world.

Every week brings new incitements by the war-makers.

Only this Monday, Hitler again shocked the world when he doubled his army, putting it on an immediate war footing. This newest threat to peace is no isolated incident. It is the latest in a whole series of provocative moves by the fascist warmongers, leading to their announced intention of beginning a new world slaughter. The Japanese militarists conquered Manchuria, are dismembering China, and are plotting to seize the Philippines and wage war against the United States. The rape of Ethiopia by the Italian fascists, Hitler's gigantic program of war preparations, and his constant threats against the small nations of Europe and the Soviet Union, were among the steps taken by the war-makers toward their goal of death and conquest.

This offensive of the troops of destruction unfortunately was not opposed by an invincible front of all the peace forces of the world. There was not enough resistance to their innumerable acts of aggression. Because the peace forces of the world were not united, the fascists have grown bolder, more insolent in their provocations.

During the past few weeks, we have seen the fascists of every country openly intervening on the side of the rebel insurrection against the democratically-elected government of

Spain. The lives of tens of thousands of innocent people have been sacrificed, because Mussolini and Hitler have supplied the mercenaries of the rebel armies with arms, airplanes and money.

How long will the peace-loving people of the world continue to let the war racketeers go unchallenged, terrorizing the weaker nations, and pursuing their policy of blackmail and robbery upon an international scale? How long will the American people, who have so convincingly shown their unmistakable desire for peace, continue to keep aloof from collective efforts for peace which alone can check the war plans of the Japanese militarists in the Far East and of their ally, Hitler, in Europe?

The drums of war are beating ever more loudly. Unless the peace forces of the world marshal their strength and build an unbreakable wall of resistance against the fascist war-makers, death and barbarism will soon ride the heavens as the fascists rain destruction from their fleets of bombing planes, equipped with every conceivable device for mass destruction and murder.

The United States is not immune from the contagious infection of war. It is in danger of being drawn into war in the Far East which the Japanese militarists are provoking. President Roosevelt has shown that he is aware of the imminent threat of a second world war. In his Chautauqua speech, he hinted at that when he said: "We must remember that so long as war exists on earth, there will be some danger that even the nation which most ardently desires peace may be drawn into war."

As a matter of fact, the peoples of the whole world desire peace. The war danger comes from the fascist cliques in every country which are willing to sacrifice millions on the altar of greed and profits. To maintain peace, we must check the drive of these war-makers, and that includes our own would-be Hitlers like Hearst and the Liberty Leaguers.

Good intentions and a horror of war will not stop the fascists. We cannot appeal to men who have no scruples, to gangsters

who murder their opponents and herd them by the thousands in concentration camps. Good intentions will not stop Hitler or Mussolini, our own fascist, Hearst, from dragging us all into a new slaughter. Our consciences revolt at their unspeakable deeds, but only actions, real actions for peace, will stop their drive to war.

President Roosevelt has made many correct statements about the need for peace. But he hangs on to a policy of so-called neutrality or isolation which in practice has encouraged the fascist aggressors, instead of stopping them dead in their tracks. It was this policy of isolation which contributed to Mussolini's victory in Ethiopia. It was this failure to take effective steps for peace which emboldened Hitler to remilitarize the Rhineland and to prepare for war against the Soviet Union and France. It was this ineffective method which emboldened the Japanese militarists to advance their war plans against China and the United States. It was this policy of neutrality which played into the hands of our own jingoists, giving them more arguments for a big armaments program by the United States. It was this policy of neutrality which enabled Hearst to cloak himself and his support to the German and Italian fascists behind a demagogic appeal for isolation.

Hearst is openly on the side of the war-makers. He has published attacks in his newspapers upon the English government for not aligning itself with Mussolini and Hitler against France and the Soviet Union. At home, he carries on the most barefaced propaganda to place the weight of the United States upon the side of Hitler, Mussolini and the other fascist dictatorships. His support of the war-makers is part of his whole plan to establish a fascist dictatorship in this country.

This is shown by the campaign carried on in his newspapers: first the charge that America is being communized through the Roosevelt administration; and, second, his campaign against Communism as man's enemy and God's, something that must be outlawed, placed outside the pale, and destroyed by any possible means. These tactics are typical of the first stage of the rise of fascism.

This is exactly the propaganda that preceded Hitler's assumption of power in Germany. This is precisely the propaganda that prepared the fascist revolt in Spain. This propaganda, carried a step further in its logical development in America, would call for an attempt by those interests which are responsible for this propaganda to cancel the results of our coming elections if they should go unfavorable to them.

Landon, who was privately nominated by Hearst months before his public nomination, is trying to get away from the hatred which millions of decent people have for Hearst. Hence, Landon finds it convenient to attempt to dissociate himself from the taint of Hearst. He does not openly support the isolation policies of his master. He talks of peace, but, in effect, the few concrete statements on the subject which have come from the candidate of Wall Street are but a restatement of Hearst's policy which gives aid to the fascists.

With Hearst openly fighting for the fascist dictators, with Hearst right now in Europe conferring with Hitler and Mussolini, it is not difficult to foresee what Landon would do if elected to office. Landon and Hearst do not object to Roosevelt's policy of neutrality, since it enables them to sidetrack the adoption of a real peace policy based on collective security. Similarly, Father Coughlin also uses the neutrality policies of the administration to preach isolation, while urging armed intervention in Mexico.

The Communist Party, alone of all political parties, has worked out a program which will keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world. Our platform declares that peace must be maintained and defended at all cost. We favor the United States participating in all measures to strengthen collective security and peace, including collaboration with the League of Nations. Instead of ever greater armaments we believe that the United States should adopt a true peace policy, work in collaboration with the Soviet Union, France and the other peace forces of the world.

We are for an American peace policy which will prohibit the sale or delivery of goods, or the granting of loans to na-

tions engaged in a foreign war contrary to the provisions of the Kellogg Peace Pact. The huge funds now spent for armaments should be turned to the support of the suffering people.

We demand that the entire munitions industry be nationalized and be put under public control. We demand an end to American intervention in the internal affairs of the Latin American countries. We are for the adoption of a true peace policy in the Americas which will abolish the Monroe Doctrine and end all unequal treaties.

We demand the strict non-recognition of the Japanese conquests in Manchuria and China and the Italian conquest of Ethiopia. We support the Puerto Rican demand for independence. We support the complete independence and self-determination of all oppressed people.

We say that the American people should demand that the government come out actively against the present fascist intervention in Spain. The democratic Spanish republic has friendly relations with us. We must support the Spanish people against the fascist barbarians. It is the duty of the Roosevelt administration to support the Spanish government and thus help support democracy and peace.

This, in brief, is the foreign policy advocated by the Communist Party. It is a policy which works for the maintenance of peace and for collective action by the peace forces of the world against the fascist war-makers.

Let us unite to forge an American peace policy which will really keep us out of war and really work for the peace of the world in collaboration with all those forces striving for peace and progress against war and fascism.

*Broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, August 28, 1936.*

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## IV

### A Labor Day Message

THIS Labor Day the workers have many gains to chalk up on the positive side of the ledger. A progressive spirit runs high in the labor movement. Millions of workers are taking steps to ensure their economic and political emancipation from the rule of the economic feudalists of capitalism. Great organizing drives are taking place in the mass production industries.

But there are ominous clouds on the economic and political horizon. In this Presidential year labor has the problem of how to organize the unorganized workers in the big open-shop industries. It must meet the danger of growing political reaction.

The answer is a unified powerful labor movement. This is the first essential, if American working men are to protect and raise their living standards, if they are to beat back and destroy the Hearst-Liberty League menace to their civil liberties and democratic rights. Without a strong and unified labor movement, reaction cannot be defeated. We have learned this lesson from other countries: in Germany a disunited labor movement brought the victory of fascism; in France a unified labor movement has been able to beat back the fascists.

That is why Wall Street directs its hardest blows against labor's efforts to organize the unorganized. A successful organization drive in steel, in rubber, in auto, in all the industries where the monarchs of monopoly keep the workers in economic serfdom, would mean higher wages, a shorter working week, a higher standard of living for everybody. The Liberty League and its spokesman, Hearst, seek to paint labor as the enemy of the middle class and the farmers. At the same time, they tell the workers that the farmers and middle class people

wax fat at their expense. This is their scheme to divide and rule. It is the Liberty League, Hearst, Wall Street and their little man, Landon, who are the enemies alike of labor, of the farmers, and of middle class people. It is they who have grown rich by foreclosing on our homes, by throwing us out of jobs. Wall Street gives the farmer three cents a quart for milk, while it gets fourteen cents a quart in the city. Wall Street pays the farmer two cents a pound for wheat and charges the housewife twelve cents a pound for a loaf of bread. It is Wall Street which loads taxes on the middle class, while the millionaires cheat the government and pay nothing on the millions which they have taken from the poor.

It is to the interests of everyone except the rich that labor be strong and unified. A strong working class, a powerful united labor movement—this is a necessity for democracy, for progress and for higher standards of living. In turn this means better living standards and more security for the farmer, and the middle class people. Together the 95 per cent of our people, who toil while Wall Street lives off our backs, can defeat the fascist plans of the reactionaries, can maintain and extend the traditional rights of our country. Together we can really build a free, happy and prosperous America, instead of an America in which Hearst is bloated with wealth while babies die of starvation.

It is the duty of every progressive person in this country to support those trade unionists who are valiantly battling the steel trust, the auto trust, the rubber trust. Our progressive people have always hated and fought the trusts since first they established their stranglehold on our country. Today, it is the duty of all of us to help labor haul down the black flag of Wall Street piracy which flies over our basic industries.

The heart of the progressive fight against reaction today lies in the right of labor to organize without interference from employers. One cannot speak of democratic rights when workers are coerced and murdered by company thugs, when the trusts are permitted to rule their company towns with spies, blacklist, gun and blackjack.



It is against the dictatorial rule of the corporations that labor is fighting. Labor seeks a living wage, and the restoration of those traditional American liberties which have been nullified by the trusts. The fight of labor is the fight of everyone who strives for a decent and happy life. The victory of labor is a victory for progress. A defeat for labor means opening the doors wide to the hell of fascism, to the rule of Lucifer Hearst.

The Communist Party stands squarely for the right of labor to organize and strike. We stand for federal legislation which will establish labor's full right to collective bargaining, which will outlaw the company unions, the spy and stool pigeon systems, and all other coercion by employers. Employers guilty of discharging workers for union or political activities should be punished with heavy penalties up to imprisonment. Wretched working conditions must be abolished throughout industry. Every working man and woman must be guaranteed a minimum annual wage by law. We must establish a thirty-hour week without reduction in earnings at trade union rates and conditions, in private industry and on public works. In this way we can achieve a real American standard of living in line with the great productive capacities of our country. A real charter of liberty for labor should be written into the law of the land. So long as labor is denied its rights, so long will there be no real democracy in the United States.

Every working man and every progressive must, therefore, test the Presidential candidates and their programs by their attitude to union labor. About Landon there can be no doubt in the mind of any thinking person. He stands on the platform of the Republican Party whose labor clause was written by the open-shopper T. E. Weir of the Iron and Steel Institute and other such "friends" of the working men. We all know that the notorious declaration of war by the Iron and Steel Institute against the American people contained precisely the same anti-labor clause as the plank of the Republican platform which would outlaw genuine trade unions. Landon is the candidate of those who seek to perpetuate the

sweatshop, the candidate of those who would destroy the trade unions. Only a reactionary, or a radical of the type who rushes in where angels fear to tread, could write letters to Mr. Landon which help whitewash his Wall Street anti-labor policy. Landon's stand on labor is best shown by his record in Kansas. He sent troops to break the strike of the miners of Treece County. Five thousand of these miners and their families are affected by silicosis. Four hundred of their children have died from the dread disease during the Landon administration. Another fifteen hundred children are dying. The mine inspector, appointed by Landon, has not lifted a finger to enforce the state laws for safeguards against silicosis.

President Roosevelt's attitude to labor is indecisive. The Democratic platform maintains that workers should have the right to organize without interference from the employers. But labor has learned by experience that it cannot depend upon Roosevelt. He hesitates and yields to pressure; he yields to pressure from the reactionaries as well as labor. This was seen in every major struggle of labor during the Roosevelt administration. The only way to make Roosevelt move even a little more in the direction of labor is through the independent activity of labor on the economic field combined with independent action of all progressives in a Farmer-Labor Party on the political field. This is the only guarantee for a higher standard of living, for effective checks against reactions.

Let us all on this Labor Day pledge ourselves to build a fighting labor movement which will make human rights supreme over property rights. Let us pledge on this Labor Day once and for all to strike the shackles of economic serfdom from the unorganized workers of this country. Through organizing the unorganized workers, we lay the basis upon which labor, united with the farmers and the middle class, can build a Farmer-Labor Party, that political instrument of the people which alone can defeat the plans of the reactionaries.

Labor Day this year has been darkened by the unlawful suspension of the unions comprising the Committee for Industrial Organization by the reactionary members of the Execu-

tive Council of the American Federation of Labor. This is a stab in the back against labor and the progressive movement generally. This illegal action can only serve the interests of Wall Street and labor's enemy No. 1—William Randolph Hearst.

This illegal action by the Executive Council is a colossal crime against the true interests, the further growth, and the all-embracing unity of the American working class. It is illegal because the constitution of the A. F. of L. specifically forbids the Executive Council to suspend or expel an international union unless granted authority by a two-thirds vote of a national convention.

Mr. William Green and Mr. William L. Hutcheson dare to prate about democracy as the issue. What kind of democracy is it when they illegally suspend unions with a membership of over 1,000,000? As head of the Carpenters' Union, Mr. Hutcheson has prevented that union from holding a convention for eight years. At this moment he denies voting rights to 100,000 lumber worker members, and yet he dares to raise the false issue of democracy. The members of the craft unions have expressed in innumerable resolutions and in meetings that they are against the splitting action of the Executive Council which serves the interests of Wall Street, of Landon who broke Kansas strikes with state troops, of Hearst that arch enemy of labor.

Is it any accident that it was William L. Hutcheson, the chairman of the so-called labor committee to support the Hearst-Landon candidacy, who introduced the motion to suspend the C.I.O. unions? This reactionary who is openly campaigning for Landon, who supports the open-shop labor clause of the Republican Party, who stifled democracy within his own union—it was this Liberty League agent within the ranks of labor who was instrumental in suspending the C.I.O. unions.

The destructive action of the Executive Council is applauded by the reactionaries. They call it the zero hour; they would make it the zero hour for a frontal assault of all reactionary forces against the labor movement. We must unite

every central labor council and state federation to refuse to carry out this split. We must not permit Wall Street to take advantage of the treacherous action of the Executive Council. The answer of all labor and of all friends of labor to suspension order must be a ringing cry for *unity* which will defeat all those who seek to weaken or destroy the labor movement. With unity, labor will conquer.

Every vote for the Communist Party strengthens the organization of the unorganized workers, the building of the Farmer-Labor Party, the gathering of all labor and progressive forces, young and old, white and Negro, men and women, in a People's Front against reaction, fascism and war.

*Broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, September 7, 1936.*

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V

## Parties and Issues

THE fundamental issue of the 1936 elections, according to the Communist viewpoint, is the choice between progress or reaction, democracy or fascism. We Communists place ourselves unequivocally on the side of progress and democracy, against reaction and fascism. We see the entire population being stirred by this issue, beginning to realign itself accordingly. The old party system is meaningless; we are repeating today the experience of 80 years ago, when new problems and issues gave birth to a new system of political parties.

It is the desire of the Communists to contribute to this realignment, to find our own proper place in it, to help the mass of the population to find their proper place.

The two poles of this re-crystallization of our political life are, on the reactionary side, the forces gathered around Landon and Knox—Hearst, the Liberty League, the Jeffersonian Democrats, Wall Street, all the forces of organized wealth and monopoly; on the progressive side, all the mass organizations of the people, which are moving in the direction of a new party, a Farmer-Labor Party.

Roosevelt and the Democratic Party do not represent either of these sides in the basic realignment. Roosevelt tries to take the middle-of-the-road course, tries to satisfy both sides of an irreconcilable struggle, and therefore satisfies neither. In the Solid South, traditional base of the Democratic Party, the ruling class still votes Democratic but already prays Republican. In the border states, the wealthy best families march openly into the Landon camp bearing the banner of Jefferson. Senator Glass announces that his own election on the Democratic ticket will be a victory for the Republican Party. The Democratic Party is a house divided, two souls struggling for

possession of one body, a political Hamlet moving inexorably to its tragic end.

The camp of progress, of the people's mass organizations, of the Farmer-Labor Party, is still not fully formed, has not completely won its political independence, and is supporting the re-election of Roosevelt while refusing to endorse the Democratic Party. In a growing number of states, it is politically independent; in others it is on the verge of emerging as an independent force. We Communists support fully the building of this independent political force of the people, this Farmer-Labor Party movement, even while we disagree with its present reliance on Roosevelt. Especially do we agree with its determination to defeat Landon and Knox as the representatives of Wall Street, reaction, fascism and war.

Great efforts are being made to confuse the issues, and especially to bring forward Landon as a "progressive" and "man of the people." It is certainly true that Landon is no Mussolini or Hitler; he was chosen for that reason, to be the answer to the inevitable charge of fascism against such a collection of du Ponts, Hearsts, Liberty Leaguers as sponsor his candidacy. A perfect choice, from this point of view, the most negative and colorless candidacy ever seen in American politics in the memory of living men, a blank sheet for each voter to write in his own desires—at least the many former and contradictory writings have been covered with whitewash. Where the world expected to see a spearhead, it was presented with a figurehead.

That the Republican campaign should represent the extreme of unprincipledness flows from the essential character of reaction moving towards fascism. While raging against President Roosevelt's miserly social security program, the Republicans are effectively wooing the Townsend movement, sometimes using Lemke for the role of John Alden to its Miles Standish, sometimes courting directly, as in Colorado, where the Republican State Convention, with the participation of the Honorable John D. M. Hamilton, endorsed officially the Townsend Plan.

The Republican Party, directed by the fascist-minded men

of Wall Street, is ready to promise all things to all men, anything to get votes, anything to get power in their hands.

But the main strategy of the reactionary camp is the same as that of the fascists of Europe, to raise the Red scare, the bogey of socialism, of Marxism, the red flag, Moscow, "orders from Stalin," the menace of "Jewish Bolshevism." This is the song of Hitler, of Mussolini, of Hearst and the Liberty League, of the dominant forces supporting Landon. They say the choice is between capitalism and socialism, that they are the only exponents of capitalism, that all others, including Roosevelt and his administration, stand for socialism. They make the same accusations against Roosevelt that they made against President Azana of Spain to justify the present fascist uprising against the government only recently elected by an overwhelming majority. The open advocates of the overthrow of democratic republican government by force and violence are, in the first place, the Hearst newspapers supporting Landon. All this propaganda is based on lies. In fact, Roosevelt stands for capitalism, not socialism; the Communists advocate socialism but say this is not the issue in 1936, but rather the issue is democracy or fascism. The Communists are not supporting Roosevelt, but put forward their own candidates. The Communist Party of the United States makes its own decisions and does not receive orders from Moscow.

The nonsense of Jewish dominance in the New Deal, or in the Communist movement, is, of course, pap for morons; the Jews, like every racial or national group, are divided among different classes and political groupings in the usual proportions.

It is unfortunate that the Socialist Party has seen fit to carry on a campaign which, conceived in the rare atmosphere of pure abstraction, fits exactly into the practical schemes of the Landon camp when it is brought to earth. Accurate judgment of this fact was expressed by Mark Sullivan, Republican columnist, when he warmly recommended all Republican writers to "follow" my friend Norman Thomas' writings as very useful in their task of drumming up votes for Landon. How this course is wrecking the Socialist Party is shown in the straw

votes indicating a majority of the Socialist voters of 1932 now voting for Landon or Roosevelt.

The Communist Party is campaigning, first of all, with the aim to help bring all progressive people and their organizations into a People's Front against Wall Street, against reaction, fascism and war, in a new political alignment—the Farmer-Labor Party. Despite the fact that the progressives in their great majority have decided to rely upon Roosevelt nationally this year—a decision which we think was a mistake—yet inevitably they are moving in the direction of a Farmer-Labor Party on a local, state and national scale. We Communists are supporting, we are a part of, this Farmer-Labor Party movement, reserving our independent role in the Presidential elections. Our election platform proposes, not socialism—which can only come through revolution—but a progressive platform of aims to be fought for under the present capitalist system by such a Farmer-Labor Party with our support and participation, expressing the general slogan of “Democracy or fascism, progress or reaction.”

A brief summary of the eight planks of the Communist platform will illustrate this. Plank one is the demand for jobs and a living wage for all. When private enterprise fails in providing this, then the government must step in to fill the breach. Plank two provides for social security through unemployment insurance and old-age pensions from 60 years up, at rates equal to former earnings but not less than \$15 per week. Plank three demands educational opportunities, vocational training, and part-time work for the youth from 16 to 25, guaranteed by the government. Plank four establishes the obligation of the government to guarantee the farmers in possession of the land, with an adequate income, through moratorium on debts which threaten dispossession, governmental refinancing of mortgages at nominal interest, provision of land for the landless tenants and sharecroppers, and prompt and adequate relief for the drought-stricken. Plank five, dealing with public finance, condemns inflation and all methods of financing at the expense of the suffering millions, such as sales



taxes, and demands that public finance shall be raised from the accumulated wealth and surplus income of the country, through a sharply-graduated income tax beginning at \$5,000 per year, repeal of tax-exemption now effective on \$35,000,000,000 of government securities, and taxation of corporate surpluses, gifts and inheritances; with tax exemption to be granted to operating farmers, small home owners and small property-owners generally. Plank six demands the protection of civil liberties, and extension of popular control of government; supporting a Constitutional amendment to finally curb all attempts of the Supreme Court to usurp legislative powers, it demands the immediate re-assertion by Congress of its Constitutional prerogatives in relation to the judiciary. Plan seven proposes the strict enforcement of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, providing complete equality for the Negro people; in this respect the Communists are the only party in America standing squarely on the basis of the Constitution. Plank eight, dealing with war and peace, demands that we keep America out of war by helping keep war out of the world; it calls for an American peace policy, based on prohibition of sale or delivery of goods, or granting of loans, to nations conducting a foreign war contrary to the Kellogg Peace Pact; on the basis of which America can cooperate with the peace forces of the world to restrain the war-makers, and eliminate the enormous expenditures for war preparations, diverting these funds to social expenditures.

Because we are advocates of a future socialist system, which as yet is supported only by a small minority of the population, we Communists declare that it is the duty of adherents of socialism to join hands with all progressives not ready for socialism, on the basis of such a platform of democratic and progressive measures, which will guarantee our country from the horrors of fascism and war, and make the future social transformation less difficult and painful.

*Broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, before the New York Herald Tribune's Sixth Annual Forum on Current Problems, September 23, 1936.*

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## VI

# Old Age Pensions and Unemployment Insurance

OUR country is the richest in the world. It has as much accumulated wealth and productive resources as the rest of the world combined. Yet millions of people are divorced from all means of livelihood except a precarious and degrading relief system, or a still worse system of charity. Millions of skilled and able workers are no longer needed in our industrial system, and constantly more are being dispensed with, due to new machinery and speed-up. Millions of our young people, with never an opportunity to acquire experience and skill, are facing a future without hope. Millions of the older generation, prematurely aged by the devastating speed-up, are thrown penniless upon the streets to drag out their last years in slow starvation and the destruction of all human dignity. Insecurity, the heritage of everyone under our insane economic system, becomes for these millions the certainty of disaster.

The cause of this social plague, under our present social order, arises out of the very riches of our productive forces. Millions must be deprived of a decent life, because our society has too much wealth. The more rapidly we multiply our wealth and productive forces, the more widespread is this social plague of misery, unemployment, starvation.

Until we are ready to reorganize our social and economic system upon different lines, which will produce different results, that is, until we Americans are ready to go forward to socialism, the first stage of communism, until that time it will be necessary to adopt emergency measures to keep our people from social poisoning and degeneration.

It is this field of emergency measures which has been given the high-sounding title of "social security."

Certain timid and utterly inadequate beginnings toward such emergency measures were taken by the Roosevelt Administration in the so-called Social Security Bill.

The positive features of this bill are, first, that it established the principle of federal legislation for old-age pensions and unemployment insurance; second, it recognized that to leave the question to the initiative of the separate states means to guarantee that nothing at all would be done. Its negative features are, first, that it adopted an unworkable compromise with the state-rights doctrine, refusing a clear-cut federal system; second, that it adopted a vicious method of financing, placing the tax-load upon the masses of people least able to bear the burden, by the tax on wages and payrolls; and, third, that the benefits are so limited in amount, so hedged about with limitations, so postponed to the future, and so circumscribed in application to only about half the suffering population, as to make a mockery of its title of "social security."

Governor Landon in Milwaukee a few days ago made the Republican criticism of the Roosevelt bill, and added his own proposals. What did he tell us? He proposes, if elected, to remedy the inadequacies of the present bill by destroying its two strong points. He would repeal the principle of federal responsibility altogether, and hand the whole problem over to the separate states for "experimentation," which in practice is a guarantee that nothing effective will be done at all.

This practical rejection of all effective old-age pensions and unemployment insurance by Governor Landon was headlined in the newspapers as a promise to give the old people and the unemployed something better than the Roosevelt bill. This is an election fraud on a colossal scale.

In truth, Landon and Knox are the chosen candidates of the most irreconcilable enemies of old-age pensions and unemployment insurance. They represent the Liberty League, Hearst, Morgan, the du Ponts, Mellon, the wealthy families

of our land, whose central policy is to prevent the government from taxing their mounting profits and billions of capital, by so much as a single penny. Landon gave a broad hint that if elected he would finance such federal relief as he could not immediately cut off by a federal sales tax which would fall upon the whole population.

With such a policy, what a cruel hoax is being perpetrated upon the unsuspecting Townsend followers, who are being wooed by Landon with the song that this means the substantial fulfillment of their demands! And what a vicious conspiracy, when in Colorado the Republican State Convention, in the presence of the Honorable John D. M. Hamilton, made the explicit promise that a vote for Landon is a vote for \$200 per month to all old people over 60 years!

All the monopolists of Wall Street will vote for Landon, believing that he will carry out their policy of slashing to the bone all governmental expenditures for social legislation of all kinds, and shift the tax burden even more over onto the poor people. Millions of workers and farmers, including deluded Townsend followers, will vote for Landon believing the newspaper headlines that Landon has promised that our country's wealth will be used for social benefit payments much greater than those of Roosevelt. Some people will have been fooled. Does anybody really think that it is the Wall Street bankers who do not know their Landon?

We of the Communist Party have a program of our own for social security, that is, of emergency measures to rescue the victims of the breakdown of a rotten capitalist system. We have written it into our official platform with the utmost of precision and clarity.

It is common knowledge that our Party played no small role in rallying the unemployed and winning the support of the entire labor movement to force recognition of government responsibility for unemployment. We helped develop the first unemployed organization in the country. Later we helped unite all organizations of the unemployed into one united na-

tional organization of the unemployed—the Workers Alliance of America.

First of all, we declare that when private enterprise cannot or will not provide employment at a living wage, then it is the obligation of the government to step in and fill the breach. Work provided by the government shall be in the production of things the people need—food, clothing and shelter. Public construction shall in the first place provide low-cost housing, schools, recreational centers, hospitals and parks in the workers' districts, etc.

Second, we would provide a guaranteed income to all able-bodied men and women, denied work through no fault of their own, as well as for all unemployed through sickness, and pensions for the aged from the age of sixty years upward. Such compensation, to provide against the deterioration of the American standard of living, should be equal to previous average income when fully employed, in no case falling below \$15 per week. It should apply to all categories of workers without exception, to the farmers, and to the self-employed professions whose employment is wiped out by crises and depression. These principles have been embodied in the Frazier-Lundeen Bill, introduced in the 74th Congress, which is an elaboration of the bill first worked out by the Communists several years ago.

Thirdly, we would save the young generation from their present demoralization which arises from a situation where they are not needed, and who now face a future without hope. We support the American Youth Act, introduced in Congress by Senator Benson at the request of the American Youth Congress, which provides opportunity for education and vocational training, with part-time work, for all young people from 16 to 25 years, at government expense. The present inadequate Youth Administration must be extended and improved.

There is but one serious argument made against these proposals. Everyone will agree that nothing short of these measures will stop the serious social deterioration inflicted upon the American people by the crisis and depression. But,

it is argued, these measures will cost too much, the country cannot afford it!

America must choose between two ways of paying the bills of crisis and depression. One way is to preserve accumulated wealth at all costs, and pay the bill in the destruction of life and happiness of millions upon millions of our people. That is the way of Landon, Hearst, the Liberty League and Wall Street. The other way, the way we propose, is to preserve at all costs the life, health and happiness of our people, and pay the bill out of surplus income and accumulated wealth. The Roosevelt Administration tried to find a third way, but this turned out to be only an unworkable compromise between the two fundamentally opposite paths, a compromise which arouses the wrath of both the rich and the poor.

Social security can be approached only through drawing upon the material wealth of our land. Sales taxes only cut the flesh from the poor in order to feed the same poor. Inflation and currency manipulation only further enrich the speculators, and impoverish the people; credit and currency should be firmly controlled by the government, which can be done only by nationalization of the entire banking system. The budget should be balanced, not by cutting social expenditures, but, on the contrary, by increased taxation of the rich. While exempting small home and property owners from taxes, the present tax exemption of the rich, on thirty-five billion dollars of securities, should be abolished; a sharply graduated income tax, beginning at \$5,000 per year, supplemented by taxes on gifts and inheritances and corporate surpluses, should take what is necessary from the surplus income of the country which now goes to the rich.

America must choose: shall the people pay with their lives, or shall the wealthy pay with their money? We say, make the rich pay! Everything else is only illusion and fraud. This is the only way to give any measure of social security to the American people.

*Broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, October 2, 1936.*

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## VII

### A Message to Young America

TONIGHT I shall speak about the problems of young America and the nation. I shall pose no problem with which you yourself have not been confronted in your own painful experience.

What you seek is simple, and by right belongs to you. You seek education, you want jobs, you hope to live a happy and fruitful life. These are not unreasonable demands. Our country is the richest in the world. It has more than enough to allow every young man and woman a chance to work and study, to marry and raise a family, to make the best of his or her creative ability. We Communists merely propose that young people be given the full opportunity which the ample riches of our land make possible.

The question uppermost in your mind is: what is responsible for the wreckage of your hopes, for the denial of jobs, for the wastage of your years?

In response to my radio broadcasts I have received hundreds of letters from young people between the ages of 18 and 30. These letters come from all sorts of young people and all quarters of the nation, but they all come finally to the same question. Here is a letter from a young man in Missouri. He graduated from a technical high school, but has spent the past six years wandering over the country looking for a chance to work at anything. Here is a letter from a young woman, a school teacher, a college graduate in New York City, whose training is being wasted, who cannot find an opening for a job which would be useful to society and herself. Here is a young Negro worker employed in a sweatshop, working long hours, unable to study or better himself. All of them, in school and

out of school, employed or unemployed, ask the question: is there no hope, no future?

Your parents are also intimately concerned about these problems. They had hopes that you would have a rosy future in our great land. That is why they toiled so that you could be educated. That is why they made sacrifices so that your way in life should be easier than theirs. And now their hearts are heavy as they watch you pacing the floor, walking the streets, everlastingly in search of those elementary needs of life denied you by a decaying social order.

The present social order long ago lost its youth. It is now losing the faith of its young people. In terms of jobs, opportunity, happiness and culture, the present social order offers our young people nothing but the vague hope that if they live long enough they can take the jobs vacated by their elders as these die off in the natural course of events. This philosophy of resignation and despair is the best that can be offered the young people of America by Herbert Hoover, the real head of the Republican Party.

The Republican Party tries to win the votes of young people by expressing a hypocritical concern for the future well-being of the youth. It holds up the specter of future tax payments while, at the same time, it would deny, in the name of these future tax payments, the niggardly crumbs given the young people by the present administration.

What brazen hypocrisy this is! The Morgans, Rockefellers and du Ponts, all the princes of privilege, have suddenly become interested in lifting the burden of taxes from the shoulders of the youth! But these same people did not hesitate one moment before plunging America into a war whose bill will be footed not only by the present generation but by many future generations to come. These same people do not say one word about the present billion-dollar war budget for which the present young generation will have to pay taxes, as will their children, and their children's children after them.

The Communist Party, and the youth of America, agree with those who say that the youth should not pay the cost



of social legislation. We say to these people: You are right. The youth should not pay. But we propose that the Morgans and du Ponts shall pay! We propose to make the rich pay to balance the budget.

Just think, the Morgans, du Ponts, Rockefellers, Fords, who by their stranglehold monopolies have closed the door of opportunity for all but a chosen few—these grave-diggers of hope and aspiration have suddenly become the apostles of opportunity!

They oppose opportunity to security. But there is no contradiction between the two. We Communists insist on such a degree of social security for the young people of America as will make it possible for them to exercise their traditional right to seek for opportunity. Opportunity through security—that is what we want.

That is what our young people want. They cannot be and are not satisfied with mere waiting until their elders die. They do not think that the militarized C.C.C. establishments are the answer to their cry for vocational training and jobs. The meager benefits of an inadequate and undemocratic National Youth Administration are not enough for the youth of America. It is out of this dissatisfaction that mighty mass movements of the young people themselves, initiated by young people and led by young people, have been created.

These are progressive groups such as the Christian Youth Building a New World, the American Youth Congress, the American Student Union, organizations striving to win economic, educational and political rights for our young generation. We Communists are proud that our Party, and especially our Young Communist League, has good working relations with these organizations of young people. In practical work, done shoulder to shoulder with us, they have come to realize that we Communists have no interests apart from any of theirs, that our Party is truly a party dedicated to the welfare of our American young people.

These movements are guarantees that Gerald K. Smith and

his type of fascist demagogue will find it very difficult to enroll our young people as the storm troops of reaction.

I accuse Father Coughlin, the man behind Gerald Smith, of conspiring with William Randolph Hearst to prepare a fascist attack against American democracy. I hereby challenge Father Coughlin to come up to the platform of the Olympia Stadium in his own city of Detroit, when I speak there on October 27, and answer our charges.

Out of the progressive activities of our young people have grown two basic documents comparable to the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. These are the now famous Declaration of Rights of the Young Generation, which was both a challenge and a rallying call to all youth, and the American Youth Act, which is the expression of the most vital needs of our young people for jobs and education.

The most splendid thing about the American Youth Act, introduced into Congress by Senator Benson and Congressman Amlie, is that it is the creation of the young people themselves. It is a beacon of hope, pointing a way out of the dark present to a future where our young people can raise families and make use of their creative abilities. Young America is on the march and their banner is the American Youth Act.

The Communist Party supports wholeheartedly the American Youth Act. We have as one of the main planks in our platform the demand, "Save the young generation." We have written its principles officially into our platform which declares:

Our country can and must provide opportunity, education and work for the youth of America. These demands of the young people as embodied in the American Youth Act—the Benson-Amlie Bill—must be enacted into law.

This bill provides for jobs, educational opportunities, and vocational training for all young people between the ages of 16 and 25.

The National Youth Administration budget must be maintained and enlarged.

Military training in the C.C.C. and schools must be abolished.

Free educational and financial assistance to the youth and the children must be guaranteed by both federal and state appropriations.

Child labor must once and for all be abolished and made unconstitutional.

We make this our program because our aim is to help the young people find the best road out of their difficulties, and because we champion the interests of all those downtrodden and oppressed by our present social order.

Of course, we believe the problems of our young people, like the problems of their elders, will be fully solved only by the abolition of the present order which is responsible for all their troubles, and by taking the socialist path which will open up the gates of progress to all humanity, and especially our young people. It is our firm belief that as our young people unite to win jobs and education, unite with their elders to defeat the cavalry of capitalism, hunger, fascism and war, they will come to understand the necessity of the socialist path.

President Roosevelt said that our young generation has a rendezvous with destiny. We say to our young people, "Do not make this a rendezvous with death." Do not allow the fascist-minded men of Wall Street to sacrifice you on the altar of greed and profits. The future of America is in your hands, my young friends. You can play your part in making our country great and progressive; or you can stand aside and permit unscrupulous demagogues to drag us to tyranny, war and fascist barbarism.

I am confident that the young generation, the flower of our people, in this grave crisis, when the balance hangs between democracy and fascism throughout the world, will put their young energies and their fresh minds to work on the side of progress. Young people of America, if you organize yourselves, if you join the trade unions, the farm organizations, if you build mighty organizations of youth, if together with the working class, the farmers, the middle-class people, you fight for democracy, then you can achieve those aims which are your hope and dream.

Young people, first voters, think hard about the problems of today. Reject the reactionary program of the Republicans

who would pit the young and old against each other. Do not be satisfied with the inadequate, half-hearted measures of the Roosevelt Administration. Vote Communist for the use of American riches to serve American life, for opportunity to work, for the chance to study, for the right to live a happy and normal life.

*Broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, October 9, 1936.*

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## VIII

### What Spain Means to America

WHAT is taking place in Spain today is not something which we Americans can view as foreign and unimportant to us. For in Spain the great issue of our day, democracy or fascism, has come to a head. The dark forces of reaction, aided and abetted by the fascist governments of Italy, Germany and Portugal, are destroying cities, blowing up factories, uprooting what was built up by the Spanish people through centuries. The forces of democracy in Spain, if sufficiently aided by the workers and all progressives of the world, will defeat the fascist rebels, and thus deal a blow against the offensive of fascism all through the world.

That is why the reactionaries have carried on a campaign of lies about what is happening in Spain. That is why Hearst has outdone his notorious past in fabricating untruths about the heroic fight of the Spanish people for a better and more secure life under their democratically elected government.

The issue in Spain is very simple. Last February the people of Spain democratically voted in the present government by an overwhelming majority. They are trying to establish principles which we Americans hold dear, namely, separation of church from state; elimination of the stranglehold of a feudal aristocracy which was throttling the future development of Spain; the liberation of the peasants from semi-slave conditions; the granting of democratic rights to a population held in bondage by tyranny, superstition and illiteracy; the right of labor to enjoy higher living standards, collective bargaining.

These rights we Americans understand and cherish. We fought to free our country from the tyranny of the British crown in 1776. We fought for the separation of church from

state and the freedom of individual worship. We fought for the destruction of feudal hangovers which would have kept America in perpetual backwardness. We fought for democratic rights against the special privileges of the American Tories and the British aristocracy.

You will remember that, although the overwhelming majority of the American people in 1776 were for democracy, the Tories of that day did not allow them peacefully to solve their problems. They waged war against the American people, brought over foreign mercenaries in their ferocious attempt to keep America in chains.

At the polls the Spanish people voted for democracy, for an end of that tyranny which had kept Spain in economic and cultural darkness for centuries. Just as our Tories in 1776 refused to accept the mandate of the people, so did Franco and other generals, the nobility, the big monopoly capitalists, all those who realized that their special privileges would be curtailed under democracy, rise in armed insurrection against the democratically elected government.

Let me draw a parallel for you. Suppose here in America the people were to elect a government by an overwhelming majority. And then the reactionaries in the Liberty League, with the aid of generals and paid mercenaries, and with the active support of Hitler and Mussolini, tried to establish fascism here. That's what happened in Spain.

Our reactionaries understand the issue very clearly. When Hearst visited Italy and Germany last summer, he and his fascist friends came to an understanding about Spain. That is why the Hearst press, day in and day out, manufactures atrocity stories, weeps crocodile tears about the persecution of the clergy, tries to cover up the real issue in Spain by dragging out its shopworn Red herring. And that is why it is the duty of every American worker and every progressive to help the Spanish people defeat the fascist invasion. A defeat for Spanish democracy would embolden our own reactionaries to hatch fascist plots against our own democratic rights, and

we would be a step nearer to facing the kind of horrors the Spanish people are enduring today.

The American press has reported how the Spanish fascists openly receive munitions and airplanes from Germany and Italy, how German and Italian fascist aviators bomb and murder innocent people. General Franco, in return for munitions from Hitler and Mussolini, has promised them strategic territory on the Mediterranean and the Atlantic coasts. Thus, the fascists are selling the independence of Spain. This knowledge is beginning to break through the propaganda of the reactionaries. They try to cover up the fascist invasion as a crusade for God, a crusade, mind you, by Mohammedan mercenaries who murder innocent Christian men and women.

The truth is that the Spanish government was taking first steps towards separating church from state, an American tradition which is written into our Constitution. It is not true that the Catholic masses of Spain support the fascists. The majority of government supporters are Catholics.

There are members of the church hierarchy, big land-owners, who cruelly exploited the peasants on their vast holdings of land. It is these church land-owners, the upper hierarchy, who are fighting with the rebels and Mohammedan mercenaries against their own people. On the other hand, there are Catholic priests fighting shoulder to shoulder with their parishioners against the fascist rebels and their mercenary troops.

The reactionaries try to portray the Spanish Communists as people who are fighting for a socialist revolution right now. But the Spanish Communist Party has stated to the whole world that it is fighting loyally to save the republic and save democratic Spain.

Hearst and Landon raise the false issue of Communism in the United States elections, in the same way as the fascists raised that issue in Spain. We are justified in warning the American people that such propaganda here is also preparation to discredit the election results in November and prepare for an effort to change those results by undemocratic methods.

The Communists do not hide their aims. They want to win

the majority of the people for socialism everywhere. But now, when the majority of the people are not yet ready to take the socialist path, the Communists are in the forefront of the fight to preserve and extend democracy, so that the working class and all exploited people can learn and prepare for the revolutionary transition to socialism.

Spanish democracy has sent a delegation to our shores. Its members are, first, Isabel de Palencia, a noted artist, who on occasions represented the Spanish republic before the League of Nations; second is Marcelino Domingo, President of the Left-Republican Party, a well-known Spanish democrat and former Minister of Education; third is Father Luis Sarasola, a Catholic priest representing the loyal section of the Catholic church fighting on the side of the Spanish government.

Let us give these representatives of Spanish democracy a true American welcome. Just as Benjamin Franklin went to France to rally the French people in support of American democracy, so does Spanish democracy today send its representatives to the American people, appealing for our support against fascist tyranny. We cannot fail these fighters for democracy. We must give them great meetings of welcome and support, so that they can go back to Spain and tell the Spanish people that America hates fascism and will not permit it to destroy a friendly democratic nation.

All progressives and liberals, all trade unionists, all labor, must realize that their fate is a common one with that of Spain. We who believe in progress must come out openly in support of the Spanish people. We must expose the infamous blockade against the Spanish government as one which is helping the fascist insurrectionists. We must demand of our own government, whose so-called neutrality policy gives aid to the fascists and hampers the fight of the Spanish people, that it sell arms to this friendly democratic government which is fighting for its life.

I appeal to working class leaders and parties in the United States, to the trade unions, to progressives everywhere, to join us in united action to help save Spanish democracy. I appeal



to the Socialist Party, as well as to Right-wing Socialist leaders in New York, Connecticut and elsewhere, to work out an independent program of action against the Spanish fascists.

We must lift the unlawful blockade against the Spanish people and their democratic government. We must support the action of the Soviet Union in exposing the criminal actions of the fascist dictators. Men and women, old and young Americans, no matter what your political or religious beliefs, I appeal to all of you who believe in civilization and the further progress of humanity, I appeal to you to help the heroic Spanish men, women, and children and their government. Collect all the money possible in your organizations and among your friends to buy munitions, food and clothing for the defenders of Spanish democracy who are laying down their lives so that democracy will not perish from the earth. Send your donations to one of the committees working in contact with the Spanish government. Our call must be: The people for Spain—Spain for the people.

*Broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, October 23, 1936.*

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## IX

### The Main Issues

As the election campaign closes, as America prepares to ballot tomorrow in the most important election since 1860, it has become clear to millions that only the Communist Party stated the main issue correctly and sharply from the beginning. Shall America begin to move definitely on the road of progress and democracy, or shall we allow our country to be dragged down the bloody path of reaction, fascism and war—this is the issue which can no longer be postponed of decision.

But if the main issue is clear, the line-up of forces is not yet so definite. True, the camp of reaction and fascism stands forth unmistakably gathered around Landon and the Republican banner. Landon's campaign, directed by Hearst from Rome and Berlin, raised every slogan of international fascism, was modeled closely on the example of Hitler. Most characteristic in this respect is the fantastic charge, placed in the very center of the campaign by Hearst and Landon, that the New Deal is leading America to communism, the implication and even direct charges that President Roosevelt is some kind of secret Communist. This absurdity is the infallible sign of the madness of fascism. Everywhere that democracy has been destroyed, it has been done under the smoke-screen of the Red scare. It is known today to all intelligent Americans that a victory for Landon will be cheered by every reactionary force in our own country and throughout the world.

President Roosevelt is trying to follow the traditional course of the middle-of-the-road. Standing squarely for the maintenance of capitalism, he has gained the hatred of the big-money families, of monopoly capital, by his insistence upon some measure of restraint to their short-sighted greed for mountainous profits and unlimited exploitation of the people. It is

the unbridled ferocity of the Wall Street-Hearst hatred of Roosevelt that has frightened the American people so much that even the Farmer-Labor Party movement, and the progressive trade unions moving toward a Farmer-Labor Party, abandoned their plans for an independent national ticket this year and rallied to the re-election of the President.

The Communist Party has not been able to agree with this decision of the broad progressive movement, even though we can understand it, and though we are more and more reaching fruitful collaboration with the progressive movement on the questions of the day. We would have been glad to withdraw our own candidates in favor of a national Farmer-Labor Party ticket, and worked in this campaign as one sector in a broad People's Front against reaction. But we cannot follow the progressives when they abandon their political independence, and place full reliance upon President Roosevelt's re-election as the solution of our problems. In the absence of a People's Front, or Farmer-Labor national ticket, the Communist Party has campaigned for its own ticket as a means of building and strengthening the foundation for that People's Front which must arise nationally after this election, just as surely as the morning must follow the night.

President Roosevelt's re-election will be a rebuke to the worst reactionaries but is no guarantee against the further progress of fascism in America. And above all else, the American people need a *guarantee* that our country shall not be dragged down the bloody path of Hitlerism, that we shall not be forced to protect our democracy through such desperate heroism as that required of the Spanish people as the price of their liberty. We must learn the bitter lessons of Europe's sorrows. We must fashion new safeguards for our future security. We must build certain guarantees that fascism shall not come to America, that in full truth, "It Can't Happen Here."

Such a guarantee can come only from the joining together into a firm alliance of all progressives, the trade unions, the farmers' organizations, for independent political action, in a Farmer-Labor Party.

Let us be very clear as to what kind of a new party we need. My friend Norman Thomas said yesterday that his party will welcome "the right kind of Farmer-Labor Party"—but he explains that he means a party that will adopt his program. America does not need a new party which is merely another name for the Socialists or Communists—there is not the slightest value in another "third party" in this country. There is only one justification and value in a new party, that is, if it unites not only the million or so voters ready for socialism, but also with them the tens of millions of workers and farmers, not ready for socialism but sick to death of the two old parties and ready and anxious to unite for progress and democracy. Such a party will not give us socialism, but it will be a guarantee against fascism—provided it really organizes now the tens of millions.

That is why we, who are the best advocates of socialism, who really know how socialism can and will be built in America, rejected the slogan of Norman Thomas that the main issue this year is socialism or capitalism. We say, No, this is not the main issue, because this would divide and not unite the American people in face of the danger of fascism and war. We say the issue is progress and democracy, against reaction and fascism, because on this issue we can unite the majority of the American people in the immediate future, for a People's Front government in locality, state and nation.

Reaction and fascism in domestic affairs are always accompanied by increased danger of war internationally. Everyone knows that the imminent danger of war, now menacing the world, comes directly from Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese fascists. So, too, our own reactionaries in this election campaign have revealed their intention to enmesh America in the fascist war camp. Only a Farmer-Labor Party in charge of our government can fully align America with the peace forces of all lands and keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world. A really democratic and progressive America, working with the French People's Front government and with that most developed democracy and stronghold of peace in the

entire world—the Soviet Union—could so unite the peoples as really to curb the war-makers and maintain world peace.

In this campaign America has seen the real face of the Communist Party. America has seen the Communists as front-line fighters in defense of the people's material interests and their democratic rights. America has seen how false are the charges against us, that we are bogey men eating babies for breakfast, enemies of the family, the church, democracy and all things valued by men and women. America has seen how it was the Communist Party, small as it still is, that already performed a vital service for the whole population in clarifying the issues of this campaign, and keeping those issues clear amidst a fog of lies, slanders and misrepresentations. America has seen the Communist Party as the most consistent fighter for democracy, for the enforcement of the democratic provisions of our Constitution, for the defense of our flag and revival of its glorious revolutionary traditions. America has seen that Communism is twentieth-century Americanism.

For the Communist Party, tonight is not the end of our campaign. It is only the beginning of a new campaign to build and strengthen the Communist Party—in order that we can give our full strength and loyalty and steadfast effort to the building of that broader unity of all progressive people, of the tens of millions, in the Farmer-Labor Party which will enable the people to gain control of their government, to build a bulwark of peace, freedom, happiness and prosperity for the whole population.

This is our message to America as our people prepare to ballot on the next course of our government. On this basis we call for a decisive defeat to those who thought the Red bogey man was enough to frighten our country to surrender to Wall Street. On this basis we call for your support to the Communist Party, tomorrow, and every day to follow until organized greed and monopoly capital are only memories.

*Broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, from Madison Square Garden, New York, November 2, 1936.*

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## X

# The People's Front Can Defeat Reaction

DESPITE the continued rise of the economic index of the United States, the main feature of our economic life continues to be its instability. With production approaching the estimated normal, we still have mass unemployment. The power of consumption of the masses of the population remains about on the level of 1932. Unprecedented expansion of productivity is creating again all the preconditions of another cyclical crisis, more severe than that of 1929. It is such factors which give emphasis to such pessimistic questions as that posed by the conservative Brookings Institution, when it said:

A fundamental question with which the world as a whole is confronted at present is whether the capitalistic system of wealth production has not perhaps permanently broken down.

Such doubts, combined with the present enormous increase in profits, have given rise to a determination among the most powerful capitalists, to make use of this period to consolidate their power and establish guarantees against any effective challenge to their rule. That is why we are witnessing an unprecedented gathering of reactionary forces, who if they win their aims would carry our country far on the road to fascism.

Far-sighted progressives noted these tendencies soon after the most reactionary circles of the Democratic Party began to break with Roosevelt. For example, at the sessions of this Institute last year, Dr. David Saposs, the well-known economist and liberal, issued the warning:

Nothing short of an enduring, far-sighted and courageous alliance of the liberal middle class, the Socialists and Communists, can keep the middle class and workers from abdicating to fascism, and the whole world from being precipitated into another war.

We Communists had independently come to the same conclusion. We were assisted in this by our study of the developments in Europe. There we saw fascism coming to power in those countries where labor was divided, and where the progressive forces had not formed an enduring alliance against reaction. We saw, in France and Spain, where the progressive forces did unite against fascism, that reaction could be checked and democratic institutions preserved. We saw that fascism was not inevitable when the progressives were able to unite their forces. We learned the fundamental lesson of the People's Front—unity means victory over reaction.

It is this approach that determined the platform and policy of the Communist Party in the 1936 elections. That is why our platform declares that democracy or fascism, progress or reaction, is the central issue in the present elections.

This main issue is presented concretely in every partial issue of the election struggle. The fully-developed reactionary program of Hearst, Landon and the Liberty Leaguers is directed toward cutting wages, raising prices, smashing the trade unions, squeezing the poor and tenant farmers out of agriculture, cutting relief, wiping out social and labor legislation, balancing the budget at the expense of the poor and cutting down the taxes of the rich.

To this end the reactionary program cultivates and idealizes the rule of an irresponsible judiciary over the legislative power, curtails democratic rights and prepares for their eventual destruction by Black Legions, Ku Klux Klans, vigilantes, etc. This program is cloaked in phrases of "Americanism" and "constitutionalism," by which it hopes to hide its real goal—the establishment of a full-fledged fascist regime.

What forces are there in the United States, strong enough to defeat this threat of the reactionary camp? Clearly, the most important of these forces are to be found in the trade union movement, the farmers' organizations, progressive groupings in the old parties and the organizations grouped around the Socialists and Communists. Here are the potential elements of an American People's Front. The problem is to find

that program upon which such otherwise diverse groupings can be united.

Such a program for a People's Front against reaction in America already exists in embryo. All these groups agree to the need of raising the living standards of the masses, building a powerful trade union movement, saving the farmers from ruin, extending social and labor legislation, balancing the budget at the expense of the rich. They agree that it is necessary to curb the usurped powers of the Supreme Court, defend democratic rights, assert popular control over the government and maintain peace.

The only way in which reaction can be decisively defeated is through building a broad People's Front upon such a program. It is the main purpose of the Communist Party in this election to further in every way the building of such a united front against reaction. That is why we say the issue is democracy or fascism, progress or reaction—an issue for which the broad potential People's Front is prepared, upon which it can be organized now, and not the ultimate issue of socialism or capitalism, a choice which the progressive forces are not ready to make.

The reactionary camp is doing everything to avoid squarely facing this issue of democracy or fascism. They—the Liberty League—try to carry the nation on the road to fascism, by declaring the only alternative today is socialism. That is why the reactionaries are so insistent that the issue to be decided in this election is the choice between capitalism and socialism. That is why they describe Roosevelt and the New Deal as Socialistic and even Communistic, although there isn't an ounce of Socialism in the administration in Washington.

Norman Thomas, Presidential candidate of the Socialist Party, seems to be confused by our complex political situation. Out of his confusion he has brought forth the same slogan as the reactionaries, socialism or capitalism. He is indifferent to the need for a broad united front to defeat the reactionaries. He refuses to see any immediate menace of fascism.



As a consequence the Socialist Party has refused effective participation in immediate political struggles; it still rejects the People's Front; it drifts toward sectarian isolation. The leadership of the Socialist Party does not see that there can be no effective fight against capitalism without fighting against the immediate menace of reaction.

Landon and Knox are the candidates of the camp of reaction. They were handpicked by William Randolph Hearst, chief exponent of fascism in America. They are supported by the Liberty League, by Morgan, by the du Ponts, by the Rockefellers, by all the monarchs of monopoly, collectively known as Wall Street. The Republican platform, behind a thin camouflage of Main Street liberalism, is the platform of reaction as I have described it.

The case of Roosevelt and the Democratic platform is more complex. Roosevelt stands for capitalism. But as between reaction and democracy, Roosevelt is striving to follow a middle course; he therefore wavers between the pressure from both sides. Roosevelt's policies for the past year were chiefly characterized by retreat before reactionary attacks; but the Democratic platform for the election emphasizes a progressive note.

It is against this indecisive position that the reactionaries rage; they demand a frontal attack against the living standards and democratic rights of the people. It is this same indecisiveness, however, that makes it impossible for the serious progressive forces to rely upon Roosevelt for the defeat of reaction.

The growing movement for a Farmer-Labor Party is the specific American form of the people's front, which we Communists see as the only hope to defeat reaction. But the Farmer-Labor Party, while seriously growing on a local and state scale, has no Presidential ticket in the field.

If there were a Farmer-Labor ticket, the Communist Party would support it and not put up its own candidates. We bring forward our own ticket to advance and strengthen the Farmer-Labor Party—the broadest People's Front against reaction.

In this we see also the means to build and strengthen our own Party and to advance the struggle for Socialism.

The major part of the Farmer-Labor Party movement is supporting the re-election of Roosevelt. That is the chief reason why there could be no Farmer-Labor ticket this year. This is especially true of the big progressive trade unions, whose pressure, exerted through John L. Lewis, was mainly responsible for the progressive note of the Democratic platform. Roosevelt supporters in the Farmer-Labor movement raise the question why the Communists, supporting the Farmer-Labor movement in other respects, do not also support Roosevelt.

We Communists are in full agreement with the aim of the progressive unions and the Farmer-Labor movement to defeat Landon and Knox at all costs. But we insist, first, that Roosevelt is no barrier to reaction; secondly, that to insure the defeat of Landon and to do it in a way most advantageous to labor and all progressive forces it is necessary that these progressive forces act unitedly and independently; and, third, that the progressive forces adopt a critical attitude toward Roosevelt and assume no political responsibility for him.

We have seen too much of the way in which Roosevelt is influenced; we have seen him moving to the Right, making concessions to the reactionaries, precisely because there was not sufficient independent counter-pressure from the Left, from the progressives. It is this lack of independent political action by the progressive forces which seriously threatens to give victory to Landon.

It is because the progressives do not organize their own forces for independent action, that the field is left open for the adventure of Lemke and Coughlin, and their so-called Union Party, conceived and financed by Hearst and the Liberty League. The Communists cannot agree to reliance upon Roosevelt, which leads to passivity, which prevents the rapid building of the people's front, the Farmer-Labor Party.

We Communists take advantage of every opportunity to repeat that we are ready to support fully every serious effort

to bring about the unity of all progressives to the fullest degree possible, for the defeat of reaction.

The Communist Party platform is designed to help this aim of building the broadest People's Front. Our platform is one that could be adopted by such a Farmer-Labor Party which we advocate and support. . . .

Our program represents and meets, the needs of the overwhelming majority of the American people. It has grown out of their struggles in the trade unions among the unemployed, the farmers, the Negro people, the intellectuals and professionals, the youth. A point of decisive importance is that this program can be achieved under the present capitalist order. That this is true has been proven by the victories of the People's Front in Spain and France. All of these demands can be won, if the people take the road of independent political action in a Farmer-Labor Party and compel the capitalists to disgorge some of the wealth they have taken from the people.

This program is of a special interest to the toilers of the South, white and Negro, but especially the Negro people who are the most exploited of working people and who are denied the right to live as human beings. There can be no freedom for the Negro people and no prosperity for the toilers of the South until the demands of the progressive platform are realized.

There has been much talk that the special problems of the South can be solved only in some peculiar Southern way. We say that the domination of Wall Street in the South is aggravated by the remnants of semi-feudal and serf relations. It is these hangovers from slavery that enabled Wall Street to establish the vicious system of wage differentials, to cite only one example.

Those shackles which prevent the full economic development of the South, those restrictions on civil liberties, those denials of full economic, political and social equality for the Negro people, can only be smashed, if white and black toilers unite, if in the South and North, East and West, the American people rally to defeat the threat of reaction and fascism, and

in the South, smash once and for all the remnants of slavery and serfdom. This is the only way freedom and prosperity can be won for the South.

The American people have shown in many ways that they will fight against fascism. Their hatred of a fascist dictatorship is the reason why the reactionaries have clothed their reactionary program in the garb of "liberty" and "constitutionalism." That is why it is necessary for the people to make a genuine fight for freedom and liberty. By fighting to maintain and extend our democratic rights we organize and strengthen the people against reaction. They learn those deeper lessons which will eventually prepare them for that necessary reorganization of our social life which can only be achieved by taking the road to socialism.

The program which the Communist Party proposes and carries to the American people is one which by fighting for liberty will pave the way for socialism. This program to meet immediate needs is one which preserves the possibility for the American people to choose the socialist path when they think it necessary, a choice which the capitalists would deny them by fascist force and violence.

In this connection I should like to point out that it is the reactionaries who use force and violence against the people, and that the Communist Party is not an advocate of force and violence. Let me quote a resolution adopted by the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party which was held last month in New York City:

The Communist Party must smash once and for all the superstition, which has been embodied in a maze of court decisions having the force of law, that our Party is an advocate of force and violence, that it is subject to laws, (Federal immigration laws, State "criminal syndicalism" laws) directed against such advocacy. The Communist Party is not a conspirative organization, it is an open revolutionary Party, continuing the traditions of 1776 and 1861; it is the only organization that is really entitled by its program and work to designate itself as "sons and daughters of the American revolution.")

Communists are not anarchists, not terrorists. The Communist Party is a legal party and defends its legality. Prohibition of advocacy of

force and violence does not apply to the Communist Party; it is properly applied only to the Black Legion, the Ku Klux Klan and other fascist groupings, and to the strikebreaking agencies and the open-shop employers who use them against the working class, who are responsible for the terrible toll of violence which shames our country.

We Communists believe that a strong and consistent fight for democratic rights under the conditions of decaying capitalism must ultimately lead the American people to the choice of the socialist path. In the fight against reaction the people will learn that the evils of the present system cannot be completely abolished unless a new social order, socialism, is built.

Under socialism, the United States, the richest land in the world, would be able to furnish prosperity, happiness and a rich and cultured life to all. Under socialism there would be no crisis, no poverty, no unemployment. The people would spring overnight from the kingdom of necessity and poverty to the kingdom of freedom and abundance.

We Communists maintain that the American people can and will be won for socialism. But this cannot be done by merely preaching socialism in the abstract as Norman Thomas and the Socialist Party are doing in this election. It can be done only by rallying the people to fight for their immediate and most burning needs and to organize them against their most dangerous enemies—the Liberty League, Landon and Hearst. In these struggles they will gain that determination and conviction which will lead them to abolish capitalism and establish socialism.

In waging this fight against reaction the American people are but carrying on their glorious revolutionary traditions, which are the most hallowed heritage of our people. Reactionaries of all shades attack socialism as revolutionary. But since when is revolution un-American? Our country was born and preserved in revolutionary struggles. Our people met their problems and solved them in a revolutionary way.

Today a far greater crisis confronts the American people. We Communists are confident that they will meet and solve it in the same spirit the American people solved the crises of 1776 and 1861. We Communists are proud that we can truly

say that Communism is the Americanism of the twentieth century, that in the great struggles to come the Communist Party will carry forward the revolutionary traditions of the past to a higher stage, and show the American people the way to a better and more secure life in the present, and to a future of peace, freedom, happiness and prosperity for all.

*Address delivered at the Institute of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, July 17, 1936.*

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## XI

# Results of the Elections

### INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 1. THE DEFEAT OF REACTION IN THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The best possible confirmation of the correctness of a strat-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. WHAT FOLLOWS AFTER THE ROOSEVELT VICTORY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3. THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One of the greatest accomplishments of our Party in this



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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PART TWO

THE AMERICAN TRADITION

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## I

# The Communists in the People's Front

### INTRODUCTION

THE swift rise in activity of a broad progressive and democratic movement in the U.S.A., in which first place is played by the Committee for Industrial Organization and its organizing drives, realized, even sooner than we had thought, those perspectives which we set at the December Plenum of our Central Committee.\* This fact becomes of major world importance in the setting of the world struggle between the forces of fascism and war on the one hand, and those of democracy and peace on the other, because it gives grounds for belief that the U.S.A. can be made one of the strongholds against world reaction, along with the People's Front movements in France, Spain and China, and in co-operation with the greatest fortress of progress, democracy and peace, the Soviet Union.

Reaction and fascism have received a series of defeats which, if followed up on a world scale, create the preconditions for its downfall everywhere. The smashing of the Trotskyite wrecking and espionage agencies in the Soviet Union, the halting of the fascist offensive before Madrid, the inauguration of the new Soviet Constitution—high mark of democracy in world history—the smashing of Mussolini's brigands at Brihuega in March, the advance toward a national anti-Japanese front in China, the stamping out of the nest of traitors in the Red Army in the Soviet Union, the new cabinet consolidating the People's Front government in Spain and its quick suppression of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyite insurrection—each of these major developments was a body blow to the fascist

\* "Results of the Elections," in this volume, pp. 115-149.—*Ed.*

conspirators of the world. Not the least important front in this world struggle is the United States, where it is upon our still numerically small Party that responsibility rests in the first place to ensure the halting of the forces of reaction, fascism and war. These forces in the United States are gathering, preparing a counter-offensive against the rising movement of the democratic elements in this country.

The Central Committee Plenum, meeting in the midst of events of world-historical importance, both abroad and at home, has the special task of concentrating the attention of our Party upon a few key questions, which, through our correct and energetic orientation, will place the Party in a position to meet its responsibilities most effectively in all fields. We have chosen four such points of concentration: (1) the next tasks in building the People's Front in the U.S.A.; (2) the struggle for progressive industrial unionism and for labor unity; (3) organizing the mass movement for an effective peace policy; and (4) building the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker*.

To concentrate upon these key questions, it will be necessary for this report to forego treatment of many of the most important world questions, which have been fully and correctly dealt with by our brother Parties in other lands, and by the speeches and articles of our International leadership, in the first place of Comrade Dimitroff, that have been transmitted regularly through the *Daily Worker*. There is such complete proof in life of the correctness of this line, and such unanimous confidence and enthusiasm within our Party for its international leadership, that discussion is required in this meeting only for clarifying the application of the general line to the changing situation and to the tasks coming directly within our own hands.

A few words on the economic trend and outlook may usefully preface a direct examination of our problems of concentration. The draft resolution presented to you notes that, "the economic recovery, already approaching pre-crisis levels, although showing increasing signs of accumulating factors making for another crash, is on the whole continuing upward, and serves

to further stimulate the organization and struggle of the workers." In this brief formulation are all the chief economic factors influencing our political problems. We are not in a position to estimate how long the upward trend of economy will continue, whether the next big change will come through economic crisis or general war; nor would any useful purpose be achieved by speculations on such questions. That increased production even above 1929 levels would still leave mass unemployment as a permanent problem is a fact accepted even by the Washington administration. Mounting expenditures for war preparations become increasingly an economic factor, even in the United States, where it is proportionally the smallest among the big capitalist powers. Rising prices and living costs, always features of economic recovery, are accentuated by the increased influence of monopoly and the world tendency to inflation, further emphasizing the necessity for organization and struggle among the masses whose living conditions are thus undermined. The economic factors are strengthening steadily the political radicalization of the people.

### 1. FACTORS AND PROBLEMS OF THE DEVELOPING PEOPLE'S FRONT

The movement for a Farmer-Labor Party in the United States represents those same social and political currents which in France and Spain have been crystallized in the People's Front.

Many are puzzled by an apparent contradiction between the clearly established growth of the People's Front sentiment in the United States, and the slowing up of the organizational realization of a national Farmer-Labor Party. Some even begin to spin new theories, to explain this contradiction, thinking that the tempo of development had been previously overestimated, or that the whole conception of the Farmer-Labor Party has been artificially forced upon a movement which will take another direction in real life. It is my opinion that we must reject all such superficial theorizing, that we must re-

affirm the perspective of a Farmer-Labor Party on a national scale which has for the past two years dominated the thought of the broad camp of the Left in American politics.

It is necessary, however, to give the gravest attention to the problem of the slow rise of the Farmer-Labor organization. This is not something to be dismissed. It must be analyzed and explained, and far-reaching conclusions must be drawn affecting the immediate tactical problems of the movement.

It may shock some persons to hear it said that, far from overestimating the tempo of development of the Farmer-Labor movement, we seriously underestimated it. Actually the rise of the new political current has been so great that many eyes lost sight of the big wave and were fastened instead on some of the small ripples in the current. It is precisely because of the exceptional breadth and speed of the rise of the Farmer-Labor movement that there has occurred what seems like a pause in organizing the national Farmer-Labor Party.

Take, as a prime example, the emergence of progressive industrial unionism as the dominant force among the workers. Surely the sweep of the C.I.O. has exceeded the expectations of most people. And this movement is the essential foundation and driving force of any successful Farmer-Labor Party. Its role is decisive, and becomes more so every day. If the national Farmer-Labor Party is not already in process of organization, it is, first of all, because the C.I.O. is not ready for such a step, even though it is clearly moving in that direction.

Can it be said that the present unwillingness of the C.I.O. to take the lead for a Farmer-Labor Party is a sign of political backwardness? I think that would be a false answer, one that would distort most dangerously the whole problem and create a false relationship between the political vanguard on the one hand and the leadership of the great mass organizations on the other. The leaders of the C.I.O. have shown great alertness to the main political problems of the day, and a growing readiness to act upon these problems, in which they faithfully reflect the rising political consciousness of the masses whom they lead. The C.I.O. has become, not only a great force in



economic life, but also simultaneously in politics. It expresses in all fields a process which may be described as the birth of the American working class as an independent and conscious force. Of course, its political role is far from being fully developed; it is only taking shape. But to describe this lack of full maturity as "political backwardness" would lead to absurd and dangerous errors. The essential fact is the tremendous "forwardness" of the mass movement and of its leaders, compared to anything in our past history.

To what, then, must we turn to find the reason for the reluctance of the C.I.O. to step forward boldly toward a national Farmer-Labor Party? We can find the key to understand this, first, in certain immediate practical considerations, which, upon examination, lead us, in turn, to a new tactical problem created by the unprecedented scope and power of the mass movement which requires us to learn from the masses before we can teach them.

First, the immediate practical considerations. The C.I.O. is already in politics, with achievements which it does not want to endanger by any hasty and ill-considered moves. We can illustrate this by comparing the experience of the steel workers in Pennsylvania, where the C.I.O. is deeply in politics, to the experience in Illinois, where it is not. In both states there are Democratic Party administrations, both of which supported Roosevelt in the 1936 elections. In Pennsylvania, when the steel workers went on strike to force recognition of the union from the independent steel companies (Jones & Laughlin), the state administration supported the workers, and the governor went personally on the picket line to be photographed by the newspapers shaking hands with the pickets; the strike was won in a few days. But in Illinois the state administration and the Chicago city administration worked as auxiliaries of the steel corporations, typified in the Memorial Day massacre of pickets at the Republic plant, the most brazen anti-labor blow struck in America for many years. An enormous gulf exists between these two examples, both occurring under the flag of the Democratic Party.

Steel workers will not listen to anyone who wants to deliver a lecture proving that the state, as the executive committee of the capitalist class, must always be a strike-breaker until it is taken over completely by the working class; that therefore the apparent difference between Pennsylvania and Illinois is a pure illusion; that the workers should abandon their support of the liberal Pennsylvania administration which they brought into power and come out with their own Farmer-Labor Party. Steel workers will answer that while they may know little about theory, they have learned on their own skins the difference between a liberal government with labor sympathies and participation and an openly reactionary one. They will waive all theoretical objections for the practical advantages of winning a few more strikes and consolidating their unions. We will be utterly unrealistic if we expect a Farmer-Labor Party of serious consequence in Pennsylvania until the C.I.O. is convinced that such a party will immediately exert as much political power as the C.I.O. already exerts through the Democratic Party. And, further, in Illinois the first conclusion of the main body of the steel workers and miners to be drawn from the experience of the Republic massacre is not to flock into the little Illinois Labor Party, but to demand a liberal overturn within the Democratic Party on the lines of Pennsylvania.

In this example we have the immediate practical considerations which have determined that the C.I.O. work in the political field for the immediate future on the lines of Labor's Non-Partisan League and not of a new Farmer-Labor Party.

Every proponent of the Farmer-Labor Party, whether he likes it or not, is forced to recognize this stubborn fact. The masses will change from this position, not at the call of a small political vanguard, but only through their own experience, which furnishes ground for the teaching of the vanguard.

Let us now for a moment examine a situation where the C.I.O. has not as yet been so decisive, where the movement is rising but is more heterogeneous, namely, the State of Wash-

ington. Last year a broad progressive-liberal-labor movement arose in that state under the name of the Commonwealth Federation. Many of us thought this movement was immediately destined to come out as a state Farmer-Labor Party. It chose, however, to work through the Democratic Party, and it gained immediately such results that only the peculiar Washington ballot, which enabled reactionary Republicans to vote for reactionary Democrats in the primaries, prevented the Commonwealth Federation from getting a measure of control of the state administration. As a result of its experience, the Commonwealth Federation is less inclined now than before the 1936 elections to launch a new party.

In these examples are expressed a general tendency throughout the country to strengthen the line of Labor's Non-Partisan League against that of the immediate formation of the national Farmer-Labor Party. Two factors in this development deserve a deeper examination. First is the extreme and growing legal obstacles in the various states to the launching of a new party (in Illinois this goes to the extreme of arbitrarily ruling off parties in violation of the law and without redress from the courts, while in Florida this even results in legally excluding the Republican Party from the ballot). Second is the primary election, whereby the governmental machinery of elections is the medium of selecting the candidates of the major parties, and even to some extent the official party committees, providing a mechanism through which the masses can and do influence these parties when they are aroused with sufficient breadth and intensity.

The present role and future potentialities of these two peculiarities of the American electoral system, the difficulties of getting new parties on the ballot and the possibilities of work in the direct primaries, have been insufficiently considered and studied by the vanguard of political radicalism in the United States. Both are being intensified by the present currents in political life. Everyone who wants to influence the political actions of millions in the immediate future will have to take these factors increasingly into account.

## FOUNDATIONS OF OLD TWO-PARTY SYSTEM SHATTERED

For generations in America it has been an unquestioned axiom of political radicalism that progress *begins* with the organizational break with the old two-party system. The Republican and Democratic Parties were Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the Gold-Dust Twins of Wall Street. As long as the traditional party structure remained intact, that axiom was valid. The old two-party system, based upon regional interests of the main sectors of the bourgeoisie, accentuated by the federal structure based on forty-eight sovereign states and the incomplete national unification of the country, effectively prevented the class division among the population from intruding its influence in a dominating way into the upper reaches of the political life of the country. That axiom is no longer valid, because the foundation of the old two-party system was shattered by the crisis. The Gold-Dust Twins are dead. In their place there emerge the clear outlines of two new parties, carrying over much debris of the old, but representing something new—a political alignment dominated, not by regional differences among the bourgeoisie, but by class stratification among the masses of the population. There is no longer any fixed party structure in our land. Everything is in flux. Everything is changing. Every individual, every group is in motion, trying with more or less success to find its correct position in the realignment, the dominant feature of which is class alignment.

It is in the light of this larger view of the political scene that we must estimate all the immediate factors and problems of the Farmer-Labor Party. I cannot take the time here to repeat all the evidence that validates this reorientation toward the whole political situation in the United States. For the main features of this you must reread my report to the December session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.\*

Now we are at the point where more far-reaching con-

\* "Results of the Elections," in this volume, pp. 115-149.—*Ed.*

clusions must be drawn from our estimate that the whole country, the main mass of the population, is engaged in a fundamental political regrouping.

The Farmer-Labor Party, conceived as the American equivalent of the People's Front in France, is taking shape and growing within the womb of the disintegrating two old parties. It will be born as a national party at the moment when it already replaces in the main one of the old traditional parties, contesting and possibly winning control of the federal government from the hour of its birth. What particular name the caprice of history may baptize it with is immaterial to us. This new party that is beginning to take shape before our eyes, involving a majority of the population, is what we Communists have in mind when we speak of a national Farmer-Labor Party, the American expression of the People's Front.

In the light of this understanding, much of the underbrush which obscures a clear view of the political forest is cleared away, or at least we rise above it. To turn to a new metaphor, we can say that the wavelets of the relatively small Farmer-Labor Party movements are only apparently falling, that in reality they are merging with a great tidal wave of complete reconstruction of American politics. That apparent paradox, with which we began our examination, the contradiction of a rising movement and a recession of the minority attempts at establishing a Farmer-Labor Party, is paradoxically resolved into a higher unity.

If this view is approximately and substantially correct, as we maintain, it follows that all subordinate questions of tactics of organization, of relations between various groupings and individuals, require a substantial overhauling and re-evaluation; that they must all be adjusted to the great historical process which is going on around us, in which we are living factors, and to which it is our special role to give consciousness, self-understanding and sustained guidance. The development of the People's Front can proceed only along the line of combining the existing Farmer-Labor Party forms with the simultaneously developing progressive movements inside

the Democratic Party (in some localities also the Republican Party), in the elections as well as in all other expressions of political and economic mass movements.

These are the main considerations that determine all the chief issues of the day involved in establishing a full guarantee against the victory of fascism in America. These considerations determine the form of the broadest struggle for the maintenance of democracy and its extension. Their determining force must be equally great for all those whose chief aim for America is socialism, a new society without exploitation of man by man and without classes. The fullest defense of even the limited and undeveloped democracy of today in America, and of its best fruits in the cultural and material status of the population, coincides fully with the most direct and least difficult path to socialism.

Does this broadening out of the approach to building the People's Front change in any fundamental way our conception of the Farmer-Labor Party as we elaborated it during and after the Seventh World Congress? No, it does not. The prospects of realizing the national Farmer-Labor Party as a major party in the country are better than we saw before, but this speeding up of developments certainly does not call for any fundamental change in our whole conception. The changes needed are tactical, in the field of methods and approach, above all by a broadening out to wider horizons.

In Minnesota, the Farmer-Labor Party, by now the major party controlling the state, found it necessary already in 1936 to establish this broad approach to the national situation. The Progressive Party in Wisconsin has, on the whole, the same orientation, although it is not so mature as the Minnesota party. The Washington movement is rapidly catching up with these two vanguard states. It is where the Farmer-Labor Party organizations are still decisively minority groupings, especially where the C.I.O. unions are a major factor in the region, that a tactical reorientation is required.

Insofar as the mass trade unions and other progressive groups are moving in the direction of a People's Front plat-

form, but are not yet ready to join in the Farmer-Labor Party, the Farmer-Labor Party forces should move toward a common political front with them. They should encourage them to systematic and organized activity within the Democratic Party (in some places, the Republican Party), making the fullest possible use of the democratic possibilities of the primary election machinery to name decisively anti-fascist and progressive candidates, and formulating a clear program of progressive social and labor legislation. The broad forces available for such movements have already been disclosed in the state conferences for social and labor legislation, held in about twenty states since our December Plenum. They are also revealed in the moving of the class forces towards the municipal elections now in preparation throughout the country, outstandingly we know in New York, in Detroit, in Cleveland, in Akron, and in many other cities, where the possibility already exists for a People's Front ticket.

Where the progressive forces gain the nomination of candidates and determine their platforms, there the Farmer-Labor Party minority forces, including the Communists and other Left-wing elements, can and must support such candidates in the elections.

In the municipal elections in preparation this year throughout the country, there must be a decided effort towards achieving such a common front of all progressive and truly democratic forces. What occurs in these municipal elections may well become a deciding influence upon the course of the Congressional elections that take place everywhere in 1938.

#### THE PATH OF STRUGGLE BEFORE US

There must, of course, be no illusions that thereby we are entering upon a broad, smooth highway with a downhill course, on which we must only coast to our destination. This policy is taking us on a path of struggle, more complicated and in many ways more difficult, with greater dangers along the way than any we have ever traveled before. Every inch of

the road will be contested by the enemy, and by the inertia of the past. The complications of the daily problems will be multiplied. From all those who are influenced by Trotskyism and opposition in principle to the People's Front, there will come a chorus of super-revolutionary wails about our betrayal of the class struggle, etc. But we, and with us all the best forces of the labor and people's movements, by a decisive course, and by constant vigilance, will prove the correctness of this policy in life, by its achievements in the organization of the masses and the improvement of their position in all respects.

Not everywhere will the success of the People's Front forces be uniform or immediate. Where the efforts to achieve such a common front fail, or where its ticket loses in the primaries, the very effort which failed must already have laid the foundation for the fullest possible use of independent tickets, Farmer-Labor tickets, and even of individual independent candidacies, to register the growing progressive forces in the elections. And where even this proves impossible, the Communist Party may put up its own candidates. The governing consideration in each case must be—to secure the most rapid and permanent growth and unity among the forces making for the People's Front, and at all costs not to let the reactionary forces monopolize the elections. In this connection it has been shown innumerable times what constitutes the organizing center of the enemies that we have to fight. It is that small group recently popularized as the economic royalists that dominate the United States, otherwise known as the upper "400," also identified as Gerard's list of 59 rulers of America.

This group is hostile to the national interests, it is they who equip the potential enemies of America with military supplies—their huge shipments of steel, scrap iron, gunpowder and military equipment to Japan. All of our work in driving towards the People's Front must be directed towards identifying these enemies, giving concrete names and addresses, nationally and in every locality. We must make a thorough survey of who these economic royalists are and identify them



before the masses in the local elections, in the preparations for the Congressional elections, in the whole drive towards the People's Front in America.

Confusionists and enemies of the People's Front will try to turn the discussion of this tactic around the question of what should be the attitude towards "the Democratic Party." But the Democratic Party is not a unity which can be so discussed with any value at all. In the main this party is moving in a progressive direction, though very unevenly, under the influence of large desertions of its Right-wing leadership and upper-class supporters, and its growing support from the oppressed classes—that process which we call a "regrouping of classes." Thus, there is being formed within the formal limits of the Democratic Party a progressive wing; this wing embraces growing sections and strata of the party and its organizations. In a few cases, not yet many, these democratic progressive forces already come close to the People's Front movement. In their majority they will be allies of the working class in this movement in the near future. Strong reactionary forces within the Democratic Party fight this process tooth and nail. Others reflect it only in a distorted way, in part, and with hesitations and relapses.

It is necessary to distinguish clearly between these conflicting forces, to have a sharply different attitude to each, to encourage the progressive elements and their proposals, to criticize the unclear and hesitating ones, and to fight uncompromisingly against the reactionaries. With such an approach, there is no question of any uniform attitude towards the "Democratic Party," considered as a whole. We Communists have, for example, criticized with full sharpness such harmful policies of the Roosevelt administration as its retrenchment on relief, its failure to shift the tax burdens to the rich, and its shameful capitulation to the reactionaries on the Spanish question. At the same time we support all measures and proposals which have a progressive character (such as the wages, hours bill; the reform of the Supreme Court; and the inquiry on rich tax-dodgers), everything which promotes the demo-

cratic rights and economic interests of the mass of the people, which is directed against reaction, fascism and war. In this way we will exert the strongest influence upon the masses, and through the masses influence the reconstruction of the political life of the country now going on.

The issue between Roosevelt and the reactionary coalition opposing him, the issue of the relation of the national to the state governments, is of far-reaching significance. As against the reactionaries we are, of course, supporting the Roosevelt course of more power to the federal government to deal with national questions. But the issue is very narrowly posed, as yet, between the two major groupings. For us this issue is much deeper and more far-reaching. That this issue can exist at all is a sign of the incomplete national unification of the country. The American bourgeoisie was never able fully to unite our country into one nation; it compromised with all sorts of localisms and particularisms which divide the people. These divisions, originating under the influence of pre-capitalist forces (slavery, landlordism, colonialism), have now been taken over by the upper bourgeoisie as its strongholds in the fight against the people. That is why the Republican Party, originally a party of national unity, has been transformed into the party of localism against the nation.

This setting of the locality against the nation, the part against the whole, is used to paralyze all efforts at social legislation, and to prevent further democratization. Only by fuller, more complete national unification can the economic problems of the masses be even approached; only thus can effective democracy be established. Through breaking down the judicial dictatorship and by setting up a national electoral system that guarantees in life the rights of citizenship, promised in the Constitution, can we abolish all restrictions on the franchise and provide direct and proportional representation in each state. It is towards this more complete conception of national unity that we Communists must direct the thought of the broad people's movement. In doing this we will continue under the conditions of today that democratic work begun by

Washington, Jefferson and Paine, and continued by Lincoln. We Communists must become known as the most energetic champions of the full national unification of our country.

Upon this foundation we will direct our influence within the people's movement in the formulating of its program. That program arises out of the life of the masses; its character was fully indicated in the electoral program of the Communist Party in the Presidential elections; it was further detailed in the state conferences for social and labor legislation. It is a progressive and democratic program capable of uniting in the near future the majority of the population.

THOMAS' "SUPER-REVOLUTIONARY" ARGUMENTS AGAINST  
THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

Here let us turn our attention again for a moment to the arguments of those who oppose the People's Front on supposedly "revolutionary" ground. Our friend Norman Thomas, for example, has just returned from a few weeks in Europe, where he spent a week or thereabouts in England, in the Soviet Union, in Scandinavia, in Spain and in France. Such a trip should be highly educational, especially since it was reinforced by a fascist bomb dropping a hundred yards from his hotel in Valencia. Still he brought back most of his prejudices intact, unshaken by what he saw and heard or by that bomb. We must be thankful for small gains; so it must be recorded that Thomas did understand, and so declared, that the Trotskyite uprising in Barcelona was a crime. He said on June 10 (at the Hippodrome meeting), that "to condone this uprising is to aid fascism today." So far, so good. We can only hope that he will convince his party that those who thus aid fascism should not be allowed in its ranks. But how stubbornly Thomas clings to the Trotskyite-inspired prejudice against the People's Front which he took to Europe with him! This is shown by two more quotations from the same speech: "I would not say that Popular Fronts have aided education for socialism. . . ." "By what transition do we bridge the gap between the defen-

sive fight against fascism and the triumph over capitalism?" At the same time Thomas admits that the People's Front has "stopped fascism."

In these quotations Thomas is repeating the same false contraposing of two parts of the one task of the party of socialism which marked the history of Trotsky's struggle against Lenin from the foundations of the Russian Bolshevik Party. Thomas has rejected the poison-fruit of Trotskyism when it appeared in the Barcelona uprising, but he continues to defend the fundamental falsity upon which it was based. Fascism, which threatens to bring all Western Europe down in ruins; which plots a war to destroy the country of socialism, the Soviet Union; which is already becoming a serious menace in the United States; which wages everywhere a war of extermination against all Socialists and against the labor movement—the progress of this fascism has been "stopped" by the People's Front, according to Thomas' own admission, but still he can deny that the People's Front which did the stopping has aided education for socialism; he still demands the immediate "transition" to socialism before he has even decided to join the People's Front to stop fascism.

The worst aspect of the doubts and confusion of Thomas is that he has never himself, in his own programmatic pronouncements, faced the problem of "transition" to socialism. The People's Front program is not socialism. It has the great merit of making no pretensions to that effect. It is openly and frankly a joint platform of non-socialists together with socialists. But the realization of this program creates the most favorable conditions for gathering and organizing the forces of socialism. No one can seriously pretend to fight for socialism, without fighting stubbornly by all means to create those most favorable conditions. But Thomas wants the "transition" before he will help create the conditions for it. Frederick Engels, confronted with a similar demand from the Blanquists,\* ex-

\* Sectarian, utopian revolutionaries, followers of Auguste Blanqui, who lacked the faith in the revolutionary capacities of the masses, believing that revolutions are made, under the form of a *coup d'état*, by a detachment of professional conspirators in the interests of the workers.—*Ed.*

claimed shortly after the experiences of the Paris Commune: "What childish naïveté to put forward one's own impatience as a theoretically convincing argument."

One may be permitted to suspect that "super-revolutionary" arguments here, as in past times, cover a disinclination to participate in the difficult and arduous tasks of building a serious revolutionary movement, and of taking responsibilities upon one's shoulders.

Since the foundation of scientific socialism, all its greatest teachers have been forced to struggle constantly against the phrasemongers of the "no compromise" school of thought, that hallmark of petty-bourgeois radicalism. Every generation must continue that struggle, for such empty bombast is constantly being generated in the minds of those who are unable or unwilling to learn from the past. The great polemics of Marx and Engels had to be supplemented by Lenin (as in that great example, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism: An Infantile Disorder* \*), while after Lenin it was necessary for Stalin to wage the epic struggle against Trotskyism which refused "on principle" to admit the possibility of "socialism in one country," demanding the whole world at once or nothing.

The People's Front, the defensive gathering of all oppressed and suffering people against the most immediate and general menace to their well-being, is a conception inherent in all the classic literature of scientific socialism. Lenin gave it its central thought, as long ago as 1902, in his magnificent slogan: "The Social-Democrat's [the revolutionary Socialist's or Communist's] ideal should not be a trade union secretary, but a *tribune of the people*."

Certainly, we are not indifferent to the problem of "transition" from a victory over fascism to victory over the whole capitalist system, "transition" to socialism. But the transition does not come from empty slogans, disconnected from everyday life. This transition arises upon the basis of the growing strength, organization, discipline, fighting power and understanding of the working class, which gathers around itself as

\* International Publishers, New York.—*Ed.*

allies all other oppressed strata of the population—a working class which has learned how to meet in battle its worst enemies, today the fascists and monopoly capitalists, and to defeat them on the immediate issues of the day. It is not a discouraged, defeated and demoralized working class that will take up and realize the great program of socialism; it is the enthusiastic, victorious and organized workers who will move forward from victories in the defensive struggle to the offensive, and finally to socialism. Every strong defense passes insensibly to the offensive. To stop the retreat means already to prepare the advance. The defeat of fascism is the first precondition for the victory of socialism.

Norman Thomas and those who think like him would reverse this formulation; they would say that the victory of socialism is the first precondition for the defeat of fascism. Thus, they would demand in the United States that no one be admitted into the anti-fascist front unless he first commits himself to socialism. The results of this in life were shown in the elections, when Thomas by this policy reduced the Socialist vote to 20 per cent of the 1932 figure, and to a fraction of Debs' vote of 32 years before, when the total electorate was less than one-third of the present. That road is surely not one of transition to socialism. I want to give you a quotation from Lenin, and recommend it to the attention of Norman Thomas, from "*Left-Wing*" *Communism*. Lenin said:

To tie one's hands beforehand, openly to tell the enemy, who is now better armed than we are, whether and when we shall fight him, is being stupid, not revolutionary. To accept battle at a time when it is obviously advantageous to the enemy and not to us is a crime; and those politicians of the revolutionary class who are unable to "maneuver, to compromise" in order to avoid an obviously disadvantageous battle are good for nothing.

When we reject the "extremism" of Norman Thomas (an extremism in words, we hasten to add, for we would never accuse him of being extreme in deeds), we are not recommending him to return to his former playmates of the Old Guard with its opportunism in principle and its compromise of the

very name of socialism. The choice is not between Old Guardism and Trotskyism, as Thomas seems to think. It is not even between Old Guardism and the Communist position, although we would be pleased to see Thomas come closer to the position of Marxism. The choice before the Socialist Party, which has already left its Old Guard behind forever, is whether it shall be disrupted and disgraced by counter-revolutionary Trotskyism, or whether it shall pass on to loyal and honorable co-operation in a People's Front with all the progressive and democratic forces in the country, and to collaboration with the Communist Party in that front for the common defense and advance of socialism.

The Communist Party works on the basis of the democratic People's Front platform. But in no way do we lose our own identity, or forget the task of strengthening our Party's role in the movement, as the most advanced and revolutionary sector of it. Working in the midst of the mass movement, the Communist Party has the task of building itself into a mass party, of educating the masses in their final aims of working class power and socialism, of acting as vanguard in the movement by pointing out the next steps in the struggle, of initiating and supporting the progressive and democratic demands and movements. By its fully independent political position, in which it speaks frankly on all issues, on all groups and parties, in which it criticizes all measures and manifestations that are harmful to the cause of democracy, our Communist Party shall vigilantly guard itself against the danger of dissolving into the general mass movement, both ideologically and organizationally. The Communist Party, by becoming more and more the recruiting center of the most advanced elements of the movement, at the same time becomes the initiative and organizing force.

Comrade Dimitroff thus summarizes this task:

And here it must be clearly stated that proletarian unity will be the sooner achieved, the successes in establishing and consolidating the united People's Front will be greater, the stronger the Communist Parties themselves become numerically, organizationally and ideologi-

cally, the more they enjoy the confidence and support of the best and foremost elements of the working class and of the working people generally. ("Communists and the United Front," *The Communist*, June, 1937.)

This role must be expressed in our mass agitation, in independent activities in the most varied forms, in the *Daily Worker*. Such strengthening of the initiative and independent activity of our Party will directly contribute to the successful development of the People's Front. In turn, only the most powerful development of the people's mass movement can create the favorable conditions for strengthening the Communist Party.

We fully and completely reject all ideas which place the working class in *opposition* to the other class groups, farmers, petty bourgeoisie, moving toward the People's Front. Such ideas are the basic stock-in-trade of the Trotskyite disrupters and wreckers, but they also influence many, especially among the recently radicalized intellectuals, who become the most ardent champions of the workers against the bourgeoisie. This does not mean that we leave out of sight the decisive leading role of the workers. The main strategic task of our Party is the economic and political organization and unification of the working class of the United States. This is the basic, the most important, factor in the People's Front for struggle against war and fascism. Only the degree of accomplishing this task measures the possibilities of the broader People's Front.

#### SUSTAINED ATTENTION TO DEVELOPING THE UNITED FRONT

From this angle we emphasize again the need for sustained attention to developing the proper relations with the Socialist Party. We continue to call our Party everywhere to active work in establishing the united front with local organizations and all honest elements in the Socialist Party. We must help them to clean their Socialist Party ranks of all helpers of fascism, of counter-revolutionary Trotskyism. We bring forward the establishment of the united front between the Socialist



Party and Communist Party as one of the most important prerequisites for unity of the working class. Any underestimation of this task can only be harmful to the cause of working class unity. Every district and locality of our Party must give this task untiring attention. This Plenum must review the problems of the united front with the Socialist Party which makes progress in spite of all obstacles. A real upsurge of the Socialist Party membership to cleanse itself of Trotskyism is in the making now. We must give it sympathetic assistance. The latest events, in which the Second International has agreed to a conference with the Communist International on the question of aid to Spain, must serve as the means to intensify and strengthen our relations with the Socialists.

Among the manifold organized expressions of the growing moves toward unity, the International Labor Defense is coming forward more and more to an important role. Its historic victories in the De Jonge and Herndon cases, the innumerable local victories and instances of valuable local work, the protracted battle for the Scottsboro boys, the strengthening of the Mooney-Billings campaign, the fight for McNamara, to mention only a few factors, have really anchored the I.L.D. firmly in the affections of literally millions of people. We tend to underestimate the energetic help by the I.L.D. to the steel strikers. The aid of the I.L.D. to the strikers, assaulted in the courts of Chicago, as a sequel to the Memorial Day massacre, was warmly received, and shows how the I.L.D. everywhere can rapidly become a major help to the trade unions as well as the general progressive movement.

Unfortunately, we must say that the Communists do not properly appreciate the I.L.D. or the work it is doing as keenly as the non-Communists. The I.L.D. is being mainly carried on everywhere by the non-Communists, which is very good on one side; but it becomes very bad when these non-Communists feel that we of the Communist Party are not interested and not helping them as we should. While helping more and more to establish the I.L.D. as a united front defense and solidarity organization overwhelmingly non-Communist, we must deem

it absolutely necessary that our Party strengthen its help to the I.L.D. which in many places is shamefully neglected. The Washington Conference of the I.L.D. now going on marks a big step forward for this organization, and must be widely popularized in the Party ranks as well as among the masses. Comrade Anna Damon, as Acting Secretary of that organization, has done really commendable work. It must now be more energetically extended. The I.L.D.'s relations with all organizations interested in civil rights and help to victims of oppression must be developed and consolidated as a major task of our Party.

## 2. THE TRADE UNION QUESTION AND THE FIGHT FOR UNITY

In our December Plenum we already made a basic estimate of the historic importance of the rise of the Committee for Industrial Organization under the leadership of John L. Lewis. An estimate of the recent events further emphasized this. We said:

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

The rise of the C.I.O. and the struggles led by it fully justify us in adding to this basic estimate that the C.I.O. marks the emerging of a conscious working class in American life. This factor, the absence of which in the past was the central factor in the slow maturing of the basic political realignments of the country, is of central importance in all fields. All the more decisive is it, therefore, in its direct field of work, the

economic organization of the workers, especially in the basic and mass production industries that were so long the unchallenged stronghold of monopoly capital and political reaction.

The shameful and stubborn resistance to this most progressive development on the part of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor has now passed over to open splitting all along the line, to strike-breaking and sabotage, and to open collaboration with the employers against the C.I.O.

It is the direct responsibility of William Green and the Executive Council, against the stubborn opposition of all progressive workers, that the unity of the labor movement has been broken, that there have appeared two opposing centers of the labor movement, one progressive, the other reactionary. The attitude of the Communist Party has been at all times clear, and remains so, to combat by all means the splitting policy of the Executive Council, to maintain the unity of the trade unions and their councils, and to support by all forces the organization of millions of workers into the unions of the C.I.O. as the main organizing center of the American working class. We continue to give the strictest attention to winning the A. F. of L. unions to this position.

We Communists are a small, though important, part of this great mass movement. We are giving all our best forces and mobilizing all our organizations to assist the work of the C.I.O. We call upon the whole working class to do the same. Efforts of the employers to divide this movement by the old familiar Red herring, which they attempt to use even against Roosevelt, have failed dismally. The leaders of the C.I.O. have firmly taken their stand on the basis of full utilization of all progressive forces without exception, and without discrimination as to political opinions outside the scope of the tasks of the C.I.O. We can expect that experience has confirmed them fully in this stand, and that the loyal and effective collaboration of the Communists has fully won our position as permanent collaborators in the great task of building a powerful trade union movement. Red baiting is becoming less effective every day,

and will soon be recognized everywhere as the infallible sign of the Liberty Leaguer and the fascist.

The whole future of the movement requires from all advanced and militant workers to consolidate this unity, to win the confidence and trust of the millions of workers being drawn into it, by means of their loyal, effective, and self-sacrificing devotion to its success.

It is necessary to do everything to help develop inner-union democracy which will serve to promote to the leading bodies of the unions the best, most loyal, and capable elements, which will provide the best guarantee for the development of these unions along policies of the class struggle.

Every Communist, from the Central Committee to the units, should be engaged every day in coming into close and intimate contact with the new militant and honest activists in the trade unions, who are coming forward by the hundreds and thousands. What is needed here is the most comradely and painstaking educational work, our Party comrades learning from them and in turn helping them in their practical work, developing their class-consciousness and political maturity, giving them the benefit of the collective experience of the whole movement. This must be the decisive dominating feature of our Party's contacts and work within the trade union movement.

On the whole our Party is working well along this line. But we must not have the illusion that all is well everywhere and at all times. On occasion we see developments which give rise to great uneasiness, when comrades rush into snap judgments on big questions of trade union policy, consider that the trade union leaders have been mistaken or have unnecessarily compromised the workers' demands, and from this conclusion pass immediately into a head-on collision with those leaders and those workers who follow them. There were dangerous moments of this sort in the Detroit district in connection with the Chrysler strike. We gave unstinted recognition to the work of our Party forces in that strike. They did excellent work. But we must speak openly of some mistakes. We must speak openly of this, as a lesson to the entire Party to avoid such dangers.

We are a fully responsible Party, and our sub-divisions and fractions do not independently take any actions which threaten to change our whole national relationship with a great and growing mass movement. As it happens, in this particular instance, some comrades were entirely in error in thinking they saw intolerable compromises and wrong methods in the settlement of the Chrysler strike. There was no situation of that kind. There was merely a secondary problem of the impatience of certain leaders in dealing with the rank and file. But even if their fears had more solid foundation, it was necessary to proceed with much more tact, foresight, and consideration in establishing an attitude toward such questions. We do not attempt to estimate such difficult and complicated trade union problems by ourselves, in isolation; but only on the basis of the fullest and frankest discussion with our comrades-in-arms of the general trade union activities, on the basis of trade union democracy.

Our country is now in the midst of a rising wave of battles for the rights of labor organization and collective bargaining, such as has never been seen before. The course of this campaign will be decisive for the whole future of labor and of our country. Our attitude and our work in the midst of this struggle must be the most sober and responsible.

Labor generally, including us Communists who approach this question with our own standards, has every reason to proceed to the particular tasks and problems facing us, with great confidence in the strategical line of the C.I.O. leadership and of John L. Lewis. The incident of the Chrysler strike illustrates and emphasizes this fact. That was one of the preparatory battles leading up to the great campaign in which we are now engaged. If we should approach that or any other individual conflict by itself, isolated from the general course of events, trying to judge it from an ideal picture of what we would like to see and not what the relation of forces requires in the whole national set-up, then we would have a distorted view which would inevitably bring serious errors in its train. The strategy of the C.I.O. has proved itself in life to be

basically sound and correct. We find that it coincides with what we independently estimated as correct strategy. There is plenty of room for legitimate differences of opinion on detailed tactics and execution; but it is not our business to fall into any tendency of sniping on non-essential questions, and thereby contribute to creating an atmosphere of fault-finding and bickering. The whole line of the Communist Party has been, must remain, and must become universal, one of confidence and wholehearted collaboration in the work with all the responsible leading elements and with the rank-and-file activists who make up the core of this great historical movement of the C.I.O. An example of the opposite approach to this question is the tendency of the Socialist Party, under the influence of the Trotskyites, more and more to isolate the Socialists in the trade union movement. I just received this morning a trade union resolution that was put through at the Socialist Party Convention in the State of Massachusetts on the trade union question. Let me read it to you as a horrible example of what we should avoid in the trade union line. The resolution says:

The Party must seek to inoculate the workers against reliance on the reactionary trade union bureaucracy. It must be remembered that the officials of the C.I.O. cannot be relied upon to provide correct leadership for the progressive forces in the trade unions. It is only through accident of history that John L. Lewis and his associates appear temporarily as nominal representatives of the progressive forces by advocating what is at present progressive policies. This accident is not at all permanent. We must understand that this bureaucracy is dedicated above all to the maintenance of capitalism and the suppression of the revolutionary development of the labor movement.

The great battles to unionize steel are the very center of American life today. In these battles there is being fought out the destiny of our country, of our democracy. So long as the reactionary steel barons, those prototypes of the economic royalists, these twentieth-century feudalists, can defy the law that confirms the right of collective bargaining, can maintain their own armies and arsenals and subordinate the local authorities and police, can recruit and arm fascist vigilante bands—all to

smash by force and violence the simple demands for organization and collective contracts in the steel industry—just so long is every civil and political liberty in permanent and imminent danger in America. This struggle is not a simple trade union struggle of the steel workers. It is a battle of all progressive and democratic people to insure the future of democracy in America. It is among our tasks to mobilize all such people around and in support of the steel strike.

To what lengths of fascist desperation the steel barons are prepared to go was illustrated in Chicago in the Memorial Day massacre. The police and armed guards simply opened fire upon an unarmed procession of steel pickets marching with their wives and children. The list of the dead is now nine, with hundreds wounded, including women and children. The spirit which prepared those guns and gave the order to fire is exactly the same as that of the barbarities of Franco in Spain, of Italian submarines sinking Spanish boats, of Nazi battleships bombarding Almeria, of Hitler's airplanes destroying Guernica. The steel barons are rousing, organizing, and financing all the anti-social, criminal, underworld elements, and are fusing them with the reactionary adventurers from the bourgeoisie in that amalgam typical of fascism the world over.

To the support of the steel workers in their battle all the living forces of democracy in America today must therefore be rallied. The whole population must be roused and organized as allies and helpers. Every assistance must be given to the efforts of the C.I.O. leaders to bring reserves into action, in the coal and ore fields, and in transportation. All workers' organizations of every kind must make their voices heard and their hands felt in support of the steel workers. Every church and civic organization must be urged to speak up and act against the lawless royalists of steel. The steel workers are fighting the battle of the people; a people's movement must come to the support.

Great responsibilities lie upon the Communist Party in this fight. We are a small party, but we play a great and growing role. What we think, what we say, and especially what we do,

have an influence a hundredfold, five hundredfold, beyond our membership. Large strata of the population guide themselves by what they see our Party doing. If we sit back and leave the task to others, many of these others will conclude that if the Communists do not find this important, then they also can safely pass the matter up for other things. Our example is a big and growing influence among broad masses. We must set a good and better example in the steel industry today.

At our last Plenum we spoke of the C.I.O. as bearing the future of the labor movement. Today we can already speak of it as realizing it. The C.I.O. not only embraces the most important sectors of organized labor, but is already the absolute numerical majority. The sweep of the unorganized into the C.I.O. has been joined, since the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. issued its final splitting orders, by a sweep of former A. F. of L. unions into C.I.O. ranks. During the past six weeks alone, through the direct influence of our Party's careful and systematic preparations for this event, unions involving over half a million members have decided, with a unanimity which has astounded the reactionaries, to move over into the C.I.O. camp, which is now in every sense the chief representative of organized labor.

This complete support which we are giving the C.I.O. does not contradict or change our fundamental line in the fight for unity of the trade union movement. On the contrary, only through such support does the unification of the labor movement become a practical task. We continue uncompromising opposition to all the splitting efforts of the American Federation of Labor Executive Council, whether of separate national unions, of locals, of city or state federations. Where splits are carried through in spite of all, we continue to help to consolidate all expelled unions, and continue the fight for unity and for realizing the C.I.O. organizing program, striving to win the A. F. of L. locals to support and participation in that fight. We will never cease to demand the unification of the American trade union movement.

With the Executive Council carrying through its splitting



work, the question will arise of the convocation of a unity congress. To such a congress, when the time comes, all unions should be invited—C.I.O. and A. F. of L., as well as those unaffiliated to either. To such a congress let all come who stand for unity and solidarity. As for those who refuse unity, they only place themselves thereby outside the movement; but the unity congress should expel no organization of workers and should stand against expulsions and splits, but for the unification of the trade unions into a single federation. Our position on the question of unity is clear. We want everyone to know it. We hope it will help to influence the course of events toward the widest possible unification on the basis of progressive industrial unionism.

In connection with the trade union questions, the problems of the unemployed and of their organizations, the Workers Alliance continues to hold a very important place. I shall not speak of the problems facing the Workers Alliance and its Convention which opens next weekend in Milwaukee. We shall have a special report to this Plenum on this question. I shall now speak about organizing the mass struggle for peace.

### 3. LET US BROADEN THE ORGANIZED STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

Two days ago came the news that the Second International has agreed to meet with the Communist International to discuss united action on behalf of Spain. This is a belated recognition of almost universal sentiment among the workers everywhere demanding a common front and common action, if peace is to be preserved, if Spanish and world democracy are to be protected against the murderous assaults of fascism. How stubbornly the leaders of the Second International resisted this demand for a united front is a measure of the energy with which this demand must be pushed now, if the negotiations are to result in real unity of action. It is a step forward, however, even to have such discussions, and this can be made the occasion for a new effort toward broadening the organized struggle for peace also in the United States.

Since our December Plenum\* the labor and progressive movement in the United States has proved its solidarity with Spanish democracy by sending 2,000 of its best representatives to Spain in the famous Lincoln Battalion to take their place in the front lines. Several hundred of our comrades have given their lives or have been severely wounded. The Lincoln Battalion has stood in the most serious battle, has held trenches for four months without relief, has been transformed into a unit of seasoned veterans, has been a model of discipline and political morale—in short, it has written a glorious page in the history of American democracy, of which we can all justly be proud. And not the least source of our pride is the fact that over sixty per cent of the Lincoln Battalion members are members of the Communist Party. There is now being organized among the Americans in Spain a second, the George Washington, battalion.

All the more must we who remain on the American front redouble our efforts for Spain, which means for democracy and peace everywhere. The work of the North American Committee for Support to Spanish Democracy must be increased and made more efficient; the Medical Bureau must be helped to enlist ever wider support. The Friends of the Lincoln Battalion must provide more of those little necessities and comforts for our boys in Spain, and popularize much wider the knowledge of their heroic deeds. The campaign for support to the Spanish children's homes in France and Spain must be organized on the broad scale that this issue demands, really involving the American people and raising millions of dollars.

Above all, we must rouse the conscience of America to the crimes of fascism in Spain. It is an indelible blot of shame upon our country that our government rushed to apply the infamous "neutrality" law to martyred Spain; but when German and Italian warships openly bombard Spanish cities and sink Spanish ships we suddenly find that it would be "intervention" to apply the same law to the fascist murderers. We can never rest until that shameful blot is wiped out. America must not

\* See "Results of the Elections," in this volume, pp. 115-149.—*Ed.*

be allowed to act the role of the accomplice of fascist murder and destruction.

More serious attention must now be turned toward the broader problem of organizing the overwhelming peace sentiment of Americans into a mass struggle for peace for an effective peace policy on the part of the United States government.

The most serious effort in this direction is the American League Against War and Fascism, which has three to four million adherents. This important beginning must be supported and strengthened in every way. The American League is now planning its Fourth Congress to be held in Pittsburgh on the Thanksgiving weekend, toward the end of November. The months leading up to this Congress must witness the strengthening of the American League, the rallying of new forces to it, the enlistment of the best active workers, the revival of local League Councils, the rallying especially of the trade unions, the establishment of relations with other peace organizations, the widening of the circulation of the League's excellent magazine, *The Fight*, a magazine which is unique in the whole world for its quality and effectiveness—the effectiveness largely due to the high quality of the work of its editor, Joseph Pass, and his ability to organize the widest co-operative efforts in its production. The American League is composed, in its active membership—some 8,000-9,000—of fully 90 per cent non-Communists, which is a very good thing, except that there has been a distinct falling off of the support given to the League in an organized way by the Communist Party in the districts—a defect that must be changed. We demand of every state and city organization of the Party that it shall seriously discuss and act upon the problem of giving practical help and forces to the American League, especially in the coming months before its Fourth Congress.

The problem which we set for ourselves, and toward which we worked in the American League and elsewhere, is how to embrace the majority of the American people, who sincerely desire peace, into an effective movement to this end. This problem, in the first place, is how to break up the false conception

of isolation and neutrality as the road to peace. It is the problem of preparing the masses for active collaboration with the peace forces of the whole world upon a real international peace policy.

We have been given intimations of a policy of peace by the Washington administration, notably by Roosevelt and Hull, in the Buenos Aires Conference. But these are nullified in practice by Congress and the State Department. The reactionary camp is able to manipulate the very peace sentiments of the masses to reactionary and war-supporting ends, through the neutrality slogan, applied to Spain but not to the fascist invaders of Spain.

The false neutrality policy, despite its appearance of strength, is in a crisis. It is under heavy criticism from many sides. There is growing recognition that it is unrealizable, that its attempted application makes more for war than peace. But there is as yet no generally accepted alternative clear policy of peace. The chief task in organizing a mass struggle for peace is to secure the general acceptance of such an alternative policy.

This cannot be achieved by a head-on collision with the existing mass prejudices against the League of Nations, although it must be explained that the present League is not what it once was, that the present League can and must be used for the cause of peace and democracy. But the United States is outside the League of Nations, and to advocate its entry is unrealistic.

There is, however, an established feature of American foreign policy, against which there is no mass prejudice, which provides an effective peace policy without the obstacles presented by the League of Nations. This is the so-called Kellogg Pact, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the Pact of Paris, signed by more than 50 nations on the initiative of the United States, outlawing the use of war as an instrument of national policy. With provisions for implementing the Kellogg Pact in the international relations of the United States, a full program of international collaboration of the peace forces of the world

would be given. Upon the demand for such a policy the broadest peace movement can be built. The basis made possible a policy along the following lines we proposed in our Party's Legislative Letter at the time the Legislative bill was before Congress. We stated then that an effective peace policy for the United States could be worked out on the basis of established covenants already signed between the United States and the rest of the world, by a law with the following simple points:

1. Require that the President shall take notice when any nation signatory to the Kellogg Pact shall violate the provisions of that pact by making war, whether officially declared or not, and shall call it to the attention of Congress;

2. That when the violation of this treaty with the United States is established, an embargo shall be placed against all economic transactions with the guilty power until the aggression is stopped and reparation made;

3. That any government, not itself an aggressor in violation of the Kellogg Pact, but suffering from an attack by enemies from within or without, shall not be hindered in its continuance of normal commercial relations with the United States;

4. That a violator of the Kellogg Pact should be considered to be that state which is the first to declare war upon another state; which uses its armed land, naval, or air forces, with or without a declaration of war, to invade the territory, or to attack the vessels, or to blockade the ports of another state;

5. That a state should also be considered the aggressor, in violation of the Kellogg Pact, when it gives support to armed parties or factions engaged in insurrection against the democratically established government of another nation;

6. That in accordance with the principles laid down in the Buenos Aires Conference, the United States shall consult with other countries in case of war or the imminent danger of war.

All efforts must be turned in this direction of merging the movement of the American people for peace together with the international movement, against the instigators of war—which means German and Italian fascism and the Japanese militarists—and toward the creation of a united front of the democratic states against fascist aggressors.

We must use every event in the international field, especially the fascist invasion of Spain and the Japanese intervention in

the Far East, for proving the true nature of the neutrality policy as an aid to fascism, as leading to war, as driving America with the whole world toward a new world war. We must arouse the masses to the nature of the work of agents of German, Italian, and Spanish fascism in America, and stimulate an effective demand for the expulsion of these rats.

This movement for an effective peace policy must penetrate into every mass organization. Strangely enough, sometimes our comrades think that in our peace movement we should go into the trade unions that are under reactionary leadership and fight to win these unions to our program, but that in a union which is under Left and Communist leadership, we don't need to do anything about it! We therefore often have this strange picture of unions far away from us becoming active in the American League, but of unions very close to us paying no attention to it whatever. Why is this? Because we don't understand that this peace movement must involve the membership of every organization. It means nothing to us so far as building a mass peace movement is concerned if the leaders of the movement give adherence to this program, if they do nothing to involve their membership in it. We must get every mass organization, every trade union, every church, every lodge, every peace group; and these must be given organizational form in the American League Against War and Fascism and its coming national congress in November. If, with certain organizations, this is not possible, let these then be brought into co-operative relations with the League.\*

*Report to the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, U.S.A., June 17, 1937.*

\* Section 4 on "Building the Party and the *Daily Worker*" is omitted here. The full report is published by Workers Library Publishers, New York, under the title, *The Communists in the People's Front*.—Ed.

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## II

### Lincoln and the Communists

IN these days of national crisis, when our nation stands once more at the cross-roads of history, there is especial value in again reviewing some of the lessons of that great crisis of these United States, out of which emerged the giant figure of Abraham Lincoln.

Again we are facing, as in 1860, the conflict between the forces of the people and the forces of entrenched privilege and political reaction. Again, this conflict goes to the roots of national life, this time even more fundamentally than before. Again, the life-needs of the masses demand a fundamental revision of the economic, social and legal foundations of the nation, a revision which is being resisted most desperately by a coalition of all the most reactionary forces of the country without regard to previous party affiliations. Again, we have a crisis of parties, and a crisis of the Constitution. And again, the party of reaction finds its chief rallying center in the Supreme Court of the United States.

History has marked the beginnings of the crisis of Lincoln's period with the date of the Supreme Court decision on the infamous Dred Scott case. Future historians, following this tradition, will date the present period of political crisis from the Supreme Court decisions invalidating the National Recovery Act and the Agricultural Adjustment Act. In the Dred Scott decision, the Supreme Court declared that Congress had no power to prohibit Negro slavery in the territories of the United States. Today, the same arrogant tones, used by Chief Justice Taney in 1857, resound again in the halls of the Supreme Court in its declaration that Congress has no power to enact social legislation to relieve the distressed masses

of the population. The Dred Scott decision, whereby it was attempted to make the Supreme Court the final arbiter of the destinies of the American people, led directly to four years' civil war. Popular sovereignty triumphed, but only at enormous cost. Today, the Supreme Court has again raised the same issue, in terms of the problems and class relations of 1936.

Facing again this usurpation of power by the Supreme Court, let us recall the words of Abraham Lincoln in his first inaugural address:

If the policy of the government, upon vital questions affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their government into the hands of that tribunal.

How fully do the words of Lincoln describe the situation today! And what a contrast these words with the timorous evasions, with the cowardly equivocations of our present pigmies who aspire to the role of the giant Lincoln.

Lincoln was not content to point out the issues. He also with equal clarity gave the answer. He said: "Somebody has to reverse that decision, since it is made, and we mean to reverse it, and we mean to do it peaceably."

That decision was reversed. The Supreme Court did not have the last word. Lincoln's desire to find a peaceful solution was blocked by the forces of reaction who resorted to arms as the party of reaction has always done since the dawn of history. But when Lincoln found that a peaceful solution was impossible, he did not therefore abandon the solution. The course which he finally took under the compulsion of history had already been anticipated by another of our historical giants, with more far-seeing eyes—the immortal John Brown—and the Abolitionists.

The period of the Civil War, like all similar periods of crisis, was marked by the break-up of the traditional party system and the emergence of a new party to lead the country through the crisis. It is one of the ironies of history that the Republican Party, created by Lincoln, has now become the chief party of



reaction; that the party which began in a life-and-death struggle against the Supreme Court and the political reaction which it headed, now prepares its disappearance from the political scene as the champion of that Supreme Court on a similar issue. The reactionary Republican Party of today still attempts to exploit the name of Lincoln, but trembles with fear before the words of Lincoln applied to the present crisis which it would prefer to consign to the dusty shelves of libraries and archives.

If the tradition of Lincoln is to survive, if his words shall play a role in political life today, this will be due not to the Republicans nor to the Democrats, but to the modern representatives of historical progress, the *Communists*. Today, it is left to the Communist Party to revive the words of Lincoln. All others are content merely with a conventional and empty bowing before a great tradition. In this also, we are repeating the experience of the Civil War days. At that time, the party of reaction was the Democratic Party, that appealed to the traditions of Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. But it was not the Democratic Party which used the teachings of Jefferson and Jackson; it was Lincoln and the new party. Lincoln revived all the best traditions of the giants of American democracy. He quoted the fierce attacks against the Supreme Court usurpation of power that had been so forcefully voiced in a previous period by Jefferson, Jackson and other founders of the Democracy.

Lincoln carried the fight against reaction to the American masses. He roused them and mobilized them for an offensive in behalf of the struggle against tyranny, for liberty and democracy. In this cause, he called upon the traditions of 1776, as we Communists do today. Attacking the Dred Scott decision and the usurped power of the Supreme Court, Lincoln, speaking here in Springfield, brought forward the Declaration of Independence, which he described as "a stumbling block to all those who, in after times, might seek to turn a free people back into the hateful path of despotism."

The forces of reaction today, the Liberty League, Repub-

lican Party, the unspeakable Hearsts and Talmadges, make a great outcry about "Americanism" and the "Constitution." They seek to turn both into the instruments of reaction, but neither Americanism nor the Constitution belongs to them. Even the Constitution, which was framed to limit and check the free play of democratic forces, and which was adopted only after the Bill of Rights had been attached, by no means laid the foundation for the kind of irresponsible despotism which the party of reaction seeks to establish today. Nowhere does the Constitution grant powers to the Supreme Court over Congress, but it does make Congress the potential master of the Supreme Court whenever it chooses to exercise that power. Only Congress determines the size of the Supreme Court and, together with the President, its composition. There have been many changes in the past, made necessary by political considerations. There is nothing in the Constitution to prevent even more changes in the future. It is worth recalling that in the midst of Lincoln's administration, on March 3, 1863, a Supreme Court, which was hampering the conduct of the war against the slave power, was changed into a Supreme Court which followed an opposite policy. On July 23, 1866, there was another change in numbers. On April 10, 1869, the number was again changed. What has been done in the past, can be done again. It is not necessary to amend the Constitution in order to do it. It is only necessary to have a Congress of real representatives of the masses of people, prepared to assert the popular power.

Lincoln would perhaps not have understood the problems of today. He played his role before the rise of monopoly capital on the one side and the modern labor movement on the other. But even of the problems of today, he had a great prophetic glimpse. His experiences with the vulture flock of Northern profiteers who coined the blood of Union soldiers into vast fortunes (the elder J. P. Morgan founded the family fortune by selling the government its own condemned rifles at fantastic prices) brought him forebodings about a future crisis when the power of the monied aristocracy would have

to be broken. He foresaw the sharpening of the struggle between labor and capital and in this coming new alignment of the nation into two camps, he clearly took his stand upon the side of labor. In his message to Congress on December 3, 1861, he spoke words for which we have no modern parallel in Presidential messages. He said:

Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration.

Before the war, Lincoln was attacked by Northern reactionaries who wanted him to suppress strikes of working men that were taking place. Lincoln answered: "Thank God that we have a system of labor where there can be a strike."

Lincoln pointed out, as a central issue of the Civil War, that only the liberation of the Negroes could provide any basis for substantial freedom for white labor. He did not hesitate to confiscate the slave-owners' property, and to arm the free slaves to fight for the security of their freedom. He said that if the slave power should win out, then "instead of white laborers who can strike, you'll soon have black laborers who can't strike."

Lincoln did not always push forward the struggle for his cause with full vigor. He was often the victim of doubts and hesitations which arose from his unstable class support and which he ascribed to his abhorrence of war and his love of peace. He learned the bitter lesson that his vacillations only served to encourage the reaction and prolong the agony of the struggle. These weaknesses of Lincoln were quite different, however, from the miserable evasions, the cowardly crawlings of our modern statesmen before the powers of reaction. He never altered his course or compromised his final aims. Karl Marx, the founder of communism, the great genius of scientific socialism, saw this clearly and claimed Lincoln as "the single-minded son of the working class."

Marx, with an insight typical of his great genius, analyzed

the relation between Lincoln's historical role and his weaknesses in the following words:

The fury with which the Southerners have received Lincoln's Acts, proves their importance. All Lincoln's Acts appear like the mean pettifogging conditions which one lawyer puts to his opposing lawyer. But this does not alter their historic content.\*

It was Marx who caused the Council of the first International Workingmen's Association to address to Lincoln on November 29, 1864, a letter of congratulations upon his reelection, a document which takes its place among the most important in the history of the international working class movement. Marx strongly influenced the British workers whose mass protests kept Prime Minister Palmerston from going into the war on the side of the slave-owners, a remarkable demonstration of international working class solidarity.

Karl Marx always understood the tremendous world importance of the United States. How deeply he valued the revolution of 1776 and the contributions of Lincoln for the whole world liberation movement, he summarized in typical fashion in one brief sentence. Marx wrote:

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.

Another great leader of the international working class, Lenin, reminded us American workers of our great revolutionary traditions and their significance for problems of today, when in his *Letter to the American Workers*, he emphasized "the great, world historic, progressive and revolutionary significance of the American Civil War of 1861-1865!"

This understanding of Lincoln and his role by the revolutionary workers of his time, and, since then, to the present, was not all one-sided. Lincoln responded to the letters of encouragement and support sent to him by the First International and by the British workers' organizations. He praised

\* Cf. *The Civil War in the United States*, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, International Publishers.—Ed.

the heroism of the British workers' movement which supported the North at the price of suffering and starvation, a heroism which, he declared, "has not been surpassed in any age or in any country."

He showed his understanding of the importance of the International Workingmen's Association when he declared:

The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation, should be one uniting all working people, of all nations and tongues, and kindreds.

Lincoln was not a stuffed shirt. He entered into the struggle of his day with forthright speech and energetic action. When he was faced with the usurped power of the Supreme Court, he did not content himself with an equivocal offhand phrase about "horse and buggy" interpretation of the Constitution. In homely and direct language, subject to no misinterpretation, understandable to the broad masses, he denounced the Court. Here, for example, is one of his declarations that rang through the whole country:

The Supreme Court has got the doctrine of popular sovereignty down as thin as homeopathic soup that was made by boiling the shadow of a pigeon that had starved to death.

When Lincoln quoted his great predecessors, he searched for similar fighting declarations. One of his favorite quotations from Jefferson regarding the Supreme Court was:

You seem to consider the judges the ultimate arbiters of all constitutional questions—a very dangerous doctrine indeed, and one which would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy.

It is because Lincoln was a fighter, a man of principle, one who never compromised the central issues of his cause once the struggle was well begun, that he carried our nation through a great crisis and opened up a new period of progress. He did not allow the forces of reaction to advance and conquer new positions while he was in office. His second campaign for the Presidency was waged on issues and slogans representing an advance, not a retreat, as compared with his first campaign. Thus it was possible for the Address of the First International,

written by Marx to Lincoln, to describe the difference between his two campaigns by saying:

If resistance to the slave power was the watchword of your first election, the triumphant war-cry of your re-election is "death to slavery!"

Is it necessary to draw any comparison between the record of this great historical figure and that of the man who is in these days opening his second campaign for the Presidency? Is it necessary to point out the contrast between that bold solution of problems by Lincoln and our present retreat, confusion, bankruptcy and hopelessness which is but very thinly covered up with high-sounding phrases and a professional smile? Under Lincoln, reaction was beaten, not strengthened; under Roosevelt the reaction has waxed fat on huge profits and became more arrogant than ever. Under Lincoln the Negroes were freed from slavery; under Roosevelt they are suffering a thousand Scottsboro and Herndon cases. Under Lincoln, the Supreme Court was tamed; under Roosevelt all effective power has been surrendered to that reactionary body.

In 1936, as in 1857, the fight against the Supreme Court is more than a fight against an unjust decision. It is a fight against a program which seeks to enslave the American people, a program which hides its reactionary face behind the mask of the Constitution and the legal spieling of the graybeards in the Supreme Court who juggle constitutional clauses to suit the vested interests of Wall Street.

Lincoln became great because he stood at the head of and represented the forces of the people, the forces of progress, which smashed through the old barriers of a corrupted and degenerate party system upholding an antiquated economic system with the establishment of a new party, with a new program, which boldly broke with the past, launched out into the future, and opened up the development of new and higher productive forces.

The times call again for a Lincoln, for a new party, for a new program. Only this can defeat the reactionaries who are trying to turn us back into the "hateful paths of despotism,"

who defend the capitalistic destruction of wealth, who keep our great factories idle and 12,000,000 workers unemployed.

You miners and other workers of Illinois, you have heard your leaders proclaim Roosevelt as "the great humanitarian," as the man who will lead you in the struggle against the brutal reaction of the Republican-Liberty League-Hearst combination. But can you seriously believe that this is the answer to your problems? Can you believe that the Democratic Party which rules you now in Illinois, which calls out the troops against you when you strike, which works hand in hand with the coal operators who shoot you down on the picket lines—that this party, shot through and through with capitalistic corruption, whose main base is the reactionary Solid South, whose leader leads by running away before every issue of the day, can meet the present crisis in any way comparable to that of Lincoln in 1860-65? The very placing of the comparison provides its own answer. The very thought becomes a slur on the memory of Lincoln.

No, what is needed is a new party and a new leadership. We Communists know that our party, the Communist Party, with its fundamental program for a complete reconstruction of society on the basis of socialism, provides the only final answer to our problems. But even now, at once, we can already in 1936, bring together broad millions who, though not ready for socialism, want to defeat the forces of reaction. We know that growing millions are ready to come together, on the basis of an immediate program of uncompromising struggle against the reaction, to overthrow the usurped power of the Supreme Court, to enact comprehensive social legislation, to provide the immediate needs of the workers, farmers and city middle classes, to provide old-age, unemployment and social insurance, to guarantee civil liberties, to secure equality for the Negroes, to place the people in charge of their government, to oust the bankers, corporation lawyers and their gang, to secure the possibility for the masses of the people to freely examine and debate their problems, to freely choose, if such shall be their future decision, the road to socialism in America.

Such a party and such a program is what we have in mind when we propose the coming together of the trade unions, the unemployed organizations, the farmers' organizations, the Townsend clubs, the minority parties, such as Socialist and Communist, into a broad, all-inclusive *Farmer-Labor Party*.

Only such a party can carry forward today, on the broadest possible scale and effectively, the traditions of Lincoln. The reactionaries will rise up in rage against us, they will denounce us as Reds and revolutionists. Of this, we need not be afraid. Revolution is the essence of the American tradition. Revolution is the essence of the teachings of Lincoln. It was in reply to the Red-baiters of his own day that Lincoln gave this classical answer:

Any people anywhere being inclined and having the power have the right to rise and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable, a most sacred right—a right which we hope and believe is to liberate the world. Nor is this right confined to cases in which the whole people of an existing government may choose to exercise it. Any portion of such people that can may revolutionize, and make their own of so much of the territory as they inhabit. More than this, a majority of any portion of such people may revolutionize, putting down a minority, intermingled with or near about them, who may oppose this movement. Such minority was precisely the case of the Tories of our own revolution. It is a quality of revolution not to go by old lines or old laws, but to break up both and make up new ones.

Lincoln was the object, in his day, of a torrent of abuse and vilification of exactly the same sort as today is poured out by Hearst, the Liberty League and the Republicans against all progressive forces in the country from liberals to Communists. Lincoln did not retreat. He faced them calmly and boldly and declared in defiance of all the vested interests of his time:

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it.

*Address delivered on Lincoln's birthday, at Springfield, Ill., February 12, 1936.*



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### III

## On Church, Home and Violence\*

*Mr. Browder, we have heard a great deal of Communists advocating the overthrow of the United States government by force. I think it will clarify the situation greatly were you to tell us just what the stand of your Party is on that particular question.*

The Communist Party does not advocate force and violence. It is a legal party and defends its legality. Communists are not conspirators, not terrorists, not anarchists. The Communist Party is an open revolutionary party, continuing under modern conditions the revolutionary traditions of 1776.

*Just how do you find a basis of comparison between those conditions and the year 1936?*

America was born as an independent nation out of a conflict that arose between the interests of the masses of the people on one side and the then existing government on the other side. The Declaration of Independence laid down the fundamental revolutionary principle that when such a conflict arises the people have the right and the duty to establish a new form of government to guarantee their future security. We Communists maintain the Declaration of Independence today. We do not, however, make the issue of a new form of government the question to be decided in the 1936 elections. We know that the overwhelming majority of the American people are not prepared to choose a new form of government.

\* A radio interview given by Earl Browder, in Hartford, Conn., on October 6, 1936. The questioner was Cedric W. Foster, newspaperman in charge of public relations for station WTHT which carried the interview.—*Ed.*

*Just what do you make as the issue in the election four weeks from now, and just what do you think the American people are prepared to do if they are not ready to choose a new form of government?*

We say the chief issue is the choice between progress and reaction, between democracy or fascism. We believe the great majority of the American people are prepared to accept a definitely progressive platform based upon protection and extension of democratic rights. Unfortunately this majority is not yet organized for political action. It has been trying unsuccessfully to get the progressive platform adopted by one or other of the old parties. Today these people are turning toward the formation of a new party which in most places takes the form of the Farmer-Labor Party.

*Well, doesn't this constitute an abandonment by the Communist Party of the revolutionary principles to which it has always adhered?*

No, the Communists systematically advocate their revolutionary principles, that is, the necessity of socialism to replace the present capitalist system. But until that becomes a practical issue for the majority of the people, the Communists will join hands with all of those who fight for a better life under capitalism. The improvement of living conditions under capitalism may delay the revolutionary change to socialism but it will provide a more peaceful, less difficult and less painful transition to socialism when the time comes.

*With all this talk of socialism creeping in here, Mr. Browder, why don't you join hands with Norman Thomas and have one party, a combination of Socialists and Communists?*

That's a good idea and we proposed that to Norman Thomas.

*What was his reaction?*

Norman Thomas rejected the idea of uniting the forces that want socialism. He goes farther and refuses to help build the Farmer-Labor Party to unite all of those who want to

stop reaction and fascism. Norman Thomas says the issue in 1936 is the choice between socialism or capitalism. He's not interested unless he can get socialism right away. Norman Thomas has even said that it might be better if Landon, the extreme reactionary, were elected.

*Well, then, please tell me briefly just what is the difference between your beliefs and those of Mr. Thomas, if there is any difference.*

In the immediate issues of the day our main difference with Thomas is that we stand for a united front of all the progressives while Thomas rejects that idea. On the question of the future socialistic society our difference is chiefly that Thomas thinks that socialism can be established without a revolution.

*May I interpose here, Mr. Browder. When you say revolution do you mean the generally accredited definition of that term which is war, bloodshed and suffering or do you mean an education revolution accomplished at the polls?*

We have no different definition of revolution than that given to us by Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson pointed out that the bloody war of 1776, which was necessary to establish American independence, was not caused by advocacy of force and violence by the patriots of those days but by the determination of a government which was separated from the people to impose its will at all costs. So long as the people can control their government there will be no necessity for a bloody revolution. If the capitalists would submit to the decisions of the American people the change to socialism will be bloodless.

*In other words Communistic principles do not advocate the waving of a red rag in the streets and machine guns mowing down the populace and that, Mr. Browder, I am frank to confess is just what many people believe.*

It is through just such an interview as this, Mr. Foster,

that we are trying to break down that belief. We Communists want to prevent a continuance of the violence that shames American life. Machine guns are not strangers to American streets, but it has never been the Communists that have brought them out. It is usually the strike-breaking agencies employed by the capitalists which have made machine guns and gas bombs commonplace experiences to large numbers of the American people. We would like to stop all that. If the employers further develop this kind of warfare upon the American working people, they are the ones who are forcing the issue.

*There is another question I want to ask you, Mr. Browder. It has to do with religion. According to press reports most of the churches in Russia have been demolished under a Communistic regime. Do you believe that religion is not necessary for the welfare of mankind, and if you do not believe that how do you justify the demolition of the churches?*

The Communists stand for unconditional freedom of worship. The reason why the church in Russia suffered from the revolution is because it was a state church bound up with the old tsarist regime of oppression which was a by-word throughout the world. It was a political instrument of the tsarist autocracy and when the Tsar was overthrown it tried to re-establish tsarism. Similarly, in Spain today, the church is suffering because it made itself the center of an organized rebellion to overthrow the democratic republic and its buildings were made into arsenals for the fascist rebels. When the church enters politics in this way the church will always suffer. If the church separates itself from the state and confines itself to its proper sphere of religion it will have nothing to complain of anywhere.

The Soviet Union divorced the church from the state and established the American system in these relations. We Communists, in general, are not adherents of any church; in this respect we follow the examples of Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Paine.

*Speaking of divorcing church from state, Mr. Browder, brings up the subject to my mind of marriage and divorce. I believe it was Theodore Roosevelt who said, "When the home disintegrates the nation decays." Don't you believe that the ease with which divorce is obtained in Russia tends to lower the moral standards of the people? I don't believe you advocate such a lowering of standards?*

Roosevelt was correct. One of the signs of decay in American capitalist society is the tragic break-up of millions of homes which is going on under the blows of unemployment. All of the immediate measures proposed by the Communists are aimed to protect the home. We do not think that the home can be maintained, however, by making divorce more difficult. The proper way is to create conditions under which people won't want divorces. Permanent and healthy family life is best built upon the secure possession by all people of the material basis for the family; that is, adequate housing, plenty of food and clothing, and an assured income. It is still true very often that when poverty walks in through the door love flies out of the window. Abolish poverty and the problem of divorce will largely disappear.

*Well, that seems to settle that, Mr. Browder. While we are on the subject of Russia I want to ask you another question. It has always been my belief that when any group of individuals, be they Communists or any other party adherents, come into power, they may forget they represent the common every-day man and woman and seek avariciously for more and more power. In other words, there enters the human element. Do you as a Communist claim your Party leaders immune from such lust for power that they will always remember the people whom they serve? Might they not fall into the category of the persons you term capitalists and whom you oppose?*

We Communists are the last ones to deny the human element in all social problems. That is why we consider it so important that the working class shall be represented by a highly or-

ganized party which sets exemplary standards for its leadership and enforces these standards ruthlessly. Without such systematic and organized control of the leadership, through a party arising directly from the mass of the people and controlled by them, it is quite true that leadership tends to degenerate. This is especially true under conditions of capitalism which sets as the highest standard for each individual, not the service of the general good, but the accumulation of individual wealth. We do *not think* this is a permanent characteristic of human nature. This is only a product of the individualistic capitalist society. A deeper feature of human nature is the desire to win the esteem of one's fellows. When this esteem can be secured only by serving the common good, then human nature will flower as never before in history. The individual will find his greatest good in the common service.

*In closing this interview, Mr. Browder, will you sum up briefly the aims of the Communist Party and what it stands for in the 1936 elections?*

The Communist Party in the present election strives first of all to unite all the progressive forces in the country in a Farmer-Labor Party with a program which calls for the provision of jobs and a minimum wage for all; social security for those who cannot work through old-age pensions and unemployment insurance; guaranteed opportunity for education and work for the young people; security for the farmer in the possession of his farm and an adequate income; maintenance and extension of democratic rights and popular control of the government; a system of public finance based upon ability to pay, that is, taxation of the rich, with abolition of sales taxes; complete equality for the Negro people by the enforcement of the Constitution, and a peace policy to keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world. This platform can be summed up as a program of democracy against fascism, of progress against reaction. It can be accomplished through organizing the people in a Farmer-Labor Party. The experience in fighting for these demands, will, we believe, convince the

majority of the people at some future time that it is necessary and possible to go forward to a new system of society which we call socialism. Socialism is that system whereby the people take over as their common property the basic economy of the country and operate it through their people's government for the benefit of the whole population. These, Mr. Foster, are our immediate and ultimate aims, and these are the principles for which we are struggling.

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## IV

# Freedom of the Press

I THINK that today we should establish the relationship, not of a candidate talking to the public but of one newspaperman talking to others. I am sure that the body of men here whose business it is to know everything does not want to hear the usual speech that is designed especially for those who know very little about the Communist Party.

I have been puzzling my mind to find the best approach to a discussion of the election campaign issues from the point of view of the Communist Party for the benefit of such an audience and, reviewing experiences I have had in the last three weeks in my swing around the Rocky Mountain States, the Pacific Coast and the Northwest, I came to the conclusion that a few remarks about one of the issues of the campaign on which apparently there is unanimity between all parties would be the best.

This issue is the question of the freedom of the press. Every candidate and every party seems to be whole-heartedly committed to freedom of the press. This unanimity is perhaps more apparent than real, and probably is an example of the way in which language is used to conceal thoughts and policies.

I found in my recent trip very interesting experiences on this question of the freedom of the press. First of all I must disclaim any particular grievance against the press for the way in which they have treated my campaign, or their reporting of my meetings on my recent tour. In fact, I found, strangely enough, that in this year of the greatest political tensions we have experienced an unusual hospitality to the Communists in the press of this country. Attempting to find a realistic explanation for this, I have been forced to the conclusion that



the extraordinary amount of space given to the Communist campaign has been due to the hope of a large section of the press that the Communists would say something or do something that could be used as a weapon between the two major contestants for the Presidency.

This leads me to an examination of what freedom of the press means as we see it exemplified in the relation between the press and the major candidates, and the voting population and the major candidates. Here I found a rather strange situation.

With the voters divided into two camps, approximately equal (I am ignoring for the sake of simplicity the negligible votes of Norman Thomas, Mr. Lemke and myself), with a slight advantage for the President, we see that freedom of the press brings the result that 90 per cent or thereabouts, of the daily papers are on one side. They are supporting Landon. This is worth noting, inasmuch as it shows that freedom of the press does not mean freedom of expression for the majority of the population of the country. It means freedom of expression for those people who happen to own certain stocks and bonds that represent ownership of particular newspapers. That is, it is freedom for some particular capitalists to express their interests and the interests of those with whom they are most closely associated.

Another observation about freedom of the press is that freedom of the press today, especially seems to be freedom to advocate and propagandize for the overthrow of the government of a friendly country. I find the largest part of the daily press of the United States is very actively supporting the attempt to overthrow the government of Spain, the duly elected democratic constitutional government of that country; that the press of the United States is a great subversive force for the overthrow of constitutional government, at least in so far as it relates to Spain.

I further found, when I reached Seattle on the 14th of August, just a day after the *Post-Intelligencer* had been closed by a strike, how freedom of the press was interpreted by those who have the exercise of that freedom. It meant the unlimited

authority of the owners of the press to discharge without any review any of their employees that they saw fit, even those who had been for fifteen years and more engaged in one particular job with complete satisfaction to the employer. It meant the right to refuse to a particular section of the population the right to organize, which has been established as a part of the public policy of the country.

As I rode down here today, I clipped from the *New York American* a couple of examples of what freedom of the press means. This leads me more directly into the politics of the election campaign. Here are two items which I give to you not as anything extraordinary but as typical of a great campaign that is being made in this country. Item No. 1, on page 7, headline, "America Being Communized, Says Publisher." Item No. 2, on the editorial page, a cartoon: "Man's Enemy—and God's, Communism on the Rampage."

I give you these two items as typical of the trend of a great body of thought in America today that is expressed in our free press, which we Communists consider the central question of the election campaign. There are two currents of newspaper propaganda: first, the charge that America is being communized through the Roosevelt administration; and second, the campaign against Communism as man's enemy and God's, something that is outlawed, outside the pale, to be destroyed by any possible means. These we consider typical of the first stage of the rise of fascism. This is exactly the propaganda that preceded Hitler's assumption of power in Germany. This is precisely the propaganda that prepared the fascist revolt in Spain. This propaganda, carried a step further in its logical development in America, would call for an attempt by these interests which are responsible for this propaganda to cancel the results of our coming elections if they should prove unfavorable.

I give you this thought for what it may be worth. If you can find evidence in the daily life that you come in contact with to support that thought, it will remain with you. If there is no evidence to support it, I have done no harm in raising the

question before your minds, which recalls to my mind the conversation I had with a certain newspaperman in a city that shall be unnamed and of a paper that we will not mention, who told me what freedom of the press meant for him.

He recently interviewed a big executive of one of the greatest corporations of America. In the course of the conversation he asked, "What will you do in case this administration to which you object so violently is returned by the voters?" This big executive said, "Well, we will not take it lying down." There is being prepared an organized attempt to resist the carrying through of the expressed will of the voters in 1936 if it goes contrary to the will of these big executives of industry.

I asked this gentleman why he didn't publish that interview. He said if he had so much as presented it to his editor he would have been fired, that this kind of thing, while freely talked, is off the record—off the record.

It is the purpose of the Communist Party in this present election campaign to put this issue on the record. We mean to bring this discussion, which goes on so freely in the hotel lobbies and the directors' rooms, if possible into the mass meetings of the voters and into the newspapers and on the radio. We consider this the central issue in 1936: the menace of fascism, the presence in America of a strong and growing body of fascist opinion which has behind it some of the most powerful figures in American finance, journalism and public life.

We see in this a direct menace to the interests and rights of the mass of the population. We see in it a threat to carry America down that same bloody road which so many European nations have already passed. We are not of the opinion that this danger is remote. We are living in a time of excessive speed of historical development. The radio and the airplane have speeded up our political development as well as our communications. The crisis which grips Europe at this moment is not unconnected with this fascist threat in the United States.

We Communists say the central issue before the country is whether it shall allow itself to be carried down this path of

reaction or whether there is still vitality enough in American democracy to protect itself from this threat and find a road which will give at least the rudiments of progress as expressed in higher living standards and democratic rights for the majority of the population.

It is this analysis of the forces and issues of the 1936 elections that caused the Communist Party to declare, in its platform, that the issue of capitalism versus socialism is not the issue in 1936. We have seen that the chief desire of the reactionary forces is to make this the issue. We have examined why this is their desire, why most reactionary forces want to make socialism the main issue, and we have come to the conclusion that they saw in this their greatest opportunity if successful, to demoralize the progressive forces of the country, break up their unity, and guarantee the victory of the reactionaries.

We therefore came to the conclusion that it is not the business of those who really stand for socialism in America, in a condition where powerful reactionary forces are threatening the country and in which the forces of socialism are very weak—it is not the business of those who advocate a new social order to make this socialism the issue of the 1936 campaign and thereby assist the reactionaries in their dishonest attempt to make socialism the issue.

We consider that it is necessary to make the issue, in so far as we are able, the gathering of all forces of democracy and progress into joint resistance to the threat of the reactionaries who would lead our country on the path of fascism. We do not think that this can be done successfully through the instrumentality of any existing party. That is why we are proposing the formation of a Farmer-Labor Party locally, on a state scale, and nationally.

Because it is too late to have a national Farmer-Labor ticket in the field, the Communists put forward their own independent ticket. We use the campaign in order to educate as much of the population as we can reach to the necessity for the building of this new political instrumentality, the Farmer-Labor

Party, which we conceive as a gathering of all the progressive forces of the country.

We consider that the present line-up of parties in America is artificial. It has no relation to the real issues before the country, and cannot last beyond the present election. We are certain that there is going to be such a complete political shake-up in this country that before another Presidential election comes around the Republican and Democratic parties, as at present existing, will not exist. They will be historic memories. We will probably be still carrying out the old American tradition of a two-party system, but in a new form. There may even be a multiplicity of political parties, but they will be grouped into two main alliances. One will represent the reactionaries, those who are driving toward fascism; the other will represent all the forces of progress in the country, the anti-fascist forces, the democratic forces, and in that term I include the Socialists and the Communists.

It is a popular superstition, which it is one of the main tasks of our Party to dispel, that the Communists are anti-democratic. This arises out of a vulgar interpretation of our slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the means of the transition to socialism. The Communists are not and have never been anti-democratic. The Communist program is only realizable through the fullest possible extension of democracy, and the realization of democracy on a scale which has not been dreamed of before in this country.

The Communist Party is not and has not been the advocate of force and violence. Perhaps one of the best historical examples which vividly gives you the true picture of who are the advocates of force and violence is the situation today in Spain. If, in the future history of America, there is a development of large-scale struggles of a violent character, let me declare categorically here that the responsibility will not rest with the Communist Party nor with the working class upon which the Communist Party bases itself in the first instance.

The responsibility for any such possible development in the future course of American politics will rest upon those same

groups and strata of the population which are carrying through this campaign that I spoke of—of America being Communized by the New Deal, and of Communism as man's enemy and God's. These are the people who are preparing violent chapters for American political history. The political camp that they represent, which is gathered around the candidate Landon, and is supported by the du Pont family, Morgan, Mellon and most of the big monopolists of this country, is the camp of Fascism.

*Speech delivered before three hundred Washington correspondents at luncheon of the National Press Club, August 26, 1936.*

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V

## Who Are the Real Friends of Political Asylum?

RECENTLY the Trotskyites, from their new vantage point inside the Socialist Party, launched another masked attack against the Soviet Union and against the revolutionary movement everywhere. This time they covered themselves with the names of various persons of more savory reputation than their own, persons who from political naïveté or from considerations of factional advantage have lent their names to the Committee for the Defense of Trotsky.

This committee, setting itself the task of securing asylum for Trotsky, seems to think that it has placed the Communist Party in an embarrassing position when we oppose their demand for asylum. They charge that we have thereby become the enemies of the principle of political asylum.

Let these gentlemen know that we meet the issue that they have raised, squarely and without evasion. We declare that we stand unequivocally for the right of political asylum for those who suffer persecution at the hands of the enemies of democracy and progress, the reactionaries and fascists. At the same time we declare that we do not include in the conception of right of asylum, the right to use asylum to plot and conspire assassinations in another country. When political refugees thus use the right of asylum, as was done, for example, by the assassins of Barthou and Alexander, they are discrediting the right of asylum and furnishing its enemies with the most powerful weapon for its abolition. The same is true of those who would defend others in such a use of the right of asylum.

We apply exactly the same principle to Trotsky and his

accomplices in the murder of Kirov, and the plotted murder of a dozen other leaders of the Soviet Union. They have used, and continue to use, the right of asylum as the cover for their assassins' plots. Thereby they discredit the whole mass movement within the democratic countries which is demanding asylum for the hundreds of thousands of refugees from fascist terrorism. They turn the whole issue away from its true political significance, and try, so far as they are able, to establish that either there shall be no asylum at all, or it shall include protection for their assassination circles.

We speak out loud and clear on this question. We are against asylum anywhere in the world for those who make assassination their weapon of political struggle, no matter who they may be. We will support every sincere effort to outlaw assassination by international agreements. From the days of Marx and Engels, the Communist movement has always condemned assassination as a political weapon. We will still condemn it, we will not support it directly or indirectly, and when we fight for the right of asylum we specifically exclude from this right those who plot or execute assassinations.

We request that this issue be faced just as squarely by the gentlemen who have lent their names to the defense of Trotsky. We ask Norman Thomas, in particular, and the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, which authorized his speaking on behalf of Trotsky, just where they stand on this question. *Do you defend the right to use asylum to plot and execute assassinations?*

Please do not evade this question, gentlemen, by raising your extraordinary doubts about Trotsky's connection with the Kirov assassination. Sixteen of his collaborators confessed in open court, before the whole world; Trotsky accepted responsibility for them, after their conviction and execution by pledging to "avenge" them; and Trotsky has for several years openly written to prepare and condone assassinations in the Soviet Union.

Let me report some facts presented by Comrade Ercoli which will be of value to the entire working class in judging



the activities of the Trotskyite counter-revolutionaries in all countries. He cited the case of a scoundrel, connected with both the police and the Trotskyist group in Paris, who attempted to kill Marcel Cachin and was prevented from doing so only by accident.

There was the provocateur linked with the Trotskyist groups who killed Comrade Camille Montanari, one of the best Italian revolutionaries. There was Maria Reese, expelled from the German Communist Party for upholding Trotsky's defeatist views on German fascism, who later became one of the leaders of the German Trotskyists, and during the Saar plebiscite made a Hitlerite speech over the radio with the approval of the German Trotskyist press.

There was Nils Hyg, one of the leaders of the Trotskyites in Sweden, who received money from the notorious Ivar Kreuger, whose specialty was financing fascist organizations.

In Budapest, a Trotskyist sheet appears legally, although Communist publications are prosecuted as high treason. A Hungarian Trotskyist (Weisschauss) in 1926 organized an attack on the life of Rakosi when the latter was working illegally in the country.

Ruth Fischer, liaison agent between Trotsky and the terrorist sent by him to the Soviet Union, is a close collaborator of Doriot, renegade and fascist leader. In Poland, the police publish Trotskyist pamphlets and try to circulate them among the workers.

In Italy, Trotsky's autobiography, which is a cesspool of slander against the Communist International, is recommended by the police for prison libraries.

In Spain and France the People's Front, which is the bulwark against fascism, is attacked by the remnants of the Trotskyite sect, who furnish agents-provocateur in their attempt to disrupt the united front and the People's Front.

This list could be extended indefinitely. The connections between the police and the Trotskyites are an irrefutable fact. The French reactionary journalist, de Kerillis, has stated in *Echo de Paris*, that the French police possess proofs of the

close ties between the activities of the Trotskyites and Hitler's murderous Gestapo. These facts are known to every one who wants to know the facts. The very least that must be demanded of those who would defend Trotsky and seek to win a new asylum for him is a clear and unequivocal answer to this question. Evasion of this question will forever stamp the defenders of Trotsky as among those who opened the gates to the worst enemies of democracy and liberty, no matter how much they protest their innocence.

It is no accident that those who rush to put their names to the defense of Trotsky, and who speak on his behalf, have no such irresistible urge to have their names on committees for the defense of Spanish democracy, are not making speeches in that cause; they have formed no committees to secure asylum in America for the victims of Hitler and Mussolini. At a moment when hundreds of thousands of the heroic Spanish people are laying down their lives for the preservation of democratic rights, that is the moment chosen by these gentlemen to set up a committee to gain democratic rights, the right of asylum—but for Trotsky.

Class-conscious workers, yes, even simple but serious democrats, will have no hesitation in deciding who are really the friends of political asylum, who are the friends of democracy. Those who rush to the defense of Trotsky are giving service to the worst enemies of democracy, to Hitler, with whose Gestapo Trotsky had secret dealings. Those who fight uncompromisingly against the political assassins, against Trotsky, and demand their outlawing, are the same people who unhesitatingly rush to the defense of the Spanish people, who organize material help, who are sending from their ranks personal help, who are standing in the forefront of the struggle for democracy and liberation in their own lands.

These are facts which show the sinister character of counter-revolutionary Trotskyism, which show that it is nothing but an agent of fascism in the ranks of the working class. Five years ago, Comrade Stalin made a masterly analysis of the nature of Trotskyism in which he proved that it was nothing

but the vanguard of world counter-revolution. Let me quote his profound words:

... Trotskyism is the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, which is carrying on the struggle against Communism, against the Soviet government, against the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie its intellectual weapon against Bolshevism, in the form of the thesis of the impossibility of building socialism in our country, in the form of the thesis of the inevitability of the degeneration of the Bolsheviks, etc.? That weapon was given it by Trotskyism. It is not an accident that all anti-Soviet groupings in the U.S.S.R. in their attempts to give grounds for their argument of the inevitability of the struggle against the Soviet government referred to the well-known thesis of Trotskyism of the impossibility of building socialism in our country, of the inevitable degeneration of the Soviet government, of the probable return of capitalism.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in the U.S.S.R. its tactical weapon in the form of attempts at open attacks on the Soviet government? This weapon was given to it by the Trotskyists, who tried to organize anti-Soviet demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad on November 7, 1927. It is a fact that the anti-Soviet actions of the Trotskyists raised the spirits of the bourgeoisie and let loose the work of counter-revolutionary sabotage of the bourgeois specialists.

Who gave the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie an organizational weapon in the form of attempts at organizing underground anti-Soviet organizations? This weapon was given to it by the Trotskyists who founded their own anti-Bolshevik illegal group. It is a fact that the underground anti-Soviet work of the Trotskyists facilitated the organized formation of the anti-Soviet groups within the U.S.S.R.

Trotskyism is the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

That is why liberalism towards Trotskyism, even when the latter is shattered and concealed, is stupidity bordering on crime, bordering on treason to the working class. (J. Stalin, *Leninism*, International Publishers, Vol. II, pp. 403-404.)

This warning of Comrade Stalin is of the utmost importance to the entire working class. It shows that mistaken tolerance, that ignorance of the counter-revolutionary nature of Trotskyism, are nothing short of a crime against the working class.

If the working class is to progress, if it is to build the

People's Front against reaction and fascism, it must worm out these agents of the fascists who are trying to conceal their murderous activity by playing on the confusion of certain liberals. Norman Thomas and the other leaders of the Socialist Party, who are covering up Trotsky, are enabling these counter-revolutionaries to perpetrate betrayals of the best interests of the working class. We say:

No asylum and no tolerance for political assassins and assassinations!

Political asylum should be sought for the victims of political reaction and fascism which, trying to maintain a dying capitalism, is murdering and oppressing whole peoples.

We must and will win the working class to this stand!

*Extracts from the Closing Speech at the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, U.S.A., December 7, 1936.*

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## VI

### The Constitutional Crisis

WHEN President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent to Congress his proposals for the reform of the judiciary, with special reference to the Supreme Court, he brought to a head the most serious political struggle that has emerged in America since the days of Civil War and Reconstruction. Like the issues of the Civil War, this presents a constitutional crisis, going to the very foundation of the American system of government and expressing a deep crisis in class relations. Already it has aroused a stubborn bitterness that was not witnessed even in the 1936 Presidential election, extraordinary for its sharpness. The struggle about the role of the Supreme Court is cutting across old party lines. It has deeply divided the Democratic Party, the party of the Roosevelt administration. It bids fair to furnish the occasion for a fundamental regrouping of class forces, long in preparation and now reaching maturity. It is, therefore, of more than ordinary importance to study the issues of this struggle, and to see the process which is lining up individuals, groups, parties and classes on one or the other side—a realignment which will indicate in what direction American political life is heading for the next period.

President Roosevelt's plan for judicial reform does not, in itself, explain the tremendous excitement which it aroused. It is far from revolutionary. It does not attempt to limit the role of the Supreme Court as fixed in the written Constitution of the U.S.A. It does not even challenge the power, usurped by the Supreme Court, without constitutional authorization, to function as a supreme legislative organ by exercise of a veto upon laws passed by Congress and approved by the President.

It is limited to measures, expressly within the power of Congress as fixed by the Constitution, to enlarge the personnel of the court under certain conditions. The expectation that such enlargement of the court may shift its views on disputed questions toward a more favorable attitude to the administration just re-elected by an overwhelming majority, is certainly not something to shock the prejudices of a democratic people. It is an expectation that would be taken for granted in any other democratic country but the U.S.A.

That feature of Roosevelt's plan around which controversy rages, is the provision that whenever judges of the Supreme Court reach the age of 70 years without retiring (upon a pension, already provided by law, of the full salary of \$20,000 per year), then the President is empowered, with the agreement of the Senate, to name additional judges to the same number, provided that the present membership of nine shall not be increased to more than 15. Inasmuch as among the present nine members, six are already more than 70 years of age, this means in practice that if the plan is adopted the President will immediately propose six new judges, either to replace them if they resign or to sit with them on the court if they do not.

The immediate significance of this plan lies in the fact that the Supreme Court itself is sharply divided. With a divided vote, often five to four, it has been exercising with unexampled freedom its usurped power to nullify Federal legislation. During the Roosevelt administration it has exercised this power on more occasions than in the entire previous history of the U.S.A. It has cancelled most of the laws embodying Roosevelt's so-called New Deal policies, usually with a bare majority, with the minority of the court itself vigorously protesting against such exercise of a questionable power. It is clear that the adoption of the Roosevelt plan would result in a right-about-face of the Supreme Court on most of the controversial issues of the day, and thereby would bring about a new relation of forces within the American governmental system.

Thus it comes about that a minor reform of the judicial system, which in a time of less social strain and struggle would pass with little attention, at this moment becomes the center of a political crisis that demands the attention of the whole world. Thus it is that a simple judicial reform becomes the storm center of a constitutional crisis in the most powerful capitalist country in the world.

### 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CRISIS

A clear understanding of the constitutional crisis requires that we review briefly the structure and history of the governmental system that arose upon the basis of the Constitution of 1787. The central or "federal" government is a federation of sovereign states (now 48 in number). To the individual states is reserved all governmental powers not expressly granted by the Constitution to the federal government. The federal government of limited powers is itself composed of three co-ordinate branches, which are supposed to act as restraining influences upon one another, with no one branch supreme, in what has been called in American constitutional law the "system of checks and balances." These three co-ordinate branches are the executive, the legislative and the judicial.

Executive powers are concentrated in the hands of the President and exercised by him directly and through his cabinet. The President appoints his cabinet with the agreement of the Senate; he is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces; he conducts foreign affairs through his Secretary of State and negotiates treaties with the agreement of the Senate; he may guide legislation through his reports and messages to Congress; he names the judges of the Supreme Court to fill vacancies with the agreement of the Senate; he is charged with the execution of the laws and policies of the federal government as laid down by acts of Congress which become law when approved by his signature or when passed over his veto by a two-thirds vote of both houses of Congress.

The legislative power is vested in the Congress of two

houses, the House of Representatives and the Senate, with concurrent powers. Representatives are elected every two years by the states in proportion to their population, and now number some 435. The Senate has two members from each state, regardless of size, a total of 96, elected for six years, with one-third to be chosen every two years. A legislative act becomes law when adopted by both houses and approved by the President, or when passed over a Presidential veto by a two-thirds majority of both houses. The power to declare war or make peace is vested in Congress.

Judicial powers are vested in a Supreme Court, provided in the Constitution, and in such lower courts as may be provided by act of Congress. The number of its members is determined by Congress. Judges are appointed by the President with the approval of the Senate and hold office for life; once appointed, they can be removed only by impeachment by the House of Representatives for acts of moral turpitude, and conviction after trial before the Senate. The judiciary interprets the application of the law to individual cases, on request of the executive officers of the government or on appeal by individual citizens.

The relations between the 48 states and the federal government, and between the three co-ordinate and equal branches of the federal government, make up the famous system of "checks and balances."

In the course of years, however, by a gradual accumulation of precedent, the Supreme Court assumed such powers that destroyed the theoretically equal "balance" of the three co-ordinate branches. By assuming the power to determine whether Congress, in adopting legislation, had acted within the powers granted to it by the Constitution, and to cancel such legislation which it declared was not so empowered, the Supreme Court in fact became a superior legislative organ, over and above the elected bodies of legislative and executive branches—a supreme governing power not elected by the people and outside any constitutional means of popular control or removal.



All this makes up a very complicated structure of government. It works without serious difficulty as long as the three branches of government are in substantial agreement as to the boundaries of their varied and overlapping powers and as to the direction of policy to be followed. But when any serious difference arises as to the division of powers and as to fundamental policy, this brings about a constitutional crisis, a deadlock between the organs of governmental power. Such a constitutional crisis exists today in the deep division on policy between the President and Congress on the one hand, and the Supreme Court on the other.

The Constitution itself provides two ways of solving such a constitutional crisis. One way is to amend the Constitution, as provided in that document, with a declaration on the matter in dispute. The other way is to bring the opinion of the Supreme Court into agreement with Congress and the executive by changing its personal composition through additional appointments.

Constitutional amendment is, however, so hedged about with difficulties that it has never been successfully applied on any question which deeply divided the country. Such an amendment must be submitted by Act of Congress to the separate 48 state legislatures for their approval, and for adoption requires the agreement of 36 out of the 48 states. Any 13 states can block such an amendment and prevent its ratification. Such a group of 13 states might comprise less than five per cent of the population, but its veto is as effective as if it were a majority. Amendments to the Constitution on fundamental issues have proved in past history capable of adoption only after a practical solution of the issue in controversy had been found by other means.

A few simple examples will sufficiently illustrate this point. Prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages was written into the Constitution during the World War, under the influence of war conditions which made national control necessary. After the war, the population turned against prohibition by an overwhelming majority. But prohibition re-

mained for many years the law of the land, until mass violation of the law had nullified it in practice. Only the growth of a tremendous industry, outside the law and creating an atmosphere of general lawlessness among the population, finally forced the advocates of prohibition themselves to agree to its repeal as impossible of enforcement. Since this issue did not involve any basic alignment of class interests, it serves to bring out all the more sharply the rigidity of the American constitutional system.

The constitutional amendments which abolished slavery in the United States and guaranteed equal rights to all citizens, came only many years after the practical decision had been made in life by the arbitrament of Civil War. The slave power in the Southern states had long dominated the federal government in all its branches; it had established the principle of the constitutional inviolability of slavery as an institution. The slave power lost control of the executive and legislative branches of the government in the election of 1860, not on the issue of slavery itself, but only on the issue of its extension to the new Western states just being opened up; even after 1860 it still retained control of the Supreme Court. Slavery was destroyed only when the slave states tried to withdraw from the federal union, in order, by military power, to force slavery upon the new states. Even then, abolition of slavery was only adopted, after years of Civil War, as a military measure necessary to a military decision of the struggle to prevent the permanent disruption of the Union. Only later did constitutional amendment register this decision in the fundamental law.

Every constitutional crisis in American history has been, of course, merely the juridical form taken by great social struggles, conflicts of classes, contradiction between fundamental class interests. In every such struggle, the role of the Supreme Court has been a very active and vital one, and in each case the Supreme Court has been the main fortress of the forces of political and social reaction, of privilege and monopoly.

The first great constitutional crisis, in which can be seen the outline of all succeeding ones, arose early in the administration of Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, and the first great ideologist of American democracy.

Jefferson came to the presidency in 1801, at the head of the Democratic Party. He had defeated the Federalist Party, the party which had championed the Constitution and which had held power under it for the first 12 years after its adoption. The Federalist Party represented the landed aristocracy of the Northeast, the clerical influences, and the moneyed interests (mercantile and speculative capital). In full control of all three branches of the federal government, it had ridden roughshod over the interests and liberties of the masses, enforcing its policies with exceptional laws (the so-called "Alien and Sedition laws").

The Federalist Party, upon its defeat in the election of 1800, determined before surrendering office to maintain and strengthen its stronghold in the judiciary, which holds office for life and is irremovable. To insure this stronghold for a long time, the Federalists, in their last days of power, created additional courts to double the previous number, appointing and confirming the Federalist occupants of the new posts on the last day of their administration before Jefferson assumed office. The Federalist Secretary of State, John Marshall, sat at his desk until midnight of his last day in office, issuing certificates of appointment to new Federalist judges; at that moment Marshall was himself already appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, a post he was to occupy for 30 years, and in which he was to prepare the Supreme Court for its reactionary role in the constitutional crisis of today.

President Jefferson, supported by a majority of Congress, when faced by this outrageous abuse of power, proceeded to adopt an act of repeal of the legislation which had created the new courts; he refused to recognize the new judges, to set up their courts, or to provide them with salaries. The first great struggle had begun between the elective branches of the government and the judiciary.

The Federalist Party, in control of the judiciary, attempted to use this position to extend their power. A certain Mr. Marbury, a Federalist appointee under the repealed Act, was refused his judicial commission by James Madison, Secretary of State under Jefferson. Marbury appealed to the Supreme Court for an order directing Madison to issue his commission. Chief Justice Marshall issued the decision, upholding the right of Marbury, declaring that his commission had been wrongfully withheld, but refusing any court action in his relief on the ground that the Act of Congress which granted jurisdiction to the courts to review such contests was contrary to the Constitution, was therefore void, and the Supreme Court without jurisdiction. Thus in the form of refusing to exercise a jurisdiction granted by Congress, the Supreme Court made its historic usurpation of power over Congress.

This historic case of "Marbury versus Madison" was the first statement of the doctrine of judicial power to nullify legislation. It was a clear act of usurpation, not sanctioned by the Constitution, and embodying a doctrine which had been specifically rejected by the Constitutional Convention which wrote that document.

Jefferson and Congress refused to recognize this decision of John Marshall for the Supreme Court. On his side, Marshall, aware of the great popular support behind Jefferson, had carefully refrained from going farther than the statement of the new doctrine, without granting Marbury any specific measure of redress of his grievance. Thus there was a deadlock. Marshall and the Federalist Party had their doctrine embodied in a decision of the Supreme Court, but Jefferson, with Congress and the country behind him, refused to bow to the decision.

So unpopular was this new doctrine of judicial veto of legislation, with its usurpation of power on the part of the Supreme Court, that John Marshall, its author, never again dared to repeat its expression in a decision in all his ensuing 30 years as Chief Justice. To have done so would have created a crisis out of which the Supreme Court would certainly

have emerged with its power definitely curtailed. For 50 years the decision in the case of "Marbury versus Madison" slumbered in the archives, and no Supreme Court Justice dared propose to exercise this questionable power. But though slumbering in the archives, this decision remained a judicial precedent, awaiting a more favorable moment for revival and effective enforcement.

Thus did the first great struggle in that long line of battles that led to the present constitutional crisis end in a compromise. Jefferson had gained the immediate victory. But John Marshall had laid down a doctrine and a precedent which was to lead directly to the Civil War and rally all reactionary forces in American life down to the present day.

In these modern days, the reactionaries wish to bolster up the power of the Supreme Court by assigning to it the special role of "bulwark of the Constitution," of the protector of national unity. But to accomplish this it is necessary for them to ignore, to try to forget, the history of the Supreme Court in the time of Jefferson's presidency. For in that period the Supreme Court, acting as the chief political instrument of the party of reaction, the Federalists, was deeply involved in conspiracies to overthrow the Constitution, to betray the very independence of the nation.

The Federalists were the party of the Constitution—but only so long as they ruled the land under that Constitution. When Jefferson and the Democratic Party brought to an end the Federalists' 12 years of misrule and oppression, the Federalists rapidly moved away from their position of being champions of national unification and passed over to the championship of states' rights against the central government, of secession and disunion, and went so far as to enter into conspiratorial relations with the agents of the British Empire, plotting to cut off the New England and Eastern states from the Union, to unite them with Canada for submission to the British Crown. That their conspiracy came to nothing in the end was due, not to their own lack of determination and zeal in their treasonable efforts, but to the exceptional success of

the policies of Jefferson, which brought such economic progress to the country as to cut the ground out from under the Federalists and take their mass support away from them. These well-established facts of American history are conveniently forgotten by those who would glorify the role of the Supreme Court, because in these treasonable conspiracies the court, through its Chief Justice Marshall, was an active participant.

John Marshall, one of the chief leaders of the Federalist Party, by no means retired from active politics when he ascended the Supreme Bench. During Jefferson's first term, the judiciary under Marshall used their positions as rostrums for political harangues against the administration, and to organize the opposition. When, in the election of 1804, the Federalist campaign against Jefferson collapsed, and he was re-elected by a majority which swept into his ranks most of the former strongholds of the Federalists, that party degenerated so completely that it became involved in the fantastic adventure of Aaron Burr, Vice-President of the United States in Jefferson's first term, who plotted with British and Spanish imperialists to cut off the great Western territories of Louisiana (purchased by Jefferson from Napoleon) by a military *coup d'état*. It was in the circumstances of the collapse of Burr's treasonable enterprise that the Supreme Court, through its Chief Justice Marshall, came into the open as the last refuge of treason against the Constitution and the country's independence and unity.

Burr's conspiracy had collapsed when his confederates among the high officers of the U. S. Army became frightened and withdrew from the adventure, betraying their own treasonable conspiracy to Jefferson. Burr himself was caught while attempting to flee the country to Mexico, after his military expedition had been dispersed. He was placed on trial on charges of treason before the court over which John Marshall presided. The evidence of Burr's treason in the hands of the government was overwhelming and complete. But Chief Justice Marshall was there to protect the traitor in his treason, and he did his job effectively.

There was but one way to save Burr from the consequences of his treason, to prevent the presentation of the evidence against him. While Burr was awaiting trial, Marshall had given him his freedom on bail, through a legal trick. The Federalist gentlemen and ladies vied with one another to heap public honors upon Burr while he awaited trial. He was feasted and lauded in the homes of the gentry. And in the midst of it all, shortly before the trial was to open, Chief Justice Marshall attended a great banquet given in honor of the traitor Burr, associating with those who openly defended his treason. When the trial opened, Marshall gave a ruling to define the crime of treason in such a way as to exclude all the government's evidence. In order to do this, he had to overthrow a previous ruling of his own, given but a few months before, and establish a rule which no jurist before or since has ever defended, and which was later rejected by the same Supreme Court. But it served the immediate purpose of excluding the evidence against Burr. The jury brought in a most unusual form of verdict: "Not proved by the evidence which has been presented." Marshall simply ordered the clerk of the Court to change the verdict to "Not guilty" and Burr was released.

Thus did the Supreme Court give aid and comfort to treason, and save that traitor whose very name has remained to this day the synonym of treason to the unity and independence of the nation.

In the case of Aaron Burr, and of the Federalist Party which aided and protected him, we have a close parallel with the development of Trotsky and the various groups and cliques which supported him in the Soviet Union. This case is the complete answer to those Americans like the Socialist leader, Norman Thomas, who rush to Trotsky's defense in connection with the recent Moscow trial of the Trotskyist Center, with the cry: "It is incredible that one who participated in the revolution should betray it, and betray it to a foreign power." In all revolutions, there have been those who would later betray it if they could, and in the American bourgeois revolution

we have a perfect example in the case of Aaron Burr. But just as John Marshall could pronounce Burr "Not guilty" by excluding the evidence, so can Norman Thomas today give the same verdict to Trotsky upon similar principles. As John Marshall saw fit to attend a banquet in honor of Burr on the eve of his trial, so Thomas can appear in a public meeting on behalf of Trotsky on the eve of the Moscow trial. But no one can disguise the political character of both these parallel actions, as equally a service to reaction and treason.

The governmental system of the United States was originally built upon a compromise between the commercial and industrial Northeastern states, hostile to slavery, and the agrarian plantation Southern states, based upon Negro slavery. Despite constant conflict of interest and constant friction in government, this compromise was continued and extended from 1776 until the 1850's. In the middle of the nineteenth century, this system of compromise came to a crisis. It broke down under the blows of the rapid opening up of the tremendous territories of the West following the discovery of gold in California and other Western territories.

The famous "gold rush" to the West of 1849 changed the course of American history, and affected the whole world, as was testified most illuminatingly in the writings of Marx and Engels at the time. The rapid occupation of a new continent, and the erection of a whole series of new "sovereign states" to take their place within the existing union of states, immediately raised the slavery issue as one that could no longer be settled by compromise. If slavery was introduced into the new territories, that would mean that control went to the South and with it control of the federal union as long as slavery existed. If, on the other hand, slavery was prohibited in the new territories, that would mean that control would go to the Northeastern states, and with it hegemony over the federal union. For the slave-owning South the issue was further sharpened by the urgent need of ever new lands upon which to constantly extend the plantation system, if slavery was to continue at all, even in its old territories, because its



backward agrarian system was rapidly exhausting the lands of the original slave states. The struggle for the West would necessarily decide the issue of the continuance of slavery or its abolition.

Into this struggle entered the Supreme Court, then as always the tried and trusted instrument of the most reactionary social and political forces in the land. In its famous decision in the case involving the runaway slave, Dred Scott, it revived the forgotten doctrine of John Marshall in the case of "Marbury versus Madison." It declared that the institution of slavery, antedating the Constitution and the union of states, could not under the Constitution be restricted by the government of the federal union, either in the established slave states or in the new states to be created. If this decision remained as the law of the land, then the victory of the South and of slavery over the whole country was assured.

Both the two major parties, Whig and Democratic, split on this issue in the 1860 election, and a new party, the Republican, formed in 1856, forged to the front on the issue of restraining slavery from extension into the new Western territories. The Republican Party, in a three-cornered contest, gained only a minority of the popular vote, but with a majority of the electoral vote of the states, elected Abraham Lincoln as President. Within a few months after Lincoln's assumption of office, the South had opened the hostilities which began four years of Civil War. This bloody conflict was required to override the Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court, and to amend the Constitution in the only way in which it has ever been fundamentally amended.

## 2. THE NEW CRISIS AND ITS POSSIBLE OUTCOME

Now once again a deep-going social and economic crisis has produced a crisis of the Constitution. This crisis today is more fundamental than that which produced the Civil War. Once again the electorate has rejected the party of extreme reaction; but this time the majority is more decisive, 27 mil-

lions as against 17 millions in the popular vote, and 46 states against two in the electoral vote. And once again the Supreme Court has come forward as the bulwark of defeated reaction, has set itself as a barrier to prohibit, as contrary to the Constitution, those policies adopted by the nation in the vast plebiscite of the election of 1936.

The Supreme Court, by nullifying almost all the legislation embodying Roosevelt's policies, and thus closing constitutional doors against any measures of a progressive, democratic and nationally-unifying character, has brought the country to an impasse.

Roosevelt, and all the progressive and democratic forces which have gathered around him, must either surrender to the program of his defeated enemies of the Republican Party, the Liberty League, and the right-wing of his own Democratic Party—or he must take up the battle to overrule the Supreme Court, to bring that institution in line with the policies which aroused the enthusiastic support of the vast majority of the people.

Roosevelt has chosen to take up the fight. In his choice of weapons he has taken that one which promises the least fundamental victory, but the quickest one—to change the composition of the Supreme Court.

The Democratic Party, which Roosevelt heads, has an overwhelming majority of the members of both Houses of Congress. With his program clearly and indisputably within the constitutional powers of Congress to enact and enforce, it would seem that Roosevelt's victory in this fight should be quick and overwhelming.

But this is not so clear in the actual relation of forces. Among the Democratic Congressmen, particularly in the Senate, there is a strong right-wing which on this issue is combining forces with the Republicans, probably as a prelude to a more permanent political regrouping in the country at large.

In the Senate a little group whose votes will be decisive are carefully sitting on the exact middle of the fence, swaying with the political winds and trying to make up their minds

as to which side of this issue will best advance their future political careers.

It is this relation of forces which has made it necessary for Roosevelt to go to the country with an appeal for the support of the masses. In this appeal the dominant note is, of necessity, a clear and unmistakable call to the workers and farmers, those whom Roosevelt speaks of as the "underprivileged," to rally against the forces of monopoly capital, of entrenched privilege and greed.

The battle over the Supreme Court has reached an intensity far beyond that of the Presidential election last year, unprecedentedly bitter as that was. The Republican Party, the Liberty League forces, the Manufacturers Association and the Chambers of Commerce, have been joined by those reactionaries who a year ago still remained for various reasons in the camp of Roosevelt. The Democratic Party is now in process of being split much more seriously and fundamentally than Al Smith and his "Jeffersonian Democrats" were able to split it in 1936.

The shifting of the upper classes to opposition, and the lower classes to support of Roosevelt, is on the Supreme Court issue more pronounced than ever. For the first time in national politics class divisions appear as the all-dominating feature of a decisive political struggle.

The working class, the farmers and the toiling middle classes are in overwhelming majority supporting Roosevelt's proposal for reforming the Supreme Court. This is particularly true of the organized labor movement. Even the reactionary leaders of the American Federation of Labor, while desperately fighting against the progressive industrial unions of the Committee for Industrial Organization headed by John L. Lewis, are forced by their membership to join in support of the Roosevelt plan in this fight, except for a few extreme reactionaries like William Hutcheson of the Carpenters' Union. Organized labor, in the midst of great strikes and organizing campaigns, in which it faces the courts as its most dangerous enemies, rallies like one army to support the fight to curb

these courts and exercise over them at least a minimum of popular control.

In this fight the Communist Party has militantly taken its stand shoulder to shoulder with the organized workers and the forces of popular democracy. Without sharing any of the illusions about the efficacy of Roosevelt's policies to fundamentally solve the political and economic problems of the country, the Communist Party recognizes unqualifiedly that in this battle the forces of reaction, fascism and war are concentrated more and more in the camp opposing Roosevelt's plan, while the forces of a popular democracy, and first of all of the labor movement, are rallied in its support. In such a line-up there is but one possible place for the Communists, on the side of democracy. When the masses of our country are aroused to battle against entrenched privilege, monopoly capital and political reaction, there is no third or neutral position.

This is all the more true since the leading forces in both camps so clearly proclaim the fundamental issue. Roosevelt has placed his case upon the foundation of a "solemn assurance that in a world in which democracy is under attack" he is seeking "to make American democracy succeed"—"political and economic democracy"—which he has concretized as "one-third of a nation ill-nourished, ill-clad, ill-housed, who must be well-nourished, well-clothed, and well-housed." That is only a statement of aims, good as that may be, and not a program for attaining these aims—but the attack against the judicial dictatorship is the first practical step in any effective program to those ends, a step which can and must be supported with all energy.

On the other hand the reactionaries, while using the most extreme demagogy in their desperate defense of the Supreme Court dictatorship, are at the same time speaking openly and frankly of their fascist aims. It is no accident that Republicans, Liberty League Democrats and miscellaneous reactionaries are proclaiming their "crusade against Communism" in terms that would make Roosevelt also one of the hated Reds. It is no accident that from such a meeting recently, on

April 13, we have reports in the *New York Times* from which such quotations as the following can be cited, sounding as if they came from Hitler Germany:

George U. Harvey, an aspirant for the Republican Mayoralty nomination, who spoke before Mr. Al Smith (Democrat), told the wildly cheering audience that if he controlled the New York police department he would rid the city of Communists in two weeks with the aid of a liberal supply of rubber hose. . . . Seated with Mr. and Mrs. Smith on the platform was Raoul Desvernines of the American Liberty League, who accompanied the former governor on his speaking tour in behalf of Alf. M. Landon in the last campaign. . . . Father Curran said he hoped to defeat the Reds by peaceful means, but he warned that "if they want it the way it was in Spain, we'll let them have it."

The reactionaries are also digging into past history to find documents with which to strengthen their arguments. One of the most popular in reactionary circles, copies of which have reached the desk of almost every businessman and employer in America during the past year, is the famous letter of Lord Macaulay, written to H. E. Randall of New York on May 25, 1857. The following quotations from that letter show the true anti-democratic face of the American bourgeoisie as it moves toward fascism:

I have long been convinced—wrote Macaulay—that institutions purely democratic must, sooner or later, destroy liberty and civilization, or both. If we had a purely democratic government here (England), . . . either the poor would plunder the rich and civilization would perish, or order and property would be saved by a strong military government, and liberty would perish. It is quite plain that your government will never be able to restrain a distressed and discontented majority. For with you the majority is the government and has the rich, who are always a minority, absolutely at its mercy. The day will come when, in the State of New York, a multitude of people, none of whom has had more than half a breakfast, or expects to have more than half a dinner, will choose a legislature. Is it possible to doubt what sort of legislature will be chosen? . . . Either some Caesar or Napoleon will seize the reins of government with a strong hand, or your Republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the twentieth century as the Roman Empire was

in the fifth. . . . Thinking this, of course, I cannot reckon Jefferson among the benefactors of mankind.

This bold and unequivocal repudiation of Jefferson, the founder of democracy in America, this appeal for the rule of the "rich who are always a minority," over the toiling masses of the people, this open appeal for "some Caesar or Napoleon" who is to "seize the reins of government with a strong hand" against the majority of the people if that majority attempts to exercise its democratic rights—here is the program of the reactionary bourgeoisie of the U.S.A., here is the true political countenance of the Supreme Court, that stronghold of reactionary autocracy in the heart of the American government, which defeats the democratic strivings of the American people, and will continue to do so until its power is broken.

The Roosevelt plan for reform of the judiciary is a first blow against the stronghold of reaction. Its success is, therefore, of vital interest to the working class, the farmers and the toiling middle classes of America, as well as to the democratic and peace-loving masses of all the world.

*Address delivered at Carnegie Hall, New York, May 26, 1937.*

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## VII

### Democracy and the Constitution

WE are celebrating several anniversaries. Two hundred years ago, in 1737, was born Tom Paine, destined to become the fiery tribune of the people in our Revolutionary War of Independence. One hundred fifty years ago we received our United States Constitution, product of the revolution which had stirred the whole world, and representing a compromise between the conflicting interests which fought the war. Eighteen years ago was born the Communist Party, the Party destined to carry on and complete the work begun by Tom Paine, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln.

The Communist Party is still small and weak, having only fifty thousand members in a nation of one hundred thirty million population. Yet small as we are, our Party has won a national standing of importance, because the whole country begins to realize that we have something of importance to say, has begun to listen to our claim that "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism."

To a certain degree we must thank our enemies for the enormous audience our Party enjoys today. They have told such colossal lies about us, they have so fantastically exaggerated our strength, that interest and sympathy was aroused for the Communist Party instead of the intended fear and abhorrence. When Al Smith, Hearst and the Liberty League last year accused President Roosevelt of being a Communist, they thought they had seized upon a sure-fire method of destroying him politically; but that did not prevent twenty-seven million voters from giving the President the greatest majority ever cast in American politics. When Tom Girdler, Henry Ford and William Green accuse John L. Lewis and the

C.I.O. of being Communist, that does not halt the great sweep of two and a half million newly organized workers into the industrial unions.

No intelligent person believes the arrogant lies that President Roosevelt or John L. Lewis, or the C.I.O., are Communist—but millions are already believing that if even such mildly progressive men and movements are all called “Communist,” then the real Communism cannot be so bad after all, and is something worth looking into quite seriously.

There is no party and no leader which has a mortgage upon the American people today. Old allegiances, old flags, old parties have lost their magic. Old alignments are being dissolved. The people are putting to the test every program, every party, every slogan, every leader. A new political alignment, a new party system is in the making today in America. Our country is in a deep political crisis.

We are in the third major crisis of American history. The first was that of the struggle for independence and the formation of a democratic nation; it began in 1776 and was closed in 1800 with the victory of Thomas Jefferson and his party over the economic royalists and aristocrats of that day. The second crisis was that of the further extension of the democratic revolution through the abolition of Negro slavery; it came to a head in 1857, with the Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court, was solved by the victory of Northern armies and the emancipation of the slaves, and was closed by the adoption of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution (which is still waiting, however, to be enforced).

The present, third, major crisis in our history arises from the fact that political power, as expressed in the democratically registered will of the majority, is challenged by economic power, as expressed in our economic royalists—the small group of rich families which owns and controls 95 per cent of our productive economy. Our economic royalists are moving to destroy our political democracy, which has been undermined by losing its economic foundations.

American democracy, as established by the Constitution and



the victory of Jefferson in 1800, is in danger of being destroyed. But it is not threatened by the Communists, nor by any vague proletarian dictatorship. It is threatened only from the side of the privileged, the rich, the Liberty Leaguers, Wall Street and their agents and lackeys. The Communist Party throws all its resources into forming and strengthening the united front of all progressive and democratic people to defeat the reactionary threat, to preserve the Constitution for the people, to maintain and extend American democracy.

Last Friday I listened, in company with most Americans, with deepest interest and attention to the extraordinary speech of our President. There is not the slightest doubt that it expressed the deepest desires and thoughts that unite the majority of the American people against the threat from Wall Street and the Liberty League. I have no hesitation in declaring for the Communist Party and its followers, that with the central thoughts and the direction of President Roosevelt's speech, we are in practical agreement, and that on such questions with which we disagree these are not questions for immediate practical solution.

Let me make this precise by quoting from the President those thoughts with which we agree:

In our generation, a new idea has come to dominate thought about government—the idea that the resources of the nation can be made to produce a far higher standard of living for the masses if only government is intelligent and energetic in giving the right direction to economic life.

That idea—or more popularly that ideal—is wholly justified by the facts. It cannot be thrust aside by those who want to go back to the conditions of ten years ago or even preserve the conditions of today. It puts all forms of government to proof.

With this central thought of President Roosevelt's speech, we declare our heartiest agreement. With every group or person which makes this thought the guide in formulating policy, we of the Communist Party can find an ever-growing basis for common action.

What prevents this policy from being expressed in govern-

ment action, and what threatens our democratic control of government? President Roosevelt answered this question correctly as follows:

We have those who really fear the majority rule of democracy, who want old forms of economic and social control to remain in a few hands. They say in their hearts: "If constitutional democracy continues to threaten our control, why should we be against the plutocratic dictatorship which would perpetuate our control?"

We Communists declare our full agreement with this identification of the main enemy and the form of its threat against the people.

The President then goes on to express a fear which we believe to be without ground, with which we disagree, and which we think is already disappearing from the minds of progressive Americans. He said:

And we have those who are in too much of a hurry, who are impatient at the processes of constitutional democracies, who want utopia overnight and are not sure that some vague form of proletarian dictatorship is not the quickest road to it. Both types are equally dangerous. One represents cold-blooded resolve to hold power. We have engaged in a definite, and so far successful, contest against that. The other represents a reckless resolve to seize power. Equally we are against that.

In these words the President himself gives the grounds for answering his own fears. The reactionary forces are dangerous because they already "hold power," and have a "cold-blooded resolve" to maintain it against the majority even if it means the destruction of democracy and the establishment of a "plutocratic dictatorship." This is a terrific threat, for these economic royalists control the economy of the country, control a large part of the President's own party in Congress, control numerous local and state governments, and are building up private armies, vigilante movements and arsenals.

But the impatient ones among the masses, those who want to jump to utopia overnight, can have no power except the power of large numbers, and numbers they can get only if the majority of the people should come to feel that they

have been betrayed by their progressive and democratic leaders, or if these leaders should prove themselves incapable to "produce a far higher standard of living for the masses." Only produce constantly that higher standard of living, even show only a consistent and effective fight for it, and all fear of the impatient masses can be laid aside as unreal.

The American masses are very patient—far too patient in fact—and the President has no real problem of holding them back. In fact, he could have advanced his program more effectively against his enemies, if he had called the masses to his assistance more consistently. Roosevelt's strength lies solely in his support among the masses, and if he sincerely wishes victory he must rely more upon it, as did Thomas Jefferson before him.

Proletarian dictatorship can become a practical order of the day in America only if President Roosevelt's promise of a higher standard of living under the present system is defeated or betrayed. We of the Communist Party are prepared to co-operate with everybody who will help to win that higher standard of living for the masses.

The Communist Party repudiates now as in the past, all theories or proposals looking toward a forcible imposition of Socialism or any utopia upon the majority of the people. We repudiate the "reckless resolve to seize power" by any minority. If there should arise in America anything similar to the situation in Spain, where the democratic republic while repulsing the fascist invasion was stabbed in the back by the "uncontrollable extremists" (a minority of the anarchists and the Trotskyist P.O.U.M.), that we, like our brothers of the Spanish Communist Party would be in the forefront of the struggle to suppress such "extremists," who are really agents of fascism, and render them harmless.

The Communist Party represents a strong and growing force to support and help every progressive tendency in American political life, and in no case to distract the progressive People's Front from its fight against the main enemy, the reactionaries and fascists.

Therefore we declare that President Roosevelt's fears of impatient ones, who want utopia overnight, who want some vague form of proletarian dictatorship—this fear is not valid, and especially is he wrong to say it is "equally dangerous" with the threat of the economic royalists to destroy democracy.

The proof of what I say can be found in the reception given Roosevelt's speech itself by the reactionaries and by the Communists. The Liberty Leaguers foam at the mouth with rage against the President, but we Communists welcome his speech, agree with its central thoughts, and quietly and calmly tell the President that he has nothing to fear from us, but, on the contrary, will receive our help, as long as he really tries to carry out his declared program.

It is to the merit of President Roosevelt and his administration that they point definitely in a progressive direction, in the spirit of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. It is their weakness that they seem unable as yet to move decisively in the direction in which they point. The last session of Congress, with its shameful sabotage of all progressive legislation, sharpens this point. Of what avail is it for 27 million people to vote for Roosevelt, if that same vote also carries into office a majority of Congress ready for shameless treachery to the people's mandate?

It has become clear beyond all dispute that the Democratic Party is not a reliable vehicle for realizing that program to which the President is committed. A considerable section of the Democratic leaders are already in a bloc with the Republicans under the blessings of the Liberty League. The old party banners and lines mean nothing. What shall be done about this? Here the President gives no clear lead, but only asks for renewal of confidence in his leadership.

It is doubtless true that the masses are more than ever united around the President, due to the vicious attacks against him by the known enemies of the people. But this alone is not sufficient. The power of the masses must be organized, to put into office, local, state and national, sincere progressives and labor men, real representatives of the masses. Even if we

give the President credit for the maximum of sincerity and determination, he is powerless without a well-organized party of the people. *That does not exist yet. But without it the reactionaries will certainly win the coming battles.*

Furthermore, we venture to declare that even the limited aim of preserving democracy requires a more far-reaching program and more fearless challenge to the economic royalists than has yet been given. The essential features of Jefferson's program must be brought up to date. Two of these are basic: first, to provide democracy with a solid economic foundation and thereby secure effective people's control of government; and second, to collaborate with the friendly peoples of other lands for mutual protection against aggressive and war-making powers. Both of them are represented as yet very weakly and timidly in Roosevelt's program.

Jefferson's theory of democracy realized fully that political power can be maintained and extended only when given a solid economic foundation. He thought this was secured in the wide distribution of small landownership and individual cultivation, which embraced the great majority, buttressed in the cities by the majority of skilled handicraftsmen who owned their own tools. Jefferson's victories were not lasting because this economic foundation was undermined and has now all but disappeared.

More than two-thirds of the population has been completely divorced from the land since Jefferson's time; of those who remain on the land considerably less than half are owners, while most of the small minority of owners are themselves hopelessly entangled in mortgages. The cities have swelled to embrace the great majority of the population, most of whom are wage-earners without the slightest property in the means of production, and only the most meager personal property.

Individual private property no longer furnishes any foundation whatever for political democracy; all the laws to strengthen individual private property now only go to bolster up the power of the economic royalists, a few hundred families who effectively monopolize the economic resources of the country.

It is the sheerest utopianism to expect the restoration of the economic foundations of democracy upon which Jefferson relied. Modern science applied to production, modern power and machinery, has doomed forever the old economic system. Some new way must be found to secure economic power to the people, otherwise political power, democracy, will inevitably be lost to them.

There is serious advance being made in this direction, but still without energetic support from the Roosevelt administration which helps only in the negative way of benevolent neutrality. This advance is the glorious sweep of trade union organization, led by the C.I.O. and John L. Lewis, especially into the strongholds of monopoly capital and the plutocracy, the mass production industries. Here alone we find a serious guarantee of the preservation of democracy, of the realization of a higher standard of living for the masses.

Let the farmers and the middle classes take a leaf from the book of the C.I.O., let them bring their Jeffersonianism up to date, let them join forces with the working class, which welcomes them with open arms—then truly, and only then, will democracy have created for itself some guarantees and strongholds.

The threat of reaction and fascism comes not only from within, but also from without. Jefferson recognized this clearly in the first years under our Constitution. As Secretary of State under Washington, it was Jefferson who threw American influence squarely behind the new French Republic, gave credits to it, and threatened an embargo against any power that invaded France. It was the economic royalists of that day who fought for "neutrality," behind which they conspired with the enemies of France, and as Jefferson foresaw, finally conspired also against their own country, the United States.

It is the weakest point of the Roosevelt administration that only in words does it continue this Jeffersonian tradition, while in deeds it surrenders to the Tories on one practical question after another, giving comfort to the fascist invasion of Spain and the Japanese rape of China.

The threat of foreign fascist aggression has already reached the land border of the United States, and parades its military forces already upon our soil. Who does not know of the Brown Shirt and Black Shirt troops, organized on American soil by Hitler and Mussolini? Who does not know that in Mexico, our neighbor to the south, fascist armies are being built and drilled, in agreement with and under the direction of fascist agents from Germany, Italy and Spain, while little Guatemala is being prepared for the role of Portugal? Who is blind to the machinations of these same forces, plus the Japanese, throughout Latin-America, especially in Brazil?

In face of these facts, what becomes of the illusion of isolation and "neutrality"? It is revealed as self-deception and cowardly retreat before the advancing armies of fascism.

America must be kept out of war in the only possible way, by America helping all peace-loving peoples to defeat the fascist attempts to spread war throughout the world.

The United States is a powerful country, once it is united in its determination to accomplish something. If we threw our moral and economic power into the scales definitely against the fascist war-makers and in favor of peace, together with France, China and the Soviet Union, we would rally the enthusiastic support of the people of Britain and its Dominions, we would rally even the people of Germany, Italy and Japan, who, knowing they had powerful and determined friends, would rise up and throw off their bloody dictators.

These are the things that are called for by a modern policy in the spirit of Tom Paine and Thomas Jefferson. These are the things that will be necessary even to carry out the simple and mild progressivism of Roosevelt.

The progressive program is not revolutionary or Communist. Despite the reactionaries' hysterical slander, there is nothing of Communism in this program, nor about Roosevelt, Lewis and other progressive leaders. It can all be achieved under capitalism—if the progressives rally the people for a real battle to achieve it. It all falls far short of socialism.

We Communists are the party of socialism. We believe that

all progress will be threatened as long as economic power is still in the hands of the economic royalists. We hope to convince the majority of the people eventually to take over the national economy as national property, and make useful working citizens out of the economic royalists. But until the majority is ready for this, we propose to keep the majority organized on a lesser progressive platform for which they are ready to fight—even if it is the middle-of-the-road progressivism of Roosevelt. At all costs the economic royalists, the plutocrats, the fascists, must be kept out of power in the United States.

Our Communist Party is 18 years old. But its roots go back much farther in American history. It is directly descended from those heroes of the European Communist movement who, under the inspiration of Marx and Engels, came to America to fight on the side of Lincoln and Emancipation during our Civil War. It absorbed the inspiration of those early American Communists of the utopian school, the finest spirits of their day, who made of America a great experimental ground in the search for better social organization. It grew directly out of the old Socialist Party formed under the leadership of Eugene V. Debs, Victor Berger, and their associates, at the turn of the twentieth century.

Today, the Communist Party has drawn to itself everything vital in the revolutionary traditions of our land, it is bone and flesh of the American workers, farmers and intellectuals, it embodies the great American tradition of the melting-pot which fuses the best from all the world, it realizes the great slogan of Tom Paine who said: "The world is my country, to do good is my religion." Our Party has been able to become so thoroughly American precisely because it has nurtured itself upon the teachings of the greatest thinkers of the world, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

The remnants of the old Socialist Party, with whom we parted company in 1919 when the Communist Party was formed, have lost their roots in the America of today, have lost contact with the American masses, are wandering in the



swamps of romantic sectarianism, precisely because they refused to follow the great thinkers of scientific socialism.

Such a party as ours does not spring into existence overnight. It required years of intense effort and many inner struggles before our Party was able to overcome and throw out of its ranks all hampering and destructive influences which afflict young movements. Only in 1928 were we able to part company forever with the poisonous Trotskyites, who in their latest developments stand revealed as the agents and accomplices of fascism. Only in 1929 did we throw out the first cousins of the Trotskyists, the Lovestone group. In the battle to cleanse our own ranks of such degenerating political influences, we found the road to the masses, we found the road to the building of a sound, healthy, practical, growing party of Socialism, which is winning the masses by its correct, clear-headed leadership in the practical problems of the day.

It is unfortunate for our friends of the Socialist Party that they refused on principle to learn from our experience. When they realized the bankruptcy of their Old Guard leadership a couple of years ago, instead of turning to a united front with the Communist Party, which we offered them in all friendship, they turned instead to the trash and poison which we had thrown out of our Party. They took the Trotskyites in last year, secretly and shamefacedly but none the less effectively.

We warned our Socialist friends: "You are swallowing a poison, which you will soon have to puke out again." They would not listen to us then, but they have been forced to do as we predicted. Week before last the Socialist Party puked. The Trotskyites are alone again. But their poisonous influence still remains to plague the Socialist Party and may still result in its death.

Our Socialist friends still, for example, think that they have moved over to the "left" of the Communists. They have the opium-illusion that by fighting everything progressive, and especially the Communists, they are fighting for Socialism. They still do not understand that their confused sectarian position is discrediting their name among the masses, harming

the cause of Socialism, and objectively aligning them with the reactionaries.

How otherwise explain the absolutely fantastic mistakes made by the chief Socialist leader, Norman Thomas. You will remember that in 1933 we had the Blue Eagle brand of New Deal, a national coalition beginning with Wall Street and the Liberty League elements, and extending to the left to include everyone but the Communists, with many signs of fascist tendencies within it. At that time Norman Thomas found it possible, together with Hillquit, to visit Roosevelt, pledge support and praise the New Deal as the best possible short of Socialism and almost Socialism itself.

But in 1935, when the Liberty League organized the Republican-Democratic offensive against Roosevelt, when the fascists turned on him—precisely that moment was chosen by Norman Thomas to also turn bitterly against Roosevelt, and in 1936 to make such a campaign that was officially welcomed by Landon and his aides as a help to them.

Up until 1933, Norman Thomas was an advocate of the League of Nations, at a time when it had the function only to preserve the Versailles Treaty. But when Hitler withdrew, when the Japanese withdrew, when Mussolini defied it and stopped attending its Councils, when the Soviet Union entered, when the League became even if very inadequately the scene of a struggle for peace—at precisely that moment Norman Thomas turned against the League and began to denounce it.

Last year when the Socialist Caballero became premier of the Spanish Republic, we pleaded with him to throw the Socialist Party fully in support of that government, but he refused and was suspicious of Caballero; but when Caballero, proved inadequate, was replaced by Negrin, another Socialist premier, then Norman Thomas suddenly hastened to the support of Caballero. Such is the policy of a Socialist Party which refuses the People's Front, and thereby becomes the plaything of Trotskyist and reactionary influences, losing the respect of all workers and progressives.

Problems are becoming more difficult today, more compli-

cated. Their solution demands more than ever a party which unites all the best capacities of the working class, more clear-headedness, more firmness, more energy, more devotion, more sacrifice. The Communist Party has demonstrated its capacity to fill this need. We are proud of the best example we have to demonstrate this—the participation of our members in the glorious Lincoln and Washington Battalions in Spain. It is a guarantee of the vitality of democracy, not only in Spain but also in America.

Not the least part of the struggle for democracy in America is to realize in life the long-promised full citizenship rights of the Negro people. We of the Communist Party have taken over and developed the honored tradition of the Abolitionists, whose work is not yet finished. Through our battles for Negro rights in a thousand places, through the Scottsboro and Herndon cases, we have earned the epithet from the Ku Klux Klan elements of being the “Negro Party.” We are proud of that, because we know that only thus can we be truly the White Workers Party. It was Karl Marx who wrote, regarding our Civil War: “Labor with a white skin cannot emancipate itself where labor with a black skin is branded.”

Our Party is becoming today a mass Party. This is determined not alone by numbers, but first of all by where we stand in relation to the masses and their movements. Today we are in the midst of every great struggle, every great organization of the masses, giving them the answers to their problems which they demand of us. We have won the respect of our enemies, and the sympathy of millions of friends. This is the great significance of our 18th Anniversary. This is the significance of the splendid convention of the Communist Party of Massachusetts which has been meeting in Boston these two days.

But our new position in the midst of the masses, who move in their millions, presents us with ever growing problems. We cannot meet and solve them unless our party membership grows correspondingly. Now large numbers of friends around our Party is not enough; we must bring them into the organized body of the vanguard, into active membership in the Com-

munist Party. Tens of thousands of our friends are only awaiting a serious invitation to join our ranks.

How true this is was brought home to me sharply last weekend when I attended the Southern States Conference of the Communist Party in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In a hall of the City Auditorium gathered 130 delegates from 11 Southern states, Negro and white, men and women, larger and more representative than the seventh convention of our Party for the whole United States.

What a transformation is coming over the old reactionary Solid South; it is breaking up, a new Solid Progressive South is in process of birth, and in the midst of it works and grows the Communist Party.

One delegate, a textile worker, who had joined the party three weeks before, apologized to the conference when he spoke, for being just a backward worker who was only beginning to learn the duties of a Party member, and who had *only brought in ten new members* since he joined. If only our old Party members had this same fresh enthusiasm and initiative of this comrade, how quickly our Party would emerge as a major power in American politics.

Let us on this combined anniversary of the Constitution of our country, and the founding of our Party, go forth determined to invite our tens of thousands of friends, which for each member means the five, or ten, or twenty, whom he personally talks with, into the ranks of our Party. Let us make our Party meetings, and its life generally, more interesting and better calculated to hold and keep the new members, and transform them into powerful leaders among the masses. Let us forge a powerful instrument of progress, which in the coming year will be able to help create a powerful People's Front of the majority of the American people, as the first stage toward winning the majority for the future socialist America.

*Address delivered at the Massachusetts Communist Party convention, Symphony Hall, Boston, September 19, 1937.*

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## VIII

# Revolutionary Background of the United States Constitution

FEW countries have a richer heritage of traditions of revolutionary struggle for human freedom than our own United States. Yet this heritage has been shamefully neglected by the modern fighters for liberation from oppression. By default, the reactionary camp has been permitted to claim for itself the championship of the preservation of the American tradition. It is only in the past few years that the Communist Party has broken with this neglectful attitude, foisted upon the radical movement some generations ago by the sectarian influences that dominated the Socialist Party, and, following the advice of Lenin, even if belatedly, began to develop the slogan, "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism."

The revolutionary gold in the ore of American history is so rich and abundant that even the reactionary miners digging here turn up a great wealth for us to begin to work on. This is why I spent many hours recently, while traveling, in a study of three books on American history (two of them recent publications), some material from which forms the basis of the present article. Needless to say, the authors of the books in question would probably object to the conclusions which we draw from them. But the facts will speak for themselves, and, in our opinion, also for our conclusions.

The three books are: *Jefferson and Hamilton*, by Claude G. Bowers, a study of the first twelve years under the Constitution, the period of Washington's two administrations and that of John Adams; *Jefferson in Power*, by the same author, dealing with the ensuing eight years of Jefferson's presidency; and *Bulwark of the Republic: Biography of the Constitution*,

by Burton J. Hendrick, a running account of the constitutional struggle from 1787 to the present time.

#### THE DILEMMA OF THE CONSTITUTION MAKERS

The United States Constitution was a product of the American Revolution, which separated the thirteen colonies from England, established them as independent states, and united them in a loose Confederation, not yet a united nation even in the most limited aspect of a customs union (such as for example later laid the foundation for the German national unification). Under the Confederation a single united policy in dealing with foreign relations was impossible; the same thing was true of domestic problems affecting all thirteen states. The revolution which cut off the oppressive and economically strangling control of London had at the same time removed the unifying authority of Britain without substituting a new one, but set up instead thirteen authorities, all too often in sharp contradiction to one another. At the same time, the revolutionary war had loosed a democratic mass movement among the population, which was not at all welcome to the ruling circles in the thirteen states. In fact, it was the threat of the unruly democratic masses which, more than any other single factor, brought these ruling circles (aristocrats, landowners and slaveholders, and rich merchants) to a keen realization of the inadequacy of the Articles of Confederation, and gave birth to the Constitution.

Having participated in making the revolution, the problem of those interests which dominated the Constitutional Convention had become how to curb that revolution among the masses, how to harness it to their special class interests, and how to make the realization of national unity, a generally felt necessity, dependent upon the dominance of their class groupings in the central government. Their dilemma was that these aims brought them into conflict with the aroused and crystallized aspirations of the masses, which had been flamingly voiced in the writings of Tom Paine and in the Declaration of Inde-

pendence. The struggle around the formation and adoption of the Constitution was the first great battle between democracy and reaction; it gave birth to the first national system of political parties; it posed the essential questions which run through American history, in forms corresponding to the stages of social and economic development of various periods, down to the present.

The camp of privilege and reaction was apparently in the saddle. But the forces of democracy among the masses, though scattered and unorganized, were powerful and rising. This was the inevitable consequence of the revolutionary war, which Lenin had in mind when, in writing his *Letter to American Workers*, he said:

The history of modern civilized America opens with one of those great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars. . . . It was a war of the American people against English robbers who subjected America and held it in colonial slavery. . . .\*

Everything that has marked off the development of America, as distinguished from that of Europe, finds its origin in this "great, really liberating, really revolutionary war," which planted deeply in the American people the aspirations of democracy; its unexampled growth in wealth and productive resources, its welding of a population of manifold national and racial origin into a united nation, and its extension of the concept of the nation to embrace half a continent—all those features that made America pre-eminent among capitalist nations found their origin in the revolutionary war and the mobilization of the people to carry it to success.

This war unleashed incalculable forces among the masses, which operate down to the present day. The struggle between these forces of the people and the forces of property and privilege is the hallmark of constitutional history. The dilemma of the Constitution makers in 1787, who predominantly represented property and privilege striving to subdue the revolution and harness it, was that of finding out how far they could

\* V. I. Lenin, *A Letter to American Workers*, International Publishers, p. 9.

go without wrecking their whole plan upon the resistance of the people. Their task was to find the minimum to which they could keep the democratic achievements of the revolution without completely wrecking it.

This judgment is not confined to the radical, or popular, camp. It is agreed to by Mr. Hendrick who, on the whole, belongs decidedly to the Tory camp. He says:

The underlying purpose was to keep political power, as far as possible, out of the hands of the masses. . . . They [the drafters of the Constitution] had before them a more difficult task even than framing a constitution; the more difficult job was to get it ratified. And the concessions gradually made to what today would be called the proletariat represented their ambition to establish a strong, effective government, and one that, at the same time, the propertyless, who then, as always, comprised the great majority of the people, would accept. (Pp. 92-93.)

The Constitution that emerged was thus a compromise. It was a compromise between conflicting regional interests of the bourgeoisie; it was a compromise between two antagonistic social-economic systems, the slave system of the Southern plantation owners and the budding capitalism of the Northern merchants and manufacturers; and, most basic of all and continuing to the present, it was a compromise between aristocratic and democratic principles of government.

It is not the purpose of this brief article to examine in detail the contradictions and compromises of the Constitution, and of its evolution. To the extent that they are essential to our argument, we will refer to them in relation to the great constitutional struggles that arose.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR THE BILL OF RIGHTS

The first great constitutional struggle arose on the question of the adoption of the proposed document. As it affects the present day, the chief point of interest was the embryonic gathering of the democratic forces around the demand for a Bill of Rights, finally victorious in the first ten amendments



which became a condition for the adoption of the Constitution. The democratic-minded people correctly recognized in the Constitution as drafted a victory for the Tories, for all its concessions to the revolutionary spirit of the time. At the same time, both camps were agreed upon the necessity for establishment of a government sufficiently strong to deal with difficult foreign relations and subdue divisionist forces, which threatened destruction to the fruits of the revolution. Thomas Jefferson, chief figure among the democratic forces, absent in France on a diplomatic mission when the Constitution was being drafted, nevertheless sent his criticism of the document and demand for a Bill of Rights by mail to Madison, Washington, and other friends, and he finally returned in time to play a leading role in the fight for the Bill of Rights and its adoption.

Tremendous significance attaches to this struggle and the Bill of Rights which it achieved. Not that the people actually received those things ostensibly guaranteed by the first ten amendments. The fight for these rights was merely transferred to the separate states where the struggle for their realization continues down to the present, although it must be noted that a number of states such as Virginia and Pennsylvania had previously adopted highly progressive Bills of Rights. Even the negative gain of specifically prohibiting the national government from encroaching upon civil rights did not prevent the Adams administration (1797-1800) from adopting the notorious Alien and Sedition Laws (the predecessors of our modern criminal syndicalism and deportation laws), in the desperate struggle of the Federalist Party to crush the rising democratic trend, represented by the Republican Party which put Jefferson in power in 1800.

Notwithstanding the absence of enforcement of the Bill of Rights (which continues until today), the struggle for its inclusion in the Constitution crystallized an elementary program for the democratic camp which was gradually achieved in the separate states to a greater or lesser degree, began the organization of the democratic forces, and set the popular

mind in a democratic direction. It was the first great victory in the constitutional struggle for the forces of the people, with not only national but worldwide consequences.

#### FEDERALIST PARTY RULE UNDER HAMILTON

George Washington, commander-in-chief of the victorious revolutionary armies, was the popular symbol of national independence, and of the national unity accomplished by the new Constitution. He inevitably became the first President, serving in that position for eight years, until 1797. His role in the creation of an independent united nation was unquestionably of the first order. The honorary title of "Father of his Country" given him by history is solidly based on historic fact.

It is of peculiar interest to note today that the theory of government embodied in the Constitution made no room for rival parties contending for control of governmental office. There were in fact no national parties when the Constitution was drafted, nor were party struggles foreseen as a major instrumentality of government. Washington's Cabinet was theoretically chosen on the basis of picking the most qualified men for particular duties without thought of party divisions; and in fact, according to general agreement, by its inclusion of Hamilton and Jefferson, chief leaders of the two great parties which soon arose in opposition to each other, it had in this respect at least realized its theory.

Hamilton and Jefferson, the two intellectual giants of America's formative period, should, according to the theory, by their collaboration under Washington's presidency, have realized national unification by a permanent collaboration of the two basic camps which had produced the compromise of the Constitution. The camp of property and privilege had its perfect representative in Hamilton, founder of the American financial system, the first great manufacturing promoter, monarchist and anti-democrat in political tendency, and to this day the hero as well as ideological guide and inspiration of the camp of reaction.

The democratic camp, that of the masses of the people (which meant, first of all, agrarian democracy), had an equally fitting representative in Thomas Jefferson, close friend of Tom Paine (the fiery revolutionary tribune of the people whose writings inspired the masses and the revolutionary army to the heroic effort required for victory), author of the Declaration of Independence in collaboration with Paine, student of progressive thought throughout the world, philosopher and statesman of democracy. But life quickly consigned to the waste-basket of history the theory of peaceful collaboration between these two antagonistic forces. Hamilton and Jefferson were soon engaged in a death-struggle within Washington's Cabinet for dominant influence in directing the course of government. Out of that struggle grew the Federalist and Democratic (officially then called Republican) parties, and the first national party conflict.

Jefferson could not long remain in Washington's Cabinet, because Hamilton soon became the decisive influence, more and more winning dominance over Washington, and establishing the Federalist Party which reached out to control every office. Jefferson, in the few years he was Secretary of State, already had laid the foundations of one of the most cherished American traditions—active solidarity with the forces of democracy and progress in other lands—in the relations between the United States and France.\* Jefferson finally resigned this position to have his hands more free to organize the struggle against Hamilton and the Federalist Party, which he boldly labeled “monarchical” and “monocratic.”

Democratic clubs sprang up all over the country to struggle against the oppressive and corrupt rule of Hamilton's party. They were stimulated by the example of the Jacobin Clubs of the French Revolution, with which the democratic masses of the United States were enthusiastically in accord. They found their leader in Jefferson.

The Federalist Party was alarmed by the signs of the rise of a rival party basing itself upon the “unruly masses” and

\* See “Lenin and Spain,” in this volume, pp. 285-296.—*Ed.*

democratic principles. It set out to crush these clubs before they could organize the majority. Then began the first "Red scare" in American history, which has served as a model for all others down to the present time. The democratic clubs were denounced as "alien and subversive influences" financed by "French gold," and all the powers of public authority and repression were brought into play to break them up. Even the aging Washington was drawn into this battle with a vitriolic denunciation of the democratic movement in one of his last Presidential messages to Congress. It is one of the little ironies of history that Tammany Hall, which, through Al Smith and Senator Copeland, is staging a similar "Red scare" against President Roosevelt, itself originated in the last years of the eighteenth century as one of those "alien and subversive" clubs denounced by George Washington.

During the eight years of Washington's presidency the struggle, while constantly sharpening, was held in some restraint by the President, whose authority among the masses was great, and who, while estranged from Jefferson, Paine and the other active democratic leaders, could never entirely forget their tremendously important role in founding the nation which he headed. But when in 1797 Washington was succeeded by John Adams, all restraints upon Hamilton and the Federalist Party disappeared. Adams was a puppet in the hands of Hamilton, who controlled his Cabinet, taken over entire from Washington, through a secret party conspiracy. Hamilton in power rode hard and desperately to realize his dictatorial ambitions. In the four short years of Adams' term he unleashed the full fury of reaction. This was the period of the notorious Alien and Sedition Laws. Jefferson was patiently and stubbornly gathering the scattered forces of democracy into the new party. The very fury of Hamilton's offensive defeated his ends, and consolidated Jefferson's party, while disintegrating and preparing the downfall of his own. Apparently in complete control of all the agencies of the national government, with all the "substantial" citizens arrayed behind him, having betrayed his puppet, President Adams, and destroyed his

authority to pave the way for naming one of his own close associates, Hamilton's schemes and his party were wrecked on the passions, greed and ambitions he had so recklessly unloosed. His own backers, especially those speculators who had been enriched by Hamilton's financial policy, entered into a conspiracy to elect Aaron Burr to the Presidency, in opposition to Hamilton's choice.

It is one of the few political services that Hamilton performed for his country that he steadfastly refused any association with Burr, sharply warned his party against that future traitor, and rather than submit to the conspiracy of his associates went down to defeat and retired from leadership of his party. For this service history must probably thank Hamilton's extreme arrogance and egotism as much as any political principles. His writings in this period had become incoherent and hysterical, and all the evidence indicates that he had lost his political bearings entirely. Jefferson was elected, after a long deadlock in the electoral college. Aaron Burr, according to the original constitutional theory, became vice-president. A few years later Hamilton fell before Burr's pistol in the famous duel that ended this historic political feud. The arrogant and powerful Federalist Party had fallen almost overnight. It never recovered. Going from bad to worse, it was soon to be involved in a series of treasonable conspiracies, including that of Burr, directed toward the dismemberment of the United States.

#### JEFFERSON AND THE SUPREME COURT

Jefferson and his party were in power. The Constitution, which had served to enthrone the counter-revolution of the privileged classes for twelve years, had failed its makers. The concessions won by the democratic masses in the first great fight over its adoption had left the door open for the defeat of the reactionary party. Those who but a few short years before had been denounced by Washington himself as "subversive" were in control of Congress and the Executive.

But the Tories, though defeated, had no thoughts of surrender. They still had a powerful ace up their sleeve. The people had rejected them—but they still had the national judiciary, appointed for life and irremovable; especially, they had the Supreme Court. Not only that, but in the closing hours of their expiring administration they rushed a judiciary law, doubling the number of judges and courts, and issuing the certificates of office in the last moments before midnight of their last day in power. They had double-locked their control of the judicial power, apparently for a generation at least. It was one of the most shameless and brazen reactionary coups in American history. From that day to the present, the Supreme Court and the judiciary in general have been recognized by the privileged and propertied classes as their final and supreme stronghold, to maintain which they are ready to go to any length.

Jefferson's two entire administrations were carried through in constant struggle with the Supreme Court and the judiciary. The struggle continued long afterward, so long as the Jeffersonian tradition continued to dominate the government. Even though he followed up his first victory four years later with a smashing defeat of the Federalist Party, which was thoroughly discredited everywhere, the rejected Tories continued to hold the courts in their hands, using them shamelessly as weapons of party struggle. It was not until ten years later, during Madison's first administration, that Jefferson was able to write:

At length, then, we have a chance of getting a republican majority in the Supreme judiciary. For ten years that branch braved the spirit and will of the nation, after the nation had manifested its will by a complete reform in every branch depending upon them. (Letter to William Gallatin, September 27, 1810.)

John Marshall, a leading Federalist, member of Adams' Cabinet, had been appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the last days before Jefferson assumed office. He it was who molded that institution into an instrument of reaction which, in 1935 and 1936, could so arrogantly assume supreme power

over Congress and legislation—and get away with it. But when Marshall took office, the Supreme Court was in low public esteem. He would never have dared assume the arrogance of Chief Justice Hughes, knowing that a political uprising of the aroused masses would have put an end once and for all to such pretensions. What he could not do directly, he proceeded to do by judicial trickery.

Jefferson, righteously indignant at the Federalists' packing of the courts after their defeat at the polls, had caused Congress to repeal that infamous measure, and refused to honor the notorious "midnight" judicial commissions. Marshall and his party were furious over this balking of their pretty scheme. It was a ruthless overriding of the Tory theory of the "inviolability" of the judiciary at the hands of democracy. They denounced the repeal as "unconstitutional." They played with the idea of having the Supreme Court declaring it therefore invalid. Such a power is not granted in the Constitution, and in fact had been specifically rejected in the Constitutional Convention. But to the Tory mind it was an "implied power," a supreme power out of reach of the people, without which government was to them unthinkable. But, afraid of an open test of strength with the triumphant democracy, they abandoned their original intention for a more subtle road to the same end.

Choosing an obscure justice of a minor court, a certain Marbury, whose commission, granted by Adams and Marshall, had not been executed by Jefferson and Madison, they brought suit in the Supreme Court against Madison (Secretary of State) to compel the issuance of the commission, citing an existing law granting jurisdiction over such questions to the Supreme Court. Whereupon Marshall issued that historic decision upon which was later erected the whole structure of judicial dictatorship. He declared that Marbury was justified in his demand, that his commission had been wrongly withheld from him, but *refused his request* for a court order to enforce that right on grounds of *lack of jurisdiction*, declaring that the law passed by Congress creating that jurisdiction was it-

self unconstitutional and therefore void. Thus, the case was decided apparently *in favor* of Jefferson and his administration, but in reality affirming, in a form giving no opportunity for challenge, the power of the Supreme Court to annul acts of Congress.

This more than questionable doctrine, thus affirmed, stood upon such a flimsy foundation, was so alien to the American mind as dominated then and for years thereafter by the teachings of Jefferson, and was so fiercely attacked by Jefferson throughout his life that for over fifty years it was never again invoked in a major political issue. It was clear to all that any attempt to exercise this usurped power at that time would have caused a political upheaval and the shearing from the Supreme Court of its immunity from popular control. When, finally, in 1857, this doctrine was again invoked in a major political issue, in the Dred Scott case, a revolutionary civil war was required to wipe out that decision and its consequences. It was only generations later, when the Supreme Court and the Tories found the democratic forces divided, that they dared to revive and apply this usurped power. And only in the past few years, when the country is in the deepest crisis of its history, the Supreme Court has found the desperate temerity to apply the judicial veto to a whole series of laws passed by Congress and affirmed at the polls by a renewed electoral mandate.

Jefferson was always outspoken in denouncing this usurpation of power by the judiciary. Here are a few of his typical expressions:

Certainly there is not a word in the Constitution which has given that power to them more than to the executive or legislative branches. (Letter to W. H. Terrance, June 11, 1815.)

The right they [the Supreme Court] usurp of exclusively explaining the Constitution. (Letter to Judge Roane, September 6, 1819.)

A very dangerous doctrine indeed, and one which would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy. (Letter to Mr. Jarvis, September 28, 1820.)

When the legislative or executive functionaries act unconstitutionally, they are responsible to the people in their elective capacity.



The exemption of the judges from that is quite dangerous enough. I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves. (*Ibid.*)

The judiciary of the United States is the subtle corps of sappers and miners constantly working underground to undermine the foundations of our confederated fabric. . . . A judiciary independent of a king or executive alone is a good thing, but independence of the will of the nation is a solecism, at least in a republican government. (Letter to Thomas Ritchie, December 25, 1820.)

. . . The germ of the dissolution of our federal government is the constitution of the federal judiciary; an irresponsible body . . . working like gravity by night and by day . . . advancing its noiseless steps like a thief over the field of jurisdiction. (Letter to Mr. Hammond, August 18, 1821.)

Let the future appointment of judges be for four or six years, and removable by the President and Senate. Letter to William T. Barry, July 2, 1822.)

These quotations, peculiarly enough, are not to be found in the popular histories. For access to the outspoken words of Jefferson, the student must dig into the libraries of collected works and original sources. And, of course, it is needless to say that for Al Smith, Carter Glass and similar self-styled "Jeffersonian Democrats" of today, Jefferson's teachings about the courts are to be carefully hidden. They have use for Jefferson's name only to cover up their own desperate Toryism which is the exact opposite to Jeffersonianism.

Chief Justice Marshall, next to Hamilton the chief hero of American privileged classes, is extolled by them as the great protector of the Constitution and of national unity. This claim needs to be examined in the light of much-neglected historical facts which it is the merit of Mr. Bowers to bring out sharply. These facts are:

1. That Marshall, a fierce partisan leader in his Federalist Party, was deep in the councils which plotted with the British to divide the United States, reclaiming the West and New England to the British Crown, as the only means of defeating the hated Jefferson and the Democrats;

2. That when Aaron Burr was caught in his treasonable

expedition to separate the Louisiana Territory (which failed due to the double-treason of his chief military confederate, a United States Army General), it was Justice Marshall, presiding over Burr's trial, who secured his acquittal by a ruling which excluded the evidence in the hands of the government, a ruling which reversed a previous one of Marshall himself delivered not two months before, a ruling which has never been followed since by the Supreme Court or any other court in the world;

3. That while Burr was awaiting trial on the charge of treason, of which history has fully convicted him, Justice Marshall, knowing he would preside at the trial, openly attended a banquet given in honor of Burr by the treasonable circles of the Federalist Party aristocracy. Such a record is quite fitting for one of the chief founders of American Tory politics, but hardly squares with the boasts of the modern Hamiltonians of his loyalty to American independence and the Constitution.

#### SOME CONFUSION IN INTERPRETING AMERICAN HISTORY

Much of the prevailing confusion among students of American history arises from the effort to interpret events as the working out of abstract conceptions and particular ideas in the world of reality. Real events refuse to fit into such schemes, for which the historians usually refuse to accept the blame, preferring to put the confusion to the account of history. A typical example is the effort to fit the history of the Constitution into the scheme of a struggle between state rights versus centralized national government, as the two constant poles of political struggle. In this idealistic conception, the name of Jefferson and the democratic camp is put forth as the classical champions of extreme state rights and the loosest form of national unity. Against Jefferson, the Federalist Party is supposed to have represented the principle of highest national centralization. Such a scheme, taken from a particular historical moment, is soon found in contradiction to the facts of a later moment; thus, the historian convicts the men who made

history of "inconsistency"—"everybody is out of step but Jack (the historian)."

The facts are clear to everyone who can read the books of the same historians. Up until 1800, while the Federalists ruled the national government, the democratic camp headed by Jefferson fought against all their attempts to aggrandize their power, and played off the demands of local self-government against them. But when Jefferson's party came to power, and even long after Jefferson had retired from office, by bringing the national government into harmony with the development of local democracy it largely reversed its attitude toward strengthening the national unity. Never before was such national unification achieved as under Jefferson, in his second election. And it was Jefferson who, to the horror of the Federalists, used the national power (in a way not provided by the Constitution) to secure to the United States the great territory of the Louisiana Purchase, and thus first opened up this nation to its continental perspectives, the highroad of national development. Those who had used national unity as an argument against Jefferson, the supposed champions of a strong central government—the Federalist Party—quickly became the plotters with foreign powers for dismemberment of the United States and the destruction of the Constitution, and the return of Louisiana Territory to foreign powers together with substantial sections of the original thirteen colonies.

The whole thing looks like a jig-saw puzzle when it is explained as the struggle between two hostile principles, in the abstract. But when we substitute living social and economic classes of men, and their interests, in place of these abstract principles; when we see these men voicing certain principles under one set of circumstances, and opposite principles under another; when we study these classes and interests in the first place, and the abstract principles only secondarily, then the chaos dissolves into a very definite and consistent picture. We see logic, consistency and unifying principle which unite Jefferson's whole career. He is fighting against vested interests

and monopoly and against financial control of government, for opening up the continent to the masses, and the fullest development of the economic life of the people as a whole, not merely of the rich and privileged. At one moment this called for opposition to the national government, at another for its unexampled use of power. If he had been true to abstract "principles," he would have betrayed his followers; being true to the people, he is accused by the historians of betraying the "principles" which they wish to use for interpreting history.

Similarly, it was the complete transformation of the country by the development of transport and industry, following the opening up of the continent for development, and the tremendous role played by the discovery of gold in the West and the consequent "Gold Rush" that created an entirely new set of circumstances toward the middle of the nineteenth century, which again reshuffled the position of men and parties on all the abstract "principles" of constitutional law. A large part of the Democratic Party, and of the Whigs, revived the early-Jefferson "principles" for the emphatically anti-Jeffersonian purpose of extending slavery over the continent: the party of reaction, of the Tories, again came forward with the doctrine of state rights, masking their position with a hypocritical appeal to all the great founders of American democracy.

Again it was the Supreme Court which was the last stronghold of Tory reaction within the Constitution; the notorious Dred Scott decision declared the American people without power to determine their own national destiny. Again it was the forces of democracy, of the people, this time united with the rising industrialism of the North, which represented progress as opposed to the plantation-landlord slavery and their allies, that reasserted national unity and achieved it in four years of civil war, incidentally wiping out the slave system forever. Again it was demonstrated that national unity and a strong central government are not necessarily opposed to progress and democracy, but on the contrary may and do become essential instruments for their achievement.

We are now in the third great constitutional crisis, exemplified for the moment by the fight around the Roosevelt proposal for reform of the Supreme Court. Again parties and men are being reshuffled in their relation to abstract "principles" of constitutional law. Again we can find no clew to understanding the struggle in terms of these abstractions, nor in terms of old political labels. As in the previous great crises, the solution in all probability will require a new system of political parties, the old alignment having lost all meaning. Again we can understand the struggle, find our place in it, bring order out of chaos, only by seeing beyond and beneath all talk of abstract "principles" to the real forces which are struggling with one another: social and economic classes and groupings, in which the polar forces opposing each other are, on the one side Tory reaction—now materialized in finance capital, Wall Street; and the democratic camp of the people on the other side—now materialized in the organized labor movement, first of all the great movement of the Committee for Industrial Organization and the progressive movements led by middle-class figures within the old parties.

The modern crisis finds many of the social groupings formerly associated with progress, now occupying an extreme reactionary position. This has always been true, and will be as long as we are dealing with the development of a society based upon classes. A great part of the population are in the midst of political change and regrouping, which they understand only dimly or not at all. Individuals and groups grope their way blindly, sometimes on one side of the fight, then on another. But in each of the main camps there is emerging a more or less stable core, with growing consciousness of what the struggle is about. On the democratic side today, this more conscious center is the progressive labor movement. The new alignment will draw the whole population before long into two main camps, which will constitute in essence two entirely new political parties. The reactionary side will be the American equivalent of Europe's fascism, the democratic and progressive side will be America's equivalent of the People's Front.

## PLACE OF THE COMMUNISTS AND THE SOCIALIST PROGRAM

We Communists know quite well where our place is in this realignment of our country's political life. We know we belong in the camp of democracy and progress, as the most conscious and loyal fighters and organizers of the fight against reaction and fascism. We belong with the People's Front.

The program of the People's Front does not include the establishment of socialism. In the material aspect of our country's development it is fully and adequately prepared for socialism, the common ownership and operation by all the people of our country's unexampled economic heritage for the benefit of the whole people. But we also know that the overwhelming majority of the people, including the working class, does not yet understand the necessity, the inevitability, of socialism. The Tory camp, the reactionaries and fascists, the camp of Wall Street, has a well-defined program which would, by speculating upon the ignorance and prejudices of the masses concerning socialism and by making it seem a fearful thing to them, stampede the population onto the paths of reaction and fascism, to the destruction of the democratic and progressive heritage of our country. That is why we, as the Party of socialism, as the best exponents of socialism, as the Party of those who will lead in the building of socialism, declare the first necessity of our country's political development is the creation of the People's Front to guarantee against the victory of reaction and fascism in America.

*We of the Communist Party never did and never will hold to a program of forcible establishment of socialism against the will of the people.* While the majority of the people, and above all of the working class, do not yet accept the program of socialism, our program of socialist reconstruction of society is a matter for educational work to win the majority, while our practical and immediate political work is to be in the forefront in the organization of the majority of the workers and of the people generally, against the reactionary menace to their rights and interests, for a program of betterment of their

lives such as the majority is ready to accept and fight for now—the program of the People’s Front. If our understanding of history is correct, this is the surest and least difficult road to winning the majority for socialism in the long run. Those who do not believe in socialism have no reason, on account of our understanding of history, to fear our collaboration with them in the People’s Front; if they believed with us that history itself will reinforce the Communist Party program they would either join our Party or the fascists. As long as they think a democratic and progressive road short of socialism is possible, and will fight for it, they have the guarantee of our loyal co-operation as long as the majority of the people agree with them.

A hundred and fifty years have passed since the American Constitution was drafted. The world today presents a far different picture than in those early years of our national history. The struggle against fascism and for the extension of democracy is of worldwide significance. When we speak of the changes that have occurred throughout the world, we are most strongly reminded of the new Stalin Constitution which has been adopted in the Soviet Union, and whose foundations rest on the construction of a new social order, where capitalism has been abolished and socialism successfully established.

The Constitution which has gone into effect in the Soviet Union “proceeds from the fact of the abolition of the capitalist system, from the fact of the victory of the socialist system in the U.S.S.R.” \*

Stalin stated in his report on the Constitution :

Bourgeois constitutions usually limit themselves to recording the formal rights of citizens without concerning themselves about the conditions of exercising these rights, about the possibility of exercising them, the means of exercising them. They speak about equality of citizens, but forget that real equality between master and workman, between landlord and peasant, is impossible if the former enjoy wealth and political weight in society, while the latter are deprived of both; if the former are exploiters and the latter are exploited.\*\*

\* *Stalin on the New Soviet Constitution*, International Publishers, p. 15.

\*\* *Ibid.*

The material prerequisites for real democracy have been established in the Soviet Union because exploiting classes and nations have given way to a socialist society of equal nations and races. Democracy in the Soviet Union has more reality than is conceivably possible under capitalism because the right to a job and the right to leisure are maintained and guaranteed by the existence of socialism.

Thus, on a worldwide scale, as fascism drives to destroy democracy, not only in Spain and China, but throughout the world, the Soviet Union, under its new Constitution, gives an unbreakable weapon to the masses who are fighting fascism in every land. The Soviet Constitution records what has been achieved in the U.S.S.R., namely, the construction of a socialist society. For the masses throughout the world, the Soviet Constitution is a program showing the way to the logical and most extensive application of democratic principles.

In forging a solid People's Front against reaction and fascism, a great role can and must be played by a revived and deepened understanding of the history of our country, and the wealth of revolutionary traditions with which it abounds. Far too long have we been neglectful of it. We have only begun its serious study, and its serious dissemination among the masses is hardly even begun. We are far too little armed with even the facts of this history, and our interpretation of it is still inexpert and unsatisfactory. The anti-socialist progressives and the open reactionaries have far more command of historical fact than we, though it must be said they have grave difficulties in making use of this weapon effectively. We have something, however, that all others lack, the key to unlock these great treasures in the scientific study of history, historical materialism, founded by Marx and Engels and developed by Lenin and Stalin. With this key, even our first tentative approaches to American history transforms it into a living thing, full of meat and meaning for today, throwing light and understanding upon every problem which our country faces at this time.

History marches toward socialism. The deep truth of this is



witnessed by the way in which every honest and serious historical study of America, even by non-socialists, serves to give material to, and build a foundation for, the position of the Party of socialism, the Communist Party, for its practical program for the present day and for its ultimate aim of a completely socialized America. "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism."

From *The Communist*, September, 1937.

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## IX

# The 18th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party

THE Communist Party of the United States celebrates today the eighteenth anniversary of its foundation. Youngest of America's political parties, it is receiving so much attention from a hostile press that millions of people are interested in knowing more about it from its own spokesmen. Since Al Smith accused President Roosevelt of being a Communist, probably most of the 27 million who voted for the President would like to know more exactly of what they are accused. We take this opportunity of our birthday to speak to the country about our Party.

Founded in Chicago 18 years ago today, the Communist Party must trace its history much further back, because it is really a continuation of the old Socialist Party founded almost 40 years ago by Eugene V. Debs, Victor L. Berger and their associates. At the convention of the Socialist Party in 1919, the majority of the membership were expelled by the leadership which controlled the organization; it was this majority that founded the Communist Party. How truly the Communists represented the movement of Debs is demonstrated by the fact that the Socialist Party, since that time, never recovered from the blow inflicted upon it by its leaders; it is now only a shadow of its former self, while the Communist Party is emerging as a growing and significant force in American politics, to which all thinking men must give attention.

At this moment the Communist Party stands alone among all the minority parties of the country in the publication field, with ten daily newspapers and some twenty weekly and semi-weekly publications. At this moment we are raising a

great fund to launch two more daily newspapers in the English language, one in Chicago and the other in San Francisco. These, with our *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker*, published in New York, will constitute the first newspaper chain in America owned and controlled by a working class political party. Supplementing this news press, our Party issues a growing flood of books, pamphlets and magazines, all of which find a ready and growing market. It is conceded even by our enemies that the publications of our Party exert a great and growing influence upon the country, and that they are models of efficient organization.

What is the message that this powerful voice of the Communist Party is giving to America? First of all, it is the message of the need for the great mass of the people, the workers and farmers, to organize for their own self-protection against those forces of greed and exploitation, collectively known as Wall Street. Trade unions of the workers, and the various forms of organization of the farmers, and co-operation between these two groups, receive from the Communist Party its undivided attention and support. Our Party trains its members to be the most effective organizers and helpers in building the organizations of the people. In this tremendous and difficult task it is no small thing to have a compact, disciplined and well-organized party helping in every way to solve the complex problems that arise. Many hundreds of thousands of workers have learned to value the work of the Communist Party in this field, and to trust our Party.

Secondly, the Communist Party works untiringly to unite all the organizations of the workers, farmers and oppressed middle classes, for effectively fighting for those governmental measures of social and labor legislation needed to meet their immediate difficulties. It was the Communist Party, for example, which brought forward the first proposal for Unemployment, Old-Age and Social Insurance, and organized a mass movement in its support, which enlisted millions and paved the way for those small beginnings toward this end enacted into law by the Roosevelt Administration. It was the

Communist Party, alone of all political parties, which helped the farmers to fight against evictions at the depth of the crisis, and which supported *completely* every legislative demand of the farmers for relief from their burdens. Only the Communist Party, no other, officially supported the demand of the war veterans for the bonus, a demand forced to fulfillment over the leaders of all other parties. It was the fight organized and led by the Communist Party on behalf of the unemployed which finally brought from a reluctant Congress those measures of relief and work which saved America from catastrophe. Millions of Americans took part in these fights, who were not Communists; but the only political party which helped them, and which brought about national unity and organization of the battle, was the Communist Party.

Thirdly, it was the Communist Party, alone among political parties, which saw the crying need for America to put an end to the disgraceful rule of lynch-law and special persecution of the Negro people, and which made a practical day-to-day struggle for this purpose. Thus it was the Communists who took up the fight for the Scottsboro boys, finally won the release of four of them, saved the lives of all, and brought the whole country to consciousness of a national disgrace which must be wiped out. It was the Communist Party which, by winning the freedom of Angelo Herndon from 20 years on a Georgia chain-gang, won a victory for the whole Negro people. It was the Communist Party which alone raised the banner of full and complete citizenship for the Negroes, although a hypocritical promise of these rights has been written into the Constitution for generations.

Fourthly, the Communist Party is working for the unity of the working class and for the establishment of a common fighting front of the great majority of the people, in a permanent political coalition, a People's Front, against their enemies, the bankers and monopolists who dominate the Republican Party and control such a large part of the Democratic Party that in the last Congress they defeated the mandate of the 1936 election. We declare that the old party lines have become

meaningless, that the time has come for a new alignment, in which the progressives shall all unite on one side against the reactionaries on the other side. That is what we mean when we call for a Farmer-Labor Party, although we are not particular about what such a party should be called. We declare that the main issue before our country today is that of the choice between progress or reaction, between democracy or fascism. We of the Communist Party are fully and completely in the camp of progress and democracy. We are giving our best efforts to help unite in this camp the majority of the people to take the government out of the hands of Wall Street.

Fifthly, the Communist Party is fighting for a peace policy for the United States, for a policy that will keep America out of war by helping the peace-loving and democratic peoples of other lands to keep war out of the world. We condemn the stupid and hypocritical "neutrality" law, which is the most unneutral law ever written, and which threatens to drag America into a new world war by directly encouraging the war-making fascist powers. We propose that the U. S. should base its foreign policy squarely upon the Kellogg-Briand Pact of Paris, by which fifty nations have pledged us to refrain from war, and upon the Nine-Power Pact which guarantees peace in the Pacific; that whenever any nation violates these pledges so solemnly made, the U. S. shall register that fact, and throw the moral and economic power of this country into the balance against the war-makers by severing economic connections with them (but not with their victims) until peace is restored and their pledges made good. We propose the fullest co-operation of the U. S. with every nation which wants peace, for common restraint of the war-makers, and for the Pacific—a Pacific Pact of Non-Aggression. We hold that war anywhere in the world is a disaster for all and threatens the peace of all. We hold that only international co-operation along these lines holds any hope for preserving the peace of the world. We give our efforts to organize the people of America to urge such a policy upon our government.

Finally, the Communist Party tells the people of America

that all our troubles arise from the private ownership of our economic resources, the factories, mills, mines, railroads, banks, by a small—and increasingly smaller—number of rich families, the monopolists and financiers known as Wall Street. There is no complete and final solution of our problems so long as the monopolists and financiers retain the ownership and control of our economy. It will finally become necessary for the people to take over this ownership and control, through their own government, and operate our economic life for the common good of all, instead of the private profit of the few. Such a change is what we call the change from capitalism to socialism—from the rule of the capitalist to the rule of the socially-organized producers, the working people of the country. We point out the successful operation of this principle in the Soviet Union, a land formerly among the most backward, unfortunate and poverty-stricken, which is now through a few years of socialism achieving miracles of economic, cultural and social progress which has already caught up with and surpassed Europe, and which is now second only to the United States. How much more quickly and completely could we in the United States, where all the necessary material foundations have already been laid, achieve plenty and prosperity for all, once we break the fetter of capitalist monopoly!

Finally, the Communist Party tells the people of America that all these good things, these necessary things for the life of the people, can only be won if there is a strong, clear-headed, disciplined Party of the workers which organizes the people to fight for them, which day in and day out, year after year, is guiding the struggle and finding the solutions for all problems—only if the best, most loyal, most energetic, and most intelligent from among the workers, farmers and middle classes unite themselves for these purposes in the Communist Party.

On its eighteenth anniversary the Communist Party is conducting a recruiting campaign for new members. We invite into our ranks for organized common work to achieve our common ends, all who agree with our basic program, who have

learned to trust and respect our Party. We want to add to our present 50,000 active dues-paying membership, within the next few weeks, at least another 50,000 who we know are prepared to join our ranks when the invitation is put squarely before them. The growth of the Communist Party is the greatest blow against the rule of monopolists and financiers; it is the greatest guarantee against reaction and fascism; it is the hope of democracy and progress; it is the promise of a future America with peace and prosperity for every man, woman and child.

*Broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, September 1, 1937.*

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## X

### Writers and the Communist Party

THIS Second Congress of American Writers, gathering at a moment when world peace is immediately threatened by the fascist destroyers of civilization and culture, faces most serious tasks. Writers can stand aside from the struggles that are rending the world only at the price of removing themselves from the life of the people, the source of all strength in their art, and of becoming, even if unwittingly, apologists for reaction. They can join the camp of reaction only by completely abandoning all honesty and decency, not to speak of the professional stultification of all writers who join the goose-step parade of fascism which celebrates its victory by burning books. Writers cannot contribute anything to literature today, except in the service of the people against reaction, fascism and war. The ivory tower has been irretrievably shattered by the bombs of Hitler and Mussolini.

We of the Communist Party heartily welcome this great movement of the writers to enter the service of the masses of the people. At your First Congress we made clear that we do not approach the writers with any ambition to transform them into union organizers, or leaflet distributors. We join wholeheartedly with those who say the task of the writer is to write—and to write more and better. There will surely be some writers who will find the road to their best material through direct participation in the struggles of labor and of the people; all will find in these struggles, directly or indirectly, the source of their strongest work. But each must find his own way, in free consultation with his fellows; and schemes, blue-prints and formal discipline are of less worth in your field than in almost any other. We Communists are the last to want to



regiment the writers; you will work out your own discipline from the common experience of your common work.

We must always remember, however, that the struggle in which we are enlisted is a war—a war which the fascist powers are rapidly translating into air-bombings and hails of machine-gun bullets over ever wider areas of the world.

Writers must work out their own discipline for the problems of their own work. But in relation to the two great warring camps, democracy against fascism, they will find it necessary to adjust their own work to the higher discipline of the whole struggle for democracy. They are to make their own decisions on the content and method of their work; but they are responsible to their fellow-men that their work does in truth serve the common cause. The freedom which every writer demands cannot become irresponsibility. Every writer is responsible to his associates and to the people for the results of his work.

We Communists ask for no privileged position among your ranks. We welcome the free co-operation of writers of all parties. We are especially glad to see this Congress, in contrast to that of last year, addressed by representatives of all political groups which place the preservation of democracy as the main order of the day. We hope you will listen with equal attention to all of them, and judge each issue and each point of view on its merits as it relates to your problems as writers. We want nothing more than the right to exercise the same freedom of expression that we gladly join in guaranteeing to all others. That is the foundation for a broad unity of all democratic and progressive forces, including those of us whose aims reach into the future to the socialist revolution, against the rising menace of fascist barbarism.

Allow me to make the Communist attitude very clear by concretely dealing with a public accusation made against the Communists, and specifically myself, in the current issue of the *New Republic*. I choose this example, rather than the hysterical cries of the Trotskyites, who can be answered only in the same way as the similar outbursts of Senator Royal Cope-

land and Al Smith. In the *New Republic* we have accusations against the Communists, written by Reinhold Niebuhr, which are not splattered simultaneously over the whole Writers' Congress, the progressive movement, and even the Roosevelt Administration, as has become the fashion. Mr. Niebuhr is more sober, and his apparent honesty merits a frank and clear answer.

Reinhold Niebuhr charges that "the similarities between Communist and Catholic orthodoxy are becoming daily more apparent." Because I spoke in sharp terms against a proposal from Waldo Frank that I join him in rejecting the evidence and verdict of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union in the trial of the Trotskyite wreckers and espionage-agents of fascism, Mr. Niebuhr concludes that "Mr. Browder no doubt imagines himself delivering a mighty excommunication." He sees in this the issue of the "politician" who "dismisses the artist" with "patronizing abuse."

If we Communists had really created such an issue of "politician versus artist," we would indeed be in a bad corner in this Writers' Congress which consists, presumably, exclusively of artists of the pen. But I presume to declare that Mr. Niebuhr is mistaken, and to feel confident that my fellow-artists gathered here will acquit me and my Party of the charge.

The issue presented by Waldo Frank's letter and my answer is purely political. The letters are published for all to read and judge. Those who agree with Mr. Frank will doubtless "excommunicate" me, as Mr. Niebuhr has done, if we are to adopt his theological terminology; those who agree with me may similarly "excommunicate" Mr. Frank in the same sense. But why Mr. Niebuhr finds in this the issue of "politician versus artist" can be explained only by assuming that he claims special privileges for the artist to go free-lancing in the field of sharpest political struggles without accountability to anyone. According to this theory, the artist may decide to try to put a whole government on trial, a socialist government at that, and propose as judges the highest legal talent in the bourgeois world, unconnected with revolutionary politics in

any way—and because he is an artist—even a “great artist”—we are to treat such nonsense with respectful consideration.

No, my dear friends, the small minority of Communists who work among you know quite well that you already have left far behind such childish views; you know that just as politicians can operate in the artistic world only on the basis of the intrinsic merits of their art, so also the artist can operate in politics only on the merit of his political argument, that he has no special privileges in this respect. If I should perchance write a very bad novel, I hope Mr. Frank the artist will criticize it with a sharpness equal to that which I directed against his very bad politics.

No, the issue is not the politician versus the artist, and neither is it the Communist Party versus the artist. The problems which disturb us are part of the issue of the people against reaction and fascism. The questions of discipline which disturb some people are not created by the Communists, they arise out of the necessities of battle. In its simplest form, it is the requirement that when the democratic front is fighting the open enemy before us, it shall not be attacked from the rear by those who pretend to be part of it.

A typical example is given by the recent uprising against the Spanish people's government by the Trotskyites and their anarchist allies. Is it possible for us to adopt an attitude of broad toleration of those who preach and practice such treason, who in actuality become the agents of the fascists? It is clear to most of us, I think, that no argument and no consideration of any kind can justify the treason of this open sort. Anyone who defends it, has no place in the anti-fascist, pro-democratic front. To the hundreds of thousand of victims of Franco there was added at one blow 900 dead behind the front by the Trotskyites. Of what use that Ben Leider, the Lincoln Battalion, the International Column, go to Spain to uphold the Spanish Republic, if we fraternize at home with those who help organize insurrection against that same government? No, we Communists want no relations whatever with such traitors, and in this we are joined by all honest democrats. This is no private issue

of discipline of ours, it is the discipline that is imposed upon every enemy of fascism.

Not all who break this fundamental discipline are to be classed as Trotskyites of course. There are such innocents who stray out into no-man's land between the trenches. They get the fire from both sides. They cry out against the injustice of such a thing. They, seekers after truth, must go wherever their nose leads them, or truth is sacrificed, according to them. But such gentle souls must be warned, in tones sharp enough to command their attention, that they are performing the same role of the Nazi battleship *Deutschland*, which in the early days of the fascist invasion of Spain maneuvered in between the Loyalist ships and Franco's transports, and said, "You can't fire upon your enemy without firing on me also." They are coming to the assistance of fascism, however innocent their intentions may be in contrast to the diabolical schemes of Hitler. They call upon us to cease firing, while they investigate the soul of the enemy, in pursuit of pure truth. But fascism never ceases its fire; it is only we of the democratic camp who are still so afflicted with confusion among our weaker sisters that we sometimes allow our lines to be broken by sentimentalists and muddle-heads; the price we pay for this weakness is counted in the lives and blood of thousands of our own comrades.

Without fundamental discipline in the democratic front, the front against fascism and war, the victory of fascism is inevitable. We Communists accept that discipline for ourselves; we make great sacrifices to maintain it. We subordinate our own desires and judgments to the necessities of creating and maintaining the united front of all anti-fascist forces. We are not trying to impose our own discipline upon other individuals or groups. We call for a common discipline for the whole democratic camp, which is a necessity for our common victory.

Is there anything in this which is alien to the world of letters? Is that regimentation, is that intolerance, is that crushing the free spirit of truth? No, on the contrary, it is the fundamental condition without which all culture, which

is the social organization of the search for truth, is doomed to destruction. Culture, the search for ever higher truth, is not the enemy of discipline and order, it is not anarchistic; quite the opposite, it is the creator of organization and discipline, it is the instrument whereby the progressive and democratic forces consolidate themselves, it is the hallmark of our camp as opposed to that of the fascists. Those who in the sacred name of freedom would break our unity in the face of the menace of fascism and war are contributing to the destruction of all freedom.

The greatest literature of our day will surely have at its heart precisely this, the artistic re-creation of the great process going on among the people of the creation of the broad democratic front and the defeat of fascism. It will be fused with the spirit which is already creating great literature in those marvelous letters which are coming to us from the boys of the Lincoln Battalion. It will be filled with a great faith in the creative powers of the masses. It will reflect the growing power of the people that arises from that faith and its embodiment in a mass discipline and organization. It will reveal the flowering of great individuals, not through opposition to the common cause, but through identification and fusion with that cause.

It is in this spirit that we Communists welcome the Writers' Congress, and extend the hand of fellowship and co-operation to Republicans, Democrats and Socialists, as well as to those of no party at all. We are united in our determination to defend culture, to unite culture with the strivings of the people, to preserve and extend our democratic heritage, to assist our brothers in other lands who are suffering the bestial assaults of fascism. Above all, we are united in the firm determination that world fascism, and its expression within our own land, shall never come to power in the United States.

*Address delivered at the opening of the Second National American Writers Congress, Carnegie Hall, New York, June 4, 1937.*



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PART THREE

THE UNITED STATES  
AND WORLD AFFAIRS

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## I

# Lenin and Spain

THIS is the thirteenth year we have been meeting to commemorate Lenin, the founder of the first socialist state, the leader of the oppressed of all the world, the teacher and guide of ever new tens of millions every year in their struggle for a new and better life. Thirteen years ago Lenin died, but never was his spirit more powerfully shaping the destinies of mankind than today.

What would Lenin speak about, if he could be with us tonight? Unquestionably he would speak, first of all, about the epic struggle for human liberation being waged for over six months by the heroic Spanish people, assaulted by the concentrated forces of world reaction. If we would honor the memory of Lenin, then tonight's meeting must be, primarily, the occasion of raising higher the banner of solidarity with the embattled democracy of Spain.

A deep blush of shame should sweep over every American, whenever Spain is mentioned, since that day, at the opening of Congress, when the administration at Washington rushed in such indecent haste to place a blockade against democratic Spain—a gratuitous act of war against a friendly nation—upon the hypocritical plea of “neutrality” and the desire to keep out of war. To avoid embarrassing Hitler, who threatens the whole world with war, our government actually performed an act of war against Spain, against Spanish democracy and for the alien fascist hordes bombarding Madrid and slaughtering hundreds of thousands of men, women and children. And it was only a year ago that the same people were telling us that a blockade against fascist Italy, in the act of raping

Ethiopia, was impossible because that would threaten peace. Evidently the principle that is guiding these policies is to help the fascists in the hope they will not attack America, but under no circumstances to help smaller nations, even though democracies, but rather help their enemies, because these democracies neither could nor would threaten America. It is the principle of rewarding our enemies and punishing our friends. And this is called a "peace" policy! What utter degradation to which we are descending!

Our enemies accuse the Communist Party that we, in demanding the support of Spanish democracy, are bringing some alien doctrine to America. They say our Leninist principles are "imported from Moscow." It is really too bad, if true, that defense of democracy can come only from Moscow. It is true that of all governments of the world, only that of the Soviet Union has stood staunchly, without wavering, at the side of Spanish democracy in its hour of trouble. That is to the glory of socialism and the Soviet Union, and the shame of all governments calling themselves democracies. But it is not true that this same spirit must be imported from Moscow to New York. In America there still live the fierce passion for liberty and hatred of tyrants which brought our country to birth and preserved it in many trials, the revolutionary traditions at the heart of Americanism—even though our government has betrayed this Americanism.

What arrogant stupidity to bring forward this blockade of democratic Spain in the name of Americanism! Even Al Smith, the mouthpiece for the du Ponts and Hearst, must pay lip service to Thomas Jefferson as the first great ideologist of the American democratic tradition. Let us ask Thomas Jefferson where he stands on this issue.

In a report on some negotiations with Spain, March 18, 1792, Jefferson observed:

In the course of this war [American revolution] we were joined by France as an ally, and by Spain and Holland as associates; having a common enemy, each sought that common enemy wherever they could find him.

About the French Revolution Jefferson said, in a letter to Edward Rutledge, August 25, 1791:

I still hope the French Revolution will issue happily. I feel that the permanence of our own leans in some degree on that; and that failure there would be a powerful argument to prove that there must be a failure here.

And what should be done when a sister democracy is threatened by a concentration of enemies? Jefferson gave the answer when he recorded a conversation with George Washington, dated December 27, 1792:

. . . he [Washington] observed to me that he thought it was time to endeavor to effect a stricter connection with France. He went into the circumstance of dissatisfaction between Spain and Great Britain and us, and observed there was no nation on whom we could rely, at all times, but France. (I was much pleased with the tone of this observation. It was the very doctrine which had been my polar star. . . .)

When France was attacked and blockaded, did Jefferson want the United States also to rush to join the blockade? Not at all, although the United States was a relatively weak country. In a letter to James Madison, Jefferson said, in March, 1793:

The idea seems to gain credit that the naval powers combining against France will prohibit supplies, even of provisions, to that country. . . . I should hope that Congress . . . would instantly exclude from our ports all the manufactures, produce, vessels and subjects of the nations committing this aggression, during the continuance of the aggression, and till full satisfaction is made for it.

What a world of difference between this bold defense of democracy against all its enemies, and the present cowardly crawling on the belly before Hitler!

Jefferson further elaborated this fundamental American doctrine in a letter to Gouverneur Morris, Minister to France, on March 12, 1793:

. . . we received information that a National Assembly had met, with full power to transact the affairs of the nation, and soon after-

wards the Minister of France here presented an application for three million of livres, to be laid out in provisions to be sent to France. . . . We had no hesitation to comply with the application . . . and we shall . . . omit no opportunity of convincing that nation how cordially we wish to serve them. Mutual good offices, mutual affection, and similar principles of government, seem to destine the two nations for the most intimate communion; and I cannot too much press it upon you to improve every opportunity which may occur . . . for placing our commerce with that nation and its dependencies on the freest and most encouraging footing possible.

How far, how far, we have traveled from Jefferson, when an administration acts upon the opposite principles; instead of advancing finances, it places all possible obstacles in the way of simple transfer of the funds of the friendly democracy in trouble; when no opportunity is lost to demonstrate that no help will be permitted, even of private persons. Mutual good offices, mutual affection and similar principles of government, count no more than the principle of defense of democracy and peace. Commerce is prohibited, instead of made as free as possible. It is the anti-democratic attackers to whom Jefferson would apply the embargo, but our administration has turned Jefferson's principles exactly into their opposite.

President Roosevelt would do well to ponder the words of Jefferson in a letter to Edmund Randolph, June 2, 1793, in which he said:

Indeed, I fear that if this summer should prove disastrous to the French, it will dampen that energy of republicanism in our new congress, from which I had hoped so much reformation.

Jefferson's doctrine, so opposite to that cowardly "neutrality" that attacks a friendly democracy instead of aiding it, expressed the deepest sentiments of the masses of the American people, not only at that moment but generally. During the French Revolution, money and arms were sent to France, American Jacobin Clubs were formed here, and all except the extreme reactionaries openly expressed their support and admiration for its democratic principles.

During the European revolutions of 1848, America showed

deep sympathy for the revolutionaries. They welcomed with great acclaim such revolutionary leaders as Weydemeyer, Kossuth and Carl Schurz. During our Civil War, it was the boast of the North that revolutionary leaders from Europe were fighting in the Union ranks against the slave power, just as it was our boast that the French, Spanish and Hollanders helped us in our War of Independence.

When, during the Civil War, Great Britain tried, not to place an embargo against the North as we have against Spain, but merely to grant belligerent rights to the South, Lincoln almost went to war against Britain. This was avoided only because Karl Marx rallied the English working class to defeat their own Tories and prevent them from sending arms to the South.

These are the true doctrines of Americanism. They fit in exactly with the doctrines of Leninism. That is why we, who meet here tonight to honor the memory of Lenin and continue his work, are the ones to whom it is left to quote the exact words of Jefferson in relation to the burning issues of the day. And that is why we can truthfully say that Communism is the Americanism of the twentieth century and that we, followers of Lenin, most carefully preserve the treasures of the American tradition, which our government has betrayed.

It is no accident that it has been left to the Soviet Union to be the only firm and reliable friend of embattled democracy in Europe today. That is because the big capitalists, and all whom they control, are abandoning democracy in favor of fascism. Wherever the big capitalists still hold power, democracy is being attacked and threatened with destruction. It is impossible to defend democracy without uniting the people against big capital, to wrest from it the controlling power. The Soviet Union is able firmly to defend democracy everywhere, because it has within its own territory completely eliminated capitalism and all exploitation, and developed for itself the greatest democracy the world has ever known.

Thus it is at the exact historical moment when the capitalists are overthrowing their own democracies that the Soviet Union

comes forward with its new Constitution, which translates the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness into the guaranteed right of every citizen to work, to education and to leisure, the material realization of those things which in bourgeois democracies are but abstract promises to the mass of the people.

The new Constitution of the Soviet Union registers what is already achieved, not what is promised for the future. It marks the fruits of the great work of Lenin, whose memory we honor tonight, the final and irrevocable victory of socialism in the largest country in the world.

It is the sign of the greatness of Lenin that he left with us when he died thirteen years ago, not only a firm and monolithic Party, fully consecrated to his teachings, but a disciple who could take up Lenin's work and bring it to completion, an architect who could fully guide the building of the structure of the socialist society, who could defeat all its enemies, who could make it an impregnable fortress in a world of enemies. Just as Lenin's name was carved indelibly beside those of Marx and Engels by his creation of the Bolshevik Party and the victory of October, 1917, just as surely has another name taken its place beside that of Lenin, by virtue of the victorious socialist construction, symbolized in the new Constitution. New glory has been added to the names of Marx, Engels, and Lenin by that other name, that of the leader of all the progressive forces of the world, Joseph Stalin.

Who is so poor of spirit that he cannot rejoice in the recognition of the world-shaping achievements of the tens of millions of the formerly downtrodden and oppressed, organized around the working class by the guiding genius of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin? Who is so blind that he cannot see that these achievements open up a new and glorious page in the history of mankind?

Socialism is inevitable, because the working class inevitably responds with enthusiasm and heroism to the inspiring call of such leaders. Capitalism is doomed beyond all reprieve, be-

cause it can by no means produce men or ideas which shape the human spirit beyond the most ephemeral moment.

The fight for democracy, peace and progress will go forward to new victories in Spain, and in the United States, as throughout the world, because it has on its side that solid bulwark established by Lenin, the Soviet Union, because that bulwark has been completed and made impregnable by the genius of Stalin.

Everywhere in the capitalist world this fight marches forward under the banner of the People's Front against fascism and war. The People's Front is growing everywhere. And everywhere the most energetic and loyal builders of this front are the Communists, trained in the school and on the model of Lenin and Stalin. The men and women of the Communist International, in all countries, whom millions recognize as their guides, are of that mold: Dimitroff, the hero of Hitler's Reichstag Fire Trial in Leipzig, who singlehanded and in irons met and defeated the Nazi dictatorship, convicted it before the whole world; Thaelmann, the banner of liberation of the whole German people, whom even after four years Hitler dares not bring to trial; Andre Marty, the hero of the Black Sea Mutiny of the French fleet, now a front line defender of Madrid; Carlos Prestes, leader of the Brazilian people's struggle against a fascist regime, now threatened with judicial murder; Mao Tse-tung, chairman of the Chinese Soviets and leader of the national liberation movement of his country. Each of these men, embodying the best of the national traditions of his country, is at the same time the embodiment of internationalism, as Thomas Jefferson was for the America of his day.

As the American democratic revolution of the eighteenth century had its Benedict Arnold and Aaron Burr, so the proletarian revolutionary movement of the twentieth century has its Trotsky. As the British Tories made heroes of these traitors, so do the capitalist class and its press shriek in our ears the "revolutionary virtues" of the traitor Trotsky. The same press to which the slightest labor militancy is anathema as "Bolshevism," which even raved against the "Bolshevism" of Presi-

dent Roosevelt, sings the softest songs of praise for the "revolutionary," the "ultra-revolutionary" Trotsky. In the fascist countries, where death is the penalty for distributing a Communist leaflet, Trotsky's books are placed by the authorities in the prison libraries for political prisoners. Truly the fascists and reactionaries know their own men; but just as surely does the working class know its own. That is why the counter-revolutionary scum of Trotskyism is being thrown out of the labor movement as fast as it shows its face. That is why the Socialist Party, which swallowed this poison less than a year ago, is already in the paroxysms of vomiting it forth again. That is why Lenin, through long years, fought against and defeated Trotsky and Trotskyism, and thereby made possible the Russian Revolution.

Political reaction and fascism were given a resounding defeat in the last elections in the United States. The people, by overwhelming majority, gave a mandate for democracy, progress, higher living standards, extended civil right and peace.

But, as we Communists warned the masses from the beginning of the election campaign, the Roosevelt middle-of-the-road administration cannot be trusted to carry out this mandate. On every point it is compromising or betraying the mandate of the elections. Only the mass organization and struggle of the people, only the building of the People's Front, can realize that mandate. This is the message of Leninism to the people of America today.

Already this spirit of Leninism is beginning to permeate the American masses. They are building their mass organizations. They are beginning to conduct mass struggles to realize the election mandate.

We are proud of the American workers, proud that already they have produced hundreds of American Lafayettes who stand in the front lines of the defense of Madrid, of the democratic republic of Spain!

We are proud of the Farmer-Labor Party movement, which produced the voice of Congressman Bernard who alone shouted "I object" to the betrayal of democracy by the voting



of the blockade of Spain! That shout crystallized the conscience of the nation, and rendered inevitable the revocation of that crime and the re-establishment of the principles of Jefferson—and of Lenin—in our relations to Spain.

We are proud of the American people who organized the North American Committee for Spanish Democracy, which has collected a million dollars in money, clothing and food, and sent it to the Spanish fighters.

We are proud of the Society for Technical Aid to Spain, which is organizing all-around measures to strengthen the forces of Spanish democracy!

We are proud of the trade unions which are conducting the valiant battles for industrial democracy in the auto and marine industries, in steel, in textile, and in a dozen industries and a thousand localities!

We are proud of the unity of the unemployed, in the Workers Alliance, which registered so effectively last week in Washington the demands of the millions of American unemployed and of the whole working class, for effective work and relief measures, and for social insurance!

We are proud of our Negro brothers, who are rising to organization and struggle to realize some of that equality, the promise of which added their votes to the great popular mandate of the elections.

We are proud of the great united youth movement, whose pilgrimage to Washington will soon place their demands before Congress and the President, and of the united student movement which has brought life to our stagnant universities, colleges and high schools! We are proud of the women's movement which is now crystallizing around the Women's Charter!

We are proud of all the rising manifestations of the People's Front in the United States. We see in them the proof that the American people will meet and solve their problems, will crush fascism, and will open up the way for the future realization of socialism in our country also, will realize the prophecy of Lenin.

These organizations and movements give the immediate pro-

gram of the People's Front in America. In fighting for the immediate aims of these mass movements, the Communists are at the same time the best and only consistent fighters for the new socialist society.

The fight for the People's Front in all its manifestations is the fight for the principles of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; it is the fight for the whole future of humanity.

Writing during the formative period of the Communist movement, Karl Marx showed in *The Communist Manifesto* that the Communist Party has no interests separate and apart from those of the working class. These interests at the same time are those of all progressive humanity. The Party of Lenin is an integral part of the working class and at the same time its most conscious element. As such it gives leadership to the working class and to the masses of toilers.

Recognizing the striving of the working class for a better life, the Communist Party does not rely on the spontaneous revolt of the masses. As the leader of the working class, the Communist Party has an unfailing guide in the theory of scientific socialism. And, indeed, socialism is a science. It embodies the best achievements and creation of human thought and action throughout the centuries. In order, therefore, to achieve the goal toward which human progress is striving, the goal of Lenin, it is necessary to be fully equipped with the theory of Marxism-Leninism.

In order that the great mass of the people may have the means of achieving their immediate needs and improving their conditions of life now, and at the same time the guarantee of the ultimate realization of a free, classless society, we must build the indispensable instrument for that purpose, the Communist Party. For practical success in the struggle to maintain peace, to preserve and extend democracy, and through the struggle for liberty to achieve socialism, a stronger and bigger Communist Party is the necessary condition for such practical achievements.

It is therefore in the interests of the working class and of the great majority of the people that we appeal to you to join

the Party of Lenin. It was Lenin who created this basic instrument for the struggle for liberty and progress, for a better life and against capitalism, the heroic and united Bolshevik Party to which it is our honor to belong.

Our forefathers proclaimed that vigilance is the price of liberty. So, too, it is necessary to preserve the strictest vigilance within our Party so that we may prevent every attempt to smuggle the contraband of anti-Leninist ideas into the Party. Such ideas, harmful to the striving of progressive humanity, must be defeated wherever they make their appearance.

While commemorating the death of Lenin, every member of the Communist Party should ask himself the question: Have I done all within my power to build and strengthen the Party of Lenin? We are strong, and are growing stronger because of our devotion to the cause of the toilers, the cause of human progress. That is why obstacles and difficulties along our path will not hinder our progress.

In serving the real and most pressing needs of the people, we say that there is nothing more important, nothing of deeper concern to us than the great struggle for democracy in Spain. The untold sacrifice and heroism of the Spanish people are wrought not only for the benefit of the masses of that country. Their battle is being waged against international fascism. They are fighting against those who strive to plunge the entire world into the hell of war. When the brave fighters of Spain proclaim that fascism shall not pass, we too raise our voices and join our hands in their struggle. Nothing that we do can even approximate that which they have sacrificed for us. It is in accord with the best of American devotion to peace and democracy that we do all in our power to help make Madrid the tomb of fascism!

Let this thirteenth anniversary of the death of Lenin mark the great strengthening and maturing of the Party of Lenin, the Communist Party. Let it mark another period of great advance of the unity of the workers, and the gathering of all the oppressed people in the People's Front. Let it mark the renewed determination of millions, growing ever larger, that

the fascists and war-makers shall never be allowed to control our country. Let it mark a new forward march of the American people, hand in hand with the democratic peoples of the world, to wider democracy, to greater prosperity, to more secure peace. That is the message of the Communist Party, of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

*Address delivered at Lenin Memorial Meeting, Madison Square Garden, New York, January 20, 1937.*

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## II

### Trotskyism Against World Peace

THE world was shocked by the revelations of the trial in Moscow of Piatakov, Radek and their fifteen co-defendants. Most people are beginning to understand its profound lessons, its historic significance, only as the result of sustained thought, of ever-deeper analysis, of accumulation of tens of thousands of corroborative details which reveal the tentacles of the world-wide plot of fascism and Trotskyism to plunge the whole world into war in 1937.

We have published in full in the *Daily Worker* the indictment, the presentation of the Prosecutor, Comrade Vyshinsky, and his summary of the evidence, the verdict of the court, as well as copious extracts of the most important testimony introduced. The facts are before us. We also have the evidence of numerous direct observers of the trial, of all political tendencies, as to its procedure and the full freedom of speech of the defendants.

What must be the conclusions of the world of honest men everywhere as to the lessons of this great trial? We of the Communist Party approach this question, not from any narrow partisan viewpoint, but from our desire to reach the broadest possible unity of progressive and democratic mankind to resist the menacing forces of fascism and war. Therefore, in establishing the conclusions to be drawn, I want first of all to make a few quotations, not from Prosecutor Vyshinsky's speech, not from any Communist source, not from any sympathizer or associate of the Communist Party—but on the contrary, from the words of a man who until a few days ago was a member of the Committee for the Defense of Trotsky, an editorial associate of the daily newspaper, the *Baltimore Sun*, Mr. Mauritz

A. Hallgren. In a letter made available to the press, and published in the *New Masses* and *Daily Worker*, Mr. Hallgren, having approached the whole question from the viewpoint of defense of Trotsky, makes the following conclusions:

The men now on trial . . . must know and they do know that they will be put to death. Despite this they do not hesitate to confess their crimes. Why? The only conceivable answer is that they are guilty. . . . I now see no valid reason for believing that the defendants in the first trial were unfairly dealt with.

That is, an open defender of Trotsky, one who approaches the Piatakov trial with doubts about the Zinoviev trial, comes to the conclusion that all the defendants were fully guilty, fairly tried, and that the essential truth about their plot was established beyond all doubt.

Regarding the absent chief of the plot, Trotsky, his defender Hallgren is forced by the evidence to conclude that the reports of the trial:

. . . provide us with an abundance of evidence . . . [that tends] to prove that Trotsky participated in the conspiracy, or that he at least had guilty knowledge of it. . . . We also have his writings and they tend greatly to strengthen the presumption, if not of actual guilt, at least of moral responsibility.

Then Trotsky's defender concludes that he had been duped, that the real purpose of the committee, into which he had been inveigled, had been from the beginning:

To win liberal support for Trotskyism, that is, for Trotsky's campaign against socialism in the Soviet Union . . . that the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky has, perhaps, unwittingly, become an instrument of the Trotskyists for political intervention against the Soviet Union.

With such conclusions having been forced, by the overwhelming weight of evidence, from the very ranks of Trotsky's avowed defenders, we may safely assure this minimum as proved beyond all necessity of further discussion. Anyone who any longer questions these proved conclusions merely proves that, as against his political prejudices which align him with the enemies of the Soviet Union, the weight of evidence means

nothing whatsoever, that he is an irreconcilable enemy with whom discussion is impossible.

Given this foundation of established fact and sound conclusion, which must be equally accepted by all honest men of whatever political opinion who are willing to weigh the evidence, we can proceed at once to an examination of those questions which still disturb some honest people who accept these conclusions, or who will inevitably accept them when they are clearly formulated.

Perhaps that question which disturbs the broadest number of people who are without detailed information about the historical background of the Russian labor movement is the Trotskyist charge that the defendants convicted of treason comprised all "Lenin's strongest colleagues and co-workers" in the 1917 Revolution. From this is drawn the theory that the trials are simply the elimination of the "natural leaders" of the revolution by some upstarts who have seized power in the Soviet Union. This vile slander depends for its effect upon lack of information on the part of the American general public, reinforced by the capitalist newspapers' creation of those "reputations." A simple recital of historically established facts is sufficient to shatter this slanderous legend. Every prominent name identified with the treason trials is connected with a long history of struggle against Lenin during his lifetime and against Lenin's Party since his death. Their treason was not something which suddenly descended upon them. It was the carrying to its logical conclusion of their long and stubborn struggle against the building of socialism in the Soviet Union.

Lenin's struggle against Trotsky, from 1903 to 1917, was sharp and bitter, and went to the foundation principles of the Bolshevik Party. When Trotsky joined that Party, in August, 1917, he did not abandon his principles, which Lenin had fought against and defeated; again and again he tried to overthrow Lenin's leadership, outstandingly in the turning points of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty and at the inauguration of the New Economic Policy. After Lenin's death his entire

course was one of embittered struggle against the Party policy, always going to greater lengths, until, after years of debate and the overwhelming repudiation of Trotsky by the masses, the renegade was finally exiled.

Zinoviev and Kamenev began a stubborn career of opposition to Lenin in 1917, when they betrayed the October Revolution, with Lenin calling for their expulsion. In 1927, after fighting Trotsky, they suddenly went over to his side, joining him on the issue of opposing the building of socialism in the Soviet Union.

Radek and Piatakov fought against Lenin before the revolution, resisting his policy of self-determination of nations, and were defeated by him. Piatakov was associated with almost every opposition that developed after the revolution, either in an open or concealed form. Radek was removed from any official posts since 1923 when, under Lenin, he was found responsible for disastrous mistakes made in relation to the German events. He was in opposition, and recanted and was re-admitted several times, but never again allowed to hold anything but an appointive post.

The same sort of history attaches to each and every name, not only of those already tried, but of those of the so-called "Right" oppositions who have been implicated by the confessions.

What nonsense, therefore, to assume that because the repeated oppositions of these people brought their names constantly into the capitalist newspapers, they were therefore the "natural leaders" of the Russian peoples. Exactly the contrary. Their connections with the masses had long been broken, and it was precisely because of this that they took the path of treason when they decided not to submit to the unanimous will of the 170,000,000 people united under the Soviets. That in spite of their repeated and crushing defeats, they were still permitted to return to positions of trust and responsibility is proof of one thing only—namely, that the Communist Party and the Soviet Union made its errors on the side of mercy, clemency and forgiveness which have ended only when con-



fronted with the final proof and confession of the blackest treachery known to history.

Now let us examine the question, which is not finally closed even for Mr. Hallgren: whether Trotsky was really the directing head of the conspiracy or whether he only had "guilty knowledge" of it. Given a successful outcome of the plot, I imagine there is not a single person in the world who can imagine any figure emerging at its head other than Trotsky—least of all the Trotskyites themselves. It is only the miserable fiasco to which their plot has come that has caused them to raise this hypocritical denial. But the proof is not alone in the confessions in Moscow of every outstanding former associate of Trotsky. It is to be found in Trotsky's writings and activity over many years which show one ascending line of reason.

The clear starting point of treasonable conspiracy, expressed from the beginning in a clearly formulated theory—Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, Piatakov, and their associates, united in the theory of the impossibility of building socialism in the Soviet Union, a theory which was the breeding ground of all oppositions and all treachery, and which was the connecting link to unite with the Right opposition of Bukharin and Rykov. Trotsky already in 1926, over ten years ago, pointed to its logical conclusion by his notorious "Clemenceau thesis." This was the theory that, just as Clemenceau had seized the moment when German armies were less than 60 miles from Paris to seize the government of France in 1914, so would Trotsky and his associates be able to come to power only when the invading armies of capitalism had invaded the Soviet Union and were within similar striking distance of Moscow.

To come to power through the might of foreign armies, however, demanded from the Trotskyists an inner program acceptable to the capitalist powers. Trotsky formulated such a program in April, 1930, printed in his *Opposition Bulletin* No. 10. This called for the restoration of capitalism in Russian economy: I quote:

Retreat is, nevertheless, inevitable. It is necessary to bring it about at the earliest possible time. . . . To discontinue mass collectivization . . . discontinue jumps in industrialization . . . to revise the question of tempo of industrialization in the light of experience . . . to abandon "deals" of a self-contained economy . . . to work out a new, alternative plan calculated on the widest possible interaction with the world market. . . . It is impossible to emerge from the present contradictions without crisis and struggle.

That last-quoted thought of Trotsky was further concretized by him in his book, *The Soviet Union and the Fourth International*, published in the United States in February, 1934, in these words:

No normal, "constitutional" ways remain to remove the ruling clique. The bureaucracy [the Soviet Power] can be compelled to yield power into the hands of the proletarian vanguard [the Trotskyists] only by *force*.

And from Mexico, on January 25 of this year, Trotsky sent a signed statement to the Hearst newspapers, printed in the *New York American* of January 26, in which he said: "Inside the Party, Stalin has put himself above all criticism, and above the state. It is impossible to displace him except by assassination."

That there can still be no mistake on the part of his followers, Trotsky for years has been tying up all his activities under the slogan: "Remove Stalin."

In the face of these instructions of Trotsky, of his well-established character as a so-called man-of-action who immediately translates his counter-revolutionary thoughts into corresponding deeds, who prides himself upon being the most reliable representative of every current hostile to the Soviet Union and its leadership which has successfully built a socialist society, in the face of the confession, full and complete, of every former associate in the Soviet Union who alone could possibly execute his plans for a return to power under any circumstances—what person is still so innocent of the world as to believe Trotsky's unsupported and hysterical denials of the mountain of evidence of his guilt?

Given all this proof, and accepting it as final because of its

overwhelming weight, there are still people who say, yes, but after all what has all this to do with us as Americans who are appalled by the world's present course which is rushing into the abyss of fascism and war and who want nothing more than to keep America out of trouble? Why should not we Americans merely satisfy our intellectual curiosity, and then wash our hands of the whole affair? How are we affected? Why should we take sides?

But Trotskyism and its alliance with fascism is no mere private affair of the Soviet Union. True it strikes first and foremost against that bulwark of peace and democracy; thereby it weakens the whole world front against fascism and war. But it goes much further. Trotskyism is active and damaging in every land, not least in the United States. Many people belittle its menace, because of its small number of active adherents. But it works with the deadliness of cholera germs, and these germs are broadcast throughout our land by the tremendous capitalist press; it is the first line attack of fascism among the masses, to paralyze their resistance through doubt and confusion.

Let us see how Trotskyism works in other countries, and see how it fits in with the whole world conspiracy of Hitler and Mussolini which has brought the clouds of war darkly over every land. In Germany the Trotskyists are the bitterest enemies of the unification of the anti-Nazi organizations, and have openly appeared as spokesmen for Hitler, as in the case of Maria Reese whose pamphlet denouncing Ernst Thaelmann was published by the American Trotskyists when Thaelmann was in Hitler's prison. In France they are the saboteurs of the People's Front, and one of their chief figures, Ruth Fischer, works in the apparatus of Jacques Doriot, hailed by French and world reactionaries as the "potential Hitler" of France. In Spain they fight for the dissolution of the People's Front government, the sole means of a single front of the Spanish masses against the Hitler-Mussolini-Franco war of murder and destruction, the sole barrier to new fascist victory.

In the United States, the Trotskyists, recent entrants into

the Socialist Party, have reduced that organization in a few months to a maze of warring cliques. Organizing disruption in the trade unions, sabotaging the steel campaign, they have established connections with the worst reactionaries. Enemies to the death of the Farmer-Labor Party, they block its formation where possible, and where not they enter to disrupt it. At this moment in Minnesota, for example, the Trotskyists are the organizers of a bloc of reactionaries and unreliaables in the trade unions and among the Farmer-Labor members of the state legislature, which defeated one of the first measures of the Benson administration. Governor Benson proposed a State Liquor Control Bill, vital to his program not only as a revenue measure, but to break the power of the whisky trust and drive its influence from the lower organizations of the Farmer-Labor Party. This bill is being fought by a combination of reactionaries and Trotskyists. He further proposed a bill to restore Party designation in the election of the members of the state legislature, a bill designed to restore Party responsibility and Party discipline. It was the reactionary union officials and the Trotskyists who swung the few needed Farmer-Labor votes over to the Republican and Democratic minority in the legislature to defeat that bill. This is only one little sample of the fruits of Trotskyist treason at work in America.

It was certainly the pressure of Trotskyist ideas upon the Socialist Party which, in the Presidential elections, brought that party into the unenviable position of helper to Landon, with the slogan, "There is no difference between Landon and Roosevelt, and perhaps it would even be better if Landon were elected."

On every issue, Trotskyism enters as the poison to block unity among the workers, and their organizations, to break up the People's Front, to help the reactionaries and fascists, and, above all, to prepare the ground for war.

It is on the war question, above all, that the horrible nature of the Trotskyist-fascist alliance stands out most clearly. We have seen from the confessions of Piatakov and Radek, how Trotsky entered into an agreement with Hitler's lieutenant

Hess and with the Japanese General Staff, on the partition of Soviet territory and the ceding of economic privileges to these two fascist powers for war purposes. One point in this agreement was the provision of Japanese imperialism with oil and other supplies needed for a prospective war against the United States.

Is there anything in the conduct of the Trotskyists in our country which would tend to contradict this agreement of their leader? No, on the contrary, the American Trotskyists could not have acted differently if they had known of and agreed to this policy. For several years now, the American Trotskyists have been hammering on the coming war between the United States and Japan, in order to demand, first, that all preparations must be made to insure the defeat of the United States in such a war, and second, consequently, that a fight be made against all idea of mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and the United States. These are exactly the things that would be required by Trotsky of his American followers in order to carry out his agreement with the Japanese General Staff.

Thus we find that even the most convinced adherent of American isolation, if he is not to shut his eyes and refuse to look at facts, must also become directly interested in disclosing and defeating the world conspiracy of Trotsky with fascism, which is threatening the peace of the whole world. Trotsky moves now, as always, with the grand sweep of the would-be world-leader, but now there is revealed in its full nakedness that the force of his world-ideas is borrowed from German and Japanese fascism.

Trotsky here and everywhere works with two weapons, with the material and moral resources borrowed from fascism and reaction, and with honest but confused and disorganized liberals and Socialists who can be fooled with specious slogans of "fair play" and of "ultra-revolution," people whom he is using and simultaneously betraying. His relation to Mexico is a typical case. On the one hand, Trotsky has been foremost in fighting against the working class and Communist support to

President Cardenas and his government against the plottings of General Calles and his American imperialist backers who are preparing a fascist insurrection in Mexico of the type of Spain. No words were too bitter for the Trotskyists in denouncing the People's Front in formation around the Cardenas government. In the midst of this campaign, Trotsky finds it quite natural to appeal to President Cardenas for asylum in Mexico, there to intensify his work against the People's Front everywhere including Mexico. Undoubtedly he would feel more secure in his asylum if the Calles plot should succeed in destroying that People's Front of which Trotsky is the arch-enemy.

No one can accuse the imperialists of not recognizing truly their friends and their enemies. That they see in Trotsky one of their chief weapons is attested by their unanimity in granting him the full freedom of their press. Those same newspapers, Hearst above all, which denounced even President Roosevelt as an embryo Bolshevik, make of Trotsky a hero beyond all others, and grant him unlimited space in their columns to spew out his poison. The *New York Herald Tribune*, leading Tory newspaper, prints a special article to advocate Trotsky's admission into the United States, in order to "help expose blackest Russia," and creates a case for him with the argument that in 1917 Trotsky did everything possible to keep Russia in the war, and finds a long-lost heroic act in which Trotsky saved the life of an American representative, a dark secret all these years. And here again, we find one of the most revealing bits of corroborative testimony of Trotsky's role, in his relation to Mexico.

I refer you now to the *New York Times* of January 13, to a special story from Mexico signed by the special international correspondent, Frank L. Kluckhorn, who was rushed from the civil war in Spain to cover what was evidently considered equally important events to come in Mexico. President Cardenas, hesitating before the demand of the Mexican workers for the exclusion of Trotsky, and facing the extreme danger from the gathering reactionary conspiracy in his own land

and the United States, wanted to improve relations with American imperialists. Kluckhorn rushed in to assure Cardenas that precisely the admission of Trotsky would be one of the chief things that would help him relieve his difficult situation, would make all the imperialists more lenient with him. Commenting on President Cardenas' decision to admit Trotsky, Kluckhorn unwittingly gave the whole world a glimpse behind the scenes where Trotsky plays his fascist role in full. Here are a few quotations from the *Times* of January 13:

President Lazaro Cardenas has removed virtually the last foreign complaints against his government. . . . He had a showdown with extremist labor over the entry of the anti-Stalinist Leon Trotsky as a political refugee, and won hands down. . . . He now agrees to indemnities on land seized. This, it is held here, lays the groundwork for sound international confidence and trade. . . . President Cardenas has shown willingness to make concessions to the Catholic Church. . . .

There we have a true estimate of values: indemnities for foreign capitalists, concessions to the Catholic Church, asylum for Trotsky. These three things have caused foreign imperialist powers to soften their attitude to Mexico, *these things are concessions to imperialist reaction*. Perhaps President Cardenas can legitimately believe that it is necessary to retreat before the pressure of imperialism, but that should only make all of us the more keenly aware that Trotsky's entrance into Mexico was a service to reaction, to the fascists and war-makers, a blow against peace and democracy.

A gambler for great stakes is Trotsky; he thinks nothing of staking the lives of millions, the national existence of thirty million Ukrainian people, the independence of Siberia, the new and flourishing socialist economy of one-sixth of the earth, the Spanish people's government, the French People's Front, the unity of the workers everywhere—all these Trotsky makes chips in his great gamble for power which he pretends he plays with Hitler, but in which Hitler and every reactionary in the world plays Trotsky against peace and democracy.

This ego-maniac firebrand is running through a world full of war-explosives, applying his torch wherever he may, hoping

for nothing so much as a new world war from which alone he sees his hopes of glory and power.

This is the true issue presented by Trotsky and Trotskyism. This is no issue merely between Trotsky and the Communist Party. It is the choice between war and fascism on the one side, or democracy and peace on the other side. Trotsky is the advance agent of fascism and war throughout the world.

If one wants to fight against fascism and war, the first battle that must be won is to drive out Trotskyism and its influence from the ranks of the workers, farmers and intellectuals. Without this victory over every Trotskyist influence, unity in the fight against fascism and war—unity which is the condition for any success—is impossible.

Nowhere is this shown with more sharpness and clarity than in Spain today. The Spanish people are in the trenches shedding their blood in torrents against the fascist hordes of Hitler and Mussolini and Franco, who are armed with all the most terrible modern weapons of war. The Spanish people's army has been hastily improvised by the masses themselves, who are moving toward unity and co-ordination under the people's government headed by Largo Caballero and the parties of the People's Front. And in the midst of this struggle of life and death, the Trotskyists come forward with the slogan of treachery, "Break the People's Front." "Turn your guns also against the government of Caballero." Even the little Trotskyist rats in the United States have the brazen effrontery to come to the halls of meetings held in solidarity with the Spanish people, and distribute their leaflets calling for destruction of the People's Front government of Spain.

The depths of infamy was reached by Trotsky when only the other day he issued the slogan through all the capitalist press that "the Soviet Union has deserted Spain." The whole world knows that is a lie. Trotsky even knew that no one would believe him. What then did he expect to accomplish by this brazen and lying slander? It was a pure-and-simple act of fascist provocation. He hoped to create a spirit of panic which would force the Soviet Union to some step which could



be used by Hitler to consolidate his help from the reactionary circles of Britain and launch his general war against the Soviet Union, France and the smaller democratic countries.

But neither the Soviet Union, with its monolithic leadership headed by Comrade Stalin and the Central Committee of the Communist Party, nor the international labor movement which is moving steadily toward general unification, can be provoked by Trotsky or Hitler. They know how to help the Spanish people in the most effective way, materially and politically. And the proof that they are doing so is the halting of the fascist gangs at the gates of Madrid, by the new strength, enthusiasm and solidarity of the Spanish people and their people's army, which with the help of the Soviet Union and the international solidarity of the workers of the world is bringing to realization their slogan: "Madrid will be the tomb of Spanish fascism."

Why is the Soviet Union a great world power today, the only country in the world with a constantly rising standard of living, which is able to give effective and powerful help to the Spanish people at a moment when they are deserted by every other government of the world?

Because the Soviet Union rejected Trotsky and Trotskyism, isolated them from the masses, drove them out of the country, and is now engaged in burning out the little poisonous remnants of Trotskyism that Trotsky left behind him and which had until now covered themselves in dark corners and operated as masked assassins, spies and wreckers.

The Soviet Union is a great and growing power, because it has solidly built up socialism, eliminated all exploitation, brought the masses of the population into the active control and direction of the government and economy of the country, and capped it all with the great new Stalinist Constitution, the realization in life of the dreams of progressive humanity of all ages, the creation of a classless society.

The Soviet Union has come forward in truth as the helper and inspirer of all the oppressed, because it has never wavered in its loyalty to the great teachings of Marx and Engels, be-

cause it has Lenin as its founder, and because after Lenin's death it found in Stalin a worthy successor and continuer of Lenin's work, who could not only guide the actual construction of socialism but also protect it against every enemy, at home and abroad.

In this world of starvation, misery, oppression and war, only the Soviet Union can show a rising material and cultural life, the end of all oppression of class by class or nation by nation, the stronghold of peace, because it has united the mass of the people behind the Party of Lenin.

Stalin has said, speaking for the 170,000,000 population of the Soviet Union, that the defense of Spanish democracy is the cause of all progressive humanity.

The defense of Spain is at the same time and, first of all, the defeat of Trotskyism, the handmaiden of fascism, in Spain and throughout the world.

All progressive humanity, which wants to help save Spain and the whole world from fascism and war, must find the road to unity in its struggles.

The united front, the People's Front, the slogans of all progressive humanity, finds in Trotskyism its most immediate and bitter enemy.

The Soviet Union, by hunting out and exterminating the agents of fascism and war lurking within its own borders, has performed a signal service to the cause of progressive humanity all over the world.

Now, just as all progressive humanity must emulate the Soviet Union in its material, moral and political assistance to Spanish democracy, we must also emulate the Soviet Union in doing battle with Trotskyism, in driving it out of the ranks of the working class and from among the people, in making it a pariah, branding it with the mark of Cain, of the enemy of human progress.

Against fascism and war, and against all its Trotskyist agents, we will organize the people to march forward to democracy, progress and peace.

*Address delivered at Madison Square Garden, New York, February 5, 1937.*

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### III

## China and America

TONIGHT I want to talk especially about China. We know, and the larger part of the American people are coming to know, that the bombs that are dropping on Shanghai today and blowing into bits tens of thousands of women and children, as well as men, that inhuman and bloody unprovoked attack upon the Chinese people about which we read every day, is something that affects our lives here in New York and in Kings County just as much as the threat of Tammany does.

Our lives in America cannot be separated from those of the people of China. Just as we recognized our close relationship with the Spanish people when Hitler's and Mussolini's airplanes began to rain bombs upon Madrid, so have we to recognize our close connection with our Chinese brothers now that they are suffering from the same enemy.

This attack upon the peace of the world by Italian and German fascism and Japanese militarist-fascism is not alone upon those who suffer at this moment. Let us not have any illusions that America can be separated from the world. The worst enemy that America has today is the one who would lull you into thinking that America can be kept separated, can be isolated, that these are troubles only of the rest of the world, that we just should keep out of it, that it doesn't concern us.

We Communists have been shouting this warning from the house-tops for the past several years. We are glad to see that slowly but surely the whole country is coming to understand that there can be no security for us in America from the horrors of war unless we take deeper and more active interest in preserving the rest of the world from these same horrors.

We have been given several general expressions of this truth by official leaders of the American people. The official spokesman of the United States a few months ago, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, addressing the Pan-American Conference in Buenos Aires, stated this very aptly and excellently. He said:

It is now as plain as mathematical truth that each nation in any part of the world is concerned with peace in every part of the world.

If we are concerned with peace in every part of the world, we certainly have to be concerned with war, the absence of peace. In China today we have a terrible war being waged against a people which stands before the whole world as the very symbol of peacefulness.

The Chinese people have been too peaceful. The Japanese imperialists have found, however, in the past couple of weeks, that even an extremely peaceful people can be driven too far, that finally they will turn and defend themselves. One of the most glorious pages in world history is the news that the Chinese people have begun to defend themselves effectively, that the Japanese imperialists have been cracking their shins against the defense in Shanghai.

But let us have no illusions! While the resistance of the Chinese people, which is only beginning, will surely bring the Japanese imperialists to grief finally, a great deal depends upon what we and the rest of the world do with regard to this struggle. If we allow Japanese imperialism, with all of its modern implements of warfare, to proceed unhampered against the Chinese people, while we of America actually join in this Japanese aggression, we are preparing trouble for America. The United States is accepting the blockade of China. We continue to allow scrap iron from the United States to be shipped from the docks of Brooklyn every week. Scrap iron from Brooklyn is going to Japan to be made into shrapnel and bombs to be dropped on the Chinese people! Washington issues orders that American ships shall stay away from Shang-

hai. But Washington doesn't issue any orders that all ships shall stop carrying shrapnel from Brooklyn to Japan.

It is here that we begin to understand that we Americans have a duty, a responsibility towards the Chinese people, and that that duty and responsibility is exactly the same as our duty towards world peace, our duty to ourselves. We cannot protect the peace of America, the peace of New York, the peace of Brooklyn, if we allow scrap iron from Brooklyn to destroy the peace of the Chinese people.

America had to go through a long revolutionary war to establish itself as an independent nation. Modern China is going through its war of independence today. When we had our war of independence, we found friends from other parts of the world, who came to help us. It is an established part of American history that we won our war of independence largely because of the help of our friends from other parts of the world.

It was only a few weeks ago that the President of the United States acknowledged this truth, in a speech that he made on the occasion of the unveiling of a monument in France to the American soldiers who died in the World War. President Roosevelt said:

We, of this country, have not forgotten, nor could we ever forget, the aid given us by France in the dark days of the American revolution.

If it was correct for France to give us aid in the dark days of our revolution, is it not correct for America to give aid to the heroic Chinese people in the dark days of their revolution?

But now Congress has decided that in the United States we are going to remain neutral. Neutrality is a strange word. It means that we shall "not take sides," we shall merely join in the blockade of China and give Japan the freedom of the American markets. That's what it seems neutrality means. The damnable consequences of the application of this false and hypocritical neutrality to Spain brought about the complicity of America in the fascist destruction of world peace. The same thing is happening in regard to China.

The bombs on Madrid, and the bombs on Shanghai, are surely going to bring bombs on New York and San Francisco, unless America changes this policy, and clasps hands with the peace-loving peoples of all the world, to remove this fascist, militarist menace from the world.

Comrades and friends, China is no small nation. If we could possibly think that after all, we could, for the time being, abandon some small nations to the aggression of the fascists, and still think that America might keep out of the mess—we still could not apply such reasoning to China. China is no small corner of the world. China has a population of 450,000,000, three and a half times as many as in the United States. Here is a people that has been exploited and oppressed by the Western capitalist nations ever since they “opened up” China, as they called it, with warships some hundred years ago.

The Western capitalist world smashed the old social and economic system of China by forcing the Chinese people to open up their doors to the machine-made goods of the West. The Chinese people have been suffering from that ever since, because no matter how backward their old system may have been, it was at least a system and was their own. But Western capitalism, Western imperialism, forced the products of the capitalist nations of the West on this great people, and at the same time prevented the Chinese people from developing their own capitalism.

The Japanese have learned the lessons of our Western imperialism with all of its worst trimmings. Now they are trying to apply the same imperialist methods, especially as exemplified by the brutal assault on the body of China.

If the Chinese people are not able successfully to resist this attack; if this great country and people are really forced by superior military power to submit to Japanese domination, let us have no illusion that this is something that will not affect us. Can you imagine what it will mean for the future of America if the Japanese militarists and imperialists are able to harness the great continent of China and 450,000,000 people to their particularly backward form of modern imperialism?

The peace of the whole world will be shattered and America will really be faced with a peril, a million times more real than that old bugaboo that Hearst used to trot out, the "yellow peril," the peril of the East. Since the peril of fascism in Asia has become real, Hearst has forgotten about the "yellow peril" and has become an open apologist of fascism, as it really menaces the future of America.

And that is significant, because Hearst represents the development of fascism in the United States. We will not be able to prevent fascism from seizing our country unless we help to prevent fascism from seizing Spain and prevent it from seizing China.

The Chinese people will have to do the biggest part of that job. They are organizing themselves to do it. It was five years ago that plans for uniting the Chinese people to save their country from the Japanese aggression were formulated and published by the Communist Party of China. The Communist Party of China has been, from that day down to this, moving forward to mobilize the whole Chinese nation for its salvation and independence.

During most of these five years the Chinese Communist Party, leading the Chinese Soviet government and the Chinese Red Army, has been suffering from the military attacks of the Nanking Kuomintang government. Within the past year, however, under the continued Japanese aggressive attacks, the Chinese people have awakened to the fact that it was the voice of the Communist Party which showed them the only road to their salvation.

Under pressure of this awakening consciousness, the Chinese masses have forced their Kuomintang government to stop their war against the Chinese Soviets and Red Army, to enter into negotiations for the establishment of a united national front against Japan. When the latest hostilities broke out in China there was already the beginning of the united front of the Chinese people, looking towards the amalgamation very soon of the Chinese Red Army into the Chinese Anti-Japanese National Liberation Army of the Chinese People.

You may be interested to know that a few days ago I received some letters from the leaders of the Chinese Soviet government and the Chinese Red Army, written just before the Japanese invasion at Shanghai, on June 24, from the city of Yen-an, in the province of Shensi, the headquarters of the Chinese Soviet government. They came from the three principal leaders of the Chinese Soviets, the organizers of the Chinese national liberation movement, the men who very shortly will be in the news cables as leaders of that great armed struggle of the Chinese people. With your permission, I am going to read these letters to you. The first letter is from the President of the Chinese Soviet Republic, Comrade Mao Tse-tung. He says:

My dear Comrade Browder:

Taking advantage of a comrade's visit, I am sending this letter to you, our respected Comrade Browder, good friend of the Chinese people and leader of the American people.

Both the Communist Party of China and the Communist Party of U.S.A. are confronted with a historic task, the task of resisting and overthrowing the aggressive policy of Japanese imperialism. The Chinese Party is endeavoring to bring about an anti-Japanese national united front. Although our work is passing through a difficult period, we have already made progress and we are doing our best to bring about the desired result.

From several American friends, and from other sources, we learned that the Communist Party of the United States and the masses of the American people are deeply concerned with China's struggle against Japan and have given us assistance in many ways. This makes us feel that our struggle is by no means isolated and we are heroically assisted from abroad. At the same time we feel that when we achieve victory, this victory will be of considerable help to the struggle of the American people for liberation. The world is now on the eve of a great explosion. The working class of the world and all the peoples who desire liberation must unite for the common struggle.

Revolutionary Greetings,

MAO TSE-TUNG.

The second letter I want to read to you is from Chow En-lai, one of the greatest political thinkers, writers and organizers of the Chinese people. He writes on the same day:



Comrade Browder:

From the comrade who visited us we learned what concern you and the Communist Party of the United States have for the Chinese revolutionary movement and what enthusiastic assistance you have given us. This news gives us great stimulation.

Comrade, do you still remember the Chinese comrades who worked with you in China ten years ago? I am among those who made your acquaintance at that time. Unfortunately Comrade Su Chao-chen, whom you knew best, is no more with us. He died of sickness in 1929, when he was working under the most difficult conditions.

Since the Sian incident, the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang have again started negotiations. We are dealing with a new problem of the united front which is not exactly like the united front negotiations between the Communists and Socialists in Europe and America. It is also different from the kind of co-operation which we had with the Kuomintang between 1924 and 1927. The objective of the united front at the present time is to fight Japanese imperialism. Thus, in China at the present time, the concrete process of bringing about the united front and the content of the united front is very devious and complicated. As to what actually happened and what is the present status of the negotiations, I have already transmitted this to you.

I fervently hope that you and the Party under your leadership will give us more support. I am also anxious to get your opinion on our united front work. I am confident that with our two parties on both sides of the Pacific working to overthrow the devil of aggression in the Pacific and later to overthrow all aggressors, we will surely succeed.

Enthusiastic Bolshevik greetings to you.

CHOW EN-LAI.

And the last of these letters is from Chu Teh, the great military genius of the Chinese Red Army. He writes:

On behalf of the Chinese People's Army, I am sending to you and through you to the Communist Party of the United States, the American workers and farmers and all American friends of the Chinese national liberation movement our enthusiastic greetings.

We are determined to exert our utmost to unite the Chinese people for the purpose of driving out Japanese imperialist bandits and struggle for the freedom and liberation of China. In this struggle we hope you will give a great deal of fraternal assistance. Let us join hands and destroy the dark and barbaric system of fascism. Our

future is bright, and is bound to be illuminated by the progress that is bound to shine in both hemispheres.

Long live the solidarity of the Chinese and the American people!  
Long live the victory of our struggle against fascism!

CHU TEH.

Comrades, what can I say of these messages from our Chinese comrades?

We have a great duty to perform. We must make the American people understand that the cause of the Chinese people is our cause, the defeat of the Japanese imperialism is our concern. We shall not allow America to be used as a base by Japan to make war against the Chinese people. We have to organize, first of all, to shut off the flow of all commodities and credits from this country which help the Japanese imperialists.

A good beginning would be to organize a few mass demonstrations around some of these Japanese scrap iron ships on the docks of Brooklyn. Most important of all, we must make our government in Washington understand that the will of the American people is to throw the moral influence and economic power of our country into the scales of battle to help the Chinese people.

Can we afford that America shall do less than is being done by the Soviet Union? The Nanking government of China announced a few days ago that they had just signed a pact of mutual non-aggression with the Soviet Union. This gives serious pause to the Japanese imperialists, who understand this is of practical help to the Chinese people blocking their way to conquest; they cannot laugh it off. But when our good Secretary of State, Mr. Cordell Hull, gave a very valuable and excellent reminder to the world of the existence of very solemn agreements—the Kellogg-Briand Pact of Paris, by which Japan had pledged itself to America and to China and to the rest of the world not to resort to war to settle any disputes, and the Nine-Power Pact, which guaranteed the integrity of China—the answer that Mr. Hull got to this very valuable reminder was the word from the Japanese War Office that in

their consideration this reminder required no answer, that it was not serious. The only kind of argument that the Japanese militarists are able to understand today is the argument that is backed up with economic and material action.

The Chinese people are organizing the military side of the struggle, but if we want the word of America to have any influence on the future of world peace, we had better make use of American economic power, at least, if we want to influence world events.

A necessary step for the honor of America, for the interests of America, for the interest of world peace, is for America to sever all economic relations with Japan until Japan withdraws her armed force from China, and respects her solemn covenant with the United States to keep the peace of the world; her solemn pledge that she made when she signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Nine-Power Pact.

We further propose to the government of the United States that they shall begin to negotiate with all nations of the Pacific who want peace for a particular agreement to act together for that purpose.

The American people are interested in peace, and we hope our government is. We know that the Chinese people want peace, and they are all united now to fight for peace in that country. We know that that great Pacific power, the Soviet Union, wants peace. A pact for mutual defense of peace in the Pacific between China, the Soviet Union and the United States will certainly guarantee peace in the Pacific.

If we want peace, we must strive to unite the peace forces of the world. Perhaps if we look at Europe, we might say it is very complicated and difficult. But when we look at the Far East—at the Pacific—it becomes much simpler. Three powers have it within their grasp. All that is required is an agreement to work together, and peace can be guaranteed.

We propose to secure the peace of the Pacific and on the basis of that to develop a real world peace program for the United States.

By helping our Chinese brothers and sisters, we can, at the

same time, help the cause of peace throughout the world. We can hasten the day of the destruction of the fascist and war-making governments, and the installation in their place of people's peace-loving governments. We can protect the interests of the American people, we can keep America out of war, by keeping war out of the rest of the world.

The only alternative to this program is the speedy engulfment of America into the new world war.

We say with the Chinese people—THEY SHALL NOT PASS; with the Spanish people—THEY SHALL NOT PASS; and here in America also, the war-makers and fascists SHALL NOT PASS.

The American people will unite their forces to control our government for democracy and progress; unite with the progressive and peace-loving peoples of the whole world to defeat the fascists and keep peace and progress for the peoples of every land.

*Address delivered at the Coney Island Velodrome, New York, September 2, 1937.*

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## IV

### Labor Unity in Mexico

It is a valued privilege to be able to greet you, workers of Mexico, in the name of the advanced sections of the workers of the U.S.A. for which our Communist Party speaks. The problems of our two countries are closely related. The people of our two countries have a common enemy, the monopolist-capitalist exploiters of Wall Street.

The people of our two lands are beginning to move in the same general direction, to organize their forces against the Wall Street bandits, against the forces of fascism, reaction and war. To meet our common problems, which are also connected with the world situation, we must build up ever more intimate connections and co-operation between our two peoples, between our two labor movements, and between our two Communist Parties.

I consider my visit here of importance from this point of view, as a symbol of the growing unity between the masses of Mexico and the U. S., in the fight against our common enemy.

It is interesting to note many points of similarity between the current political events in our two lands. The presidents of both Republics, alike in being progressive men of the middle-of-the-road philosophy, are attacked with the most vicious abuse and slander by the reactionary and fascist forces, by all Wall Street agents. The billionaires are not content to have administrations of a liberal, democratic and progressive nature; they demand administrations that will openly and boldly attack the political rights and economic interests of the people. They want rulers like Hitler and Mussolini. Anything less than this they call Communism and Bolshevism. Most of the great newspapers in the U. S. every day wail about

the "Bolshevik" governments of Franklin Roosevelt in the U. S. and General Cardenas in Mexico.

What Wall Street hates, the people of both countries have learned to love. The more Wall Street rages against Roosevelt and Cardenas, the more the masses of the people rally around them.

Of course, neither Roosevelt nor Cardenas are Communists nor are they sympathetic with Communism. We know that the program of each, while progressive, liberal and democratic in character, lies strictly within the limits of capitalism, though the economies of the two countries are quite different.

Nevertheless, we Communists find it very interesting when the greatest powers of capitalism, the great monopolists, begin to shriek "Communist" against such moderate leaders of the masses as Cardenas and Roosevelt. Long ago it was said: "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad!" The last madness has come upon Wall Street. It is the madness of fascism.

We Communists do not allow ourselves to be deceived. When the reactionaries howled about a "Communist victory" in our U. S. elections, we could only laugh at them. We know that among Roosevelt's 27 million supporters there are still comparatively very few Communists. But we also laugh with pleasure to see Wall Street doing our Communist work for us. Those 27 million are not Communists, they used to be very hostile to Communism, but since the Wall Street reactionaries began to howl "Communist" against Roosevelt, they begin to say, "Maybe there is something in Communism after all; maybe the Communists are not so bad; we'll have to look into this question." Thus we Communists, still a very small party, have been made respectable by this reactionary madness.

At the same time, the reactionary and fascist forces are becoming more bold and desperate under the lashing of their madmen leaders, Hitler and Mussolini, who drive toward world war while driving their followers in each country toward civil war. They will not be content until they destroy all remnants of democracy, of organization of the masses, of all human culture. Faced with this growing menace, all honest and sincere

progressives and democrats are realizing they must unite the people for defense; we Communists everywhere are at the same time calling for such a defensive unity of the people, to which we pledge our fullest support and co-operation.

Thus it is coming about in every country, that a united front of all workers is growing, around which rises a great People's Front, which includes also the Communists. It is this People's Front which has called a halt to the advance of fascism toward conquering the world. The People's Front stopped Franco at the gates of Madrid; the People's Front saved France from fascism; the beginnings of the People's Front make possible the progressive measures of Roosevelt in the U. S.; the beginnings of the People's Front is that solid foundation which enables General Cardenas to take over your railroads for the Mexican people.

What is this fascism that threatens the world? The most illuminating picture of what fascism prepares for every country is in Spain. Spanish fascism prepared an armed insurrection against the democratic republic. It shouted that it was defending Christianity—but it slaughtered Christian Spaniards with an imported Moorish army from Africa. It called itself a "national" movement—but it was organized, financed, and directed from Rome and Berlin. It claimed to crusade for the Catholic Church—but its most bestial destruction of open cities and slaughter of women and children was directed against the Basques, most Catholic of all people in Spain.

It protested that it was fighting against Communism—but its most desperate resolve is to smash the democratic republic, which it identifies with Communism just as it does in the U. S. and Mexico. It says it defends "civilization"—but it destroys all culture and civilization with airplanes, bombs, tanks and armies imported from abroad. Every slogan of fascism has been exposed as a lie in Spain. It stands exposed as the murderer of the people, the betrayer of the nation, the destroyer of democracy and civilization.

Fascism represents a small minority, armed to the teeth, desperately resolved to rule or ruin the world. It gains its

victories through the *disunity* of the great majority of the people and of the nations which want peace and democracy. Where the workers are solidly united, and with them the great masses of the people, in a People's Front, there fascism is always and inevitably defeated. Therefore the great aim of the fascists is always and everywhere to sow disunity, distrust and demoralization among the democratic people, and between the democratic nations. Therefore to preserve democracy and peace, the first law is that of unity, unity at all costs, unity first and last, unity until the forces of fascism and war are destroyed and driven from the earth.

Everywhere the fascists look for their helpers, not only among the open reactionaries, but also among those who shout the loudest in extreme revolutionary slogans, but who use such slogans to try to break the People's Front in face of fascist attacks. Thus in Spain, the butcher Franco based his greatest expectations of smashing the iron front of the People's Army upon the insurrection organized behind its lines in Barcelona, by the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites of the P.O.U.M.

Luckily the Spanish Republic and the people had been warned in time, they were prepared, and they put down that treacherous stab-in-the-back in a few days. Trotskyism thus exposed itself in Spain, and through Spain to the whole world, as the slinking masked agent of fascism. Trotskyism is the same the world over. What it tried in Spain, it is preparing everywhere else it shows its head. It is the most vicious enemy of the unity of the workers and of the people.

Spain has given another lesson of first importance to the whole democratic world. In its darkest hours, the Spanish Republic was deserted by almost all the other great democratic countries of the world. One honorable exception was the Mexican Republic which, within its limited resources and abilities, demonstrated in deeds its real solidarity with the Spanish Republic. But the help which was decisive to enable the Spanish people to arm themselves to withstand the airplanes, tanks, cannon and armies invading them from Hitler Germany, Fascist Italy and enslaved Morocco, came not from France,



not from England, not from the United States—no, they came from the only great power which is both able and willing to help any people fighting for its freedom and independence, from the great country of socialism, the Soviet Union. Stalin declared that the cause of the Spanish people is the cause of all progressive and democratic mankind. He could speak in the name of a great power, of 170 million people, because his people has won complete liberty, not only from foreign domination, but from the domination of all landlords, monopolists and bloodsuckers who have all been driven completely out of the Soviet Union.

It is a great joy to us in the United States to witness the Mexican people more and more organizing their forces, more and more pushing the reactionary forces into the background, more and more asserting your national independence and leadership among the Latin-American peoples, more and more realizing the great objectives of the national revolution set up in your Constitution. We are happy to see such measures as the beginning of land distribution to the peasants. We are happy to see you take your railroads finally and forever out of the hands of foreign imperialist stockholders. We are happy to see you, step by step, moving toward possession and administration of one after another of your great industries and national resources. We have our own selfish reasons for this happiness—a free and independent Mexican people will be a great help and inspiration to us in the United States to win our own freedom from the Wall Street monopolists who robbed not only Mexico, Cuba and all Latin-America but who rob and oppress the people of the United States with equal ferocity. Go forward with full determination, as a united nation, toward complete possession of your own land.

It has been a privilege which I highly appreciate to have participated for the last three days in the Central Committee meeting of the Communist Party of Mexico. I have learned to admire and love my comrades of the leadership of the C.P.M. as never before.

Our Mexican Communists have made brilliant advances, in

winning the confidence and co-operation of increasing sections of the Mexican workers and people. They have made mistakes—but is there anyone in the world who has not? Only those who sit back and do nothing! The mistakes of our Mexican Communists consisted in wanting to push forward too fast, faster than our friends and collaborators were in all cases ready to go. That had threatened a disastrous division, with brother fighting brother, labor fighting labor. But Communists can never permit such a situation! The Central Committee of the C.P.M. has called a halt to this fratricidal conflict. It has declared for unity at all costs. It is prepared to do everything necessary to heal the breach. It is mercilessly correcting all its weaknesses which have contributed to permitting this intolerable division. It has passed the supreme test of a mature party—the ability to correct its own errors before the world. It has proved again that it deserves the confidence of the Mexican masses.

Great tasks and great struggles are ahead of you, workers and people of Mexico, as they also face us in the United States, and as they face the people of the whole world. We must prepare to defend our threatened democracy and peace. We must learn how to defeat the fascists, reactionaries and war-makers. We must learn how to unite; how to unite the workers of every industry and locality; how to unite all the toiling people in the nation, how to win control of our countries and hold them against the fascists. We must learn how to unite the toiling people of all countries; how to unite for common international action; how to build a world unity of defense against fascism and war. This is no small task. Our difficulties are great.

But our determination is also great, and our common abilities, when united on a national and international scale, are multiplied a thousandfold. We learn our true strength through unity. It is an invincible strength. Therefore, forward to the united front of labor, and of all the people, in Mexico, in the United States, and in all the world. Through unity to victory for all the toiling people!

*Abridged text of a speech delivered at a mass meeting in Mexico City, June 29, 1937.*

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## Zionism and the Partition of Palestine

ALL Jewish workers who have been supporters, or have been influenced by, Zionism, and who have been hostile to the Communist Party because our Party opposed its political program, should really be prepared to do some hard and fundamental thinking about the latest British proposal for partition of Palestine, and to draw some serious lessons from the crisis in Zionism that it produced.

Is it not clear that the partition of Palestine puts an end to all the illusions so long propagated about a "strong Jewish State" in the future?

Is it not clear that the British imperialists deliberately prepared for this debacle of Zionism by setting the Jews against the Arabs, and by creating conditions that made friendly cooperation between the two people more and more difficult?

Is it not clear that the Zionist leadership failed to take a single step to offset or block this strategy of the imperialists, but on the contrary became their tools and echoes?

Is it not clear that any program of a dispersed people, which looks to support of the British imperialists for realization, inevitably becomes simply a tool in the hands of the imperialists?

All four of these questions are clear to all thinking people now, no matter how much we might still disagree about more basic problems. The crisis in Zionism is now so deep, and its immediate causes stand out so clearly, that all honest people must soon be of one opinion on these simple questions.

These words are addressed especially to those who in the past were antagonistic to the Communist Party because of our attacks against Zionism. I ask you, in view of the crisis in

Zionism today, is it not necessary for you to review again all the fundamental problems involved in this question—to talk them over among yourselves, and also with us? We have been proved correct by events in many of the points we raised with you before. Is it not possible that our criticism merits your renewed examination in the light of these latest events?

I know well how difficult it is for men and women to come together again for sober discussion, after having been divided for years by acrimonious disputes. But is it not necessary now, from your point of view as well as from ours, to rise above all old quarrels which were based upon a world situation now fundamentally changed, and see if we cannot agree on how to face this changed world which threatens our interests with equal ferocity?

That the British imperialists now openly throw overboard their promises to Zionism (promises which we always said they would never keep), may be a disaster to those who built up a whole program and a life upon such a shifty foundation. But, the old saying that "it's an ill wind that blows no good," also applies to this problem. Out of the wreckage of hopes and illusions, this much good at least can be gained and must be gained by the efforts of all honest men and women on both sides of the old disputes—the good of wiping out the false barriers that divided us, of making a fresh approach to establish brotherly and comradely relations between Jewish workers of common interests who had been separated about differences now shown to be false ones.

Maybe we Communists have also been at fault in the past with regard to the fierceness with which this false conflict was allowed to rage. We are ready to examine this question also, and are always self-critical in such matters. We have no desire now to cry "I told you so"; we don't want to make other workers' disasters a victory for us. Even if we made mistakes, it was only because we saw that disaster inherent in the program of Zionism, and wanted to avert it. Now we all have a chance to review the whole situation again, in the light of new facts which are changing the face not only of Palestine but

of the whole world, and see if we cannot work out a common platform upon which American workers of all national origins can get together with American workers of Jewish origin, without being longer divided by that old and unfortunate feud about Zionism.

New days and new problems require new thoughts, new programs, and new friends. We offer our hand of fellowship to all disillusioned Zionist workers for a new common approach to all our problems.

From *Jewish Life*, 1937.

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VI

## For a Common Front Against the War-makers

YOUR convention of the Communist Party of Canada meets at a moment when the whole world stands at the crossroads, pondering the most fateful decisions. The horrible fumes of a new world conflagration already hang over every home. A small minority of desperate international bandits have been able, because the great majority of peace-loving people have been disunited and are retreating, to drag the whole world again to the brink of the abyss.

At this moment, above all others, your Party has a most responsible role to play, above all in helping to create and strengthen a common front against the war-makers. This critical moment in world history puts to test all men, all leaders, all programs, all parties. It is against this background that it is my duty and pleasure to bring to you the warmest fraternal greetings of the Communist Party of the United States and of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, and to wish you the most fruitful deliberations.

It would indeed be strange if the Communist Parties of Canada and the United States should fail to have the closest and most brotherly relations. By our close collaboration, which expresses our full internationalism, we are at the same time continuing the best traditions of our two nations. Today, on the most vital question of war and peace, and the regroupings taking place in our political life, there is an essential similarity and close relationship between us in the problems we face and the solutions we must find. It is hardly possible that our two countries should part company now at the crossroads of history and take opposing paths.

Why is the whole world threatened by war today? Why is it that no city can be sure that it may not be awakened any night by the crash of bombs dropped from the air? Why is it that three governments have been able to terrorize the world?

There is a direct succession of events, during the past six years, which inevitably created the present situation. In 1931, the Japanese militarists marched unannounced into Manchuria, seized control of it by violence, and transformed it into a Japanese colony with a puppet government called Manchukuo. The whole world shuddered, the League of Nations and the U.S.A. declared the act a violation of international law and solemn treaties—but nothing was done, the great majority who wanted peace based upon ordered agreement could not themselves agree upon any common action. This helplessness and futility was not lost upon the other bandit powers.

Hitler tore up the Locarno treaty, marched into the demilitarized Rhineland, fortified it, and brought his gigantic war-machine directly to the borders of France. Again nothing happened—the democracies were terrified by the threat of war, retreated before the aggression, bowed before the accomplished fact.

Mussolini, originator of fascist banditry, drew the next conclusion by throwing an army of invasion into backward and helpless Ethiopia, member of the League of Nations. This time there were gestures of organized resistance; the League denounced the aggression and declared economic sanctions against Italy. But just at the moment when sanctions could become effective, just when the U.S.A. was ready to declare its co-operation, the Tory ruling circles in Britain torpedoed the ship of peace by exploding upon the world the Hoare-Laval proposal, broke up and scattered the peace front, and opened the road to Addis Ababa for Mussolini. Again the bandits were told in effect that the world was their free hunting preserve, that the forces of peace were helpless before them.

Then the bandits struck again, this time into the heart of Europe; Mussolini and Hitler made their joint invasion of Spain, with the help of Moorish mercenaries, and under the

slogan of a war of Christianity undertook to destroy the Spanish Republic. The democratic nations responded with the hypocritical farce of the "non-intervention" policy, which blockaded Republican Spain while the fascist rebels were freely supplied with men and munitions by Mussolini and Hitler—a positive help to the bandits, in which, to our shame, the U.S.A. also joined with its irrational "neutrality" law. Again the international bandits were told in effect that they could freely roam the world with a torch of war.

With such a complete breakdown of international law and morality, why should the Japanese not have assumed a "neutral" world would also complacently witness their horrible atrocities in China? The democratic nations had done everything possible to encourage banditry! During all this period, only one great power had stood out as an uncompromising fighter for peace, had never deserted Ethiopia, had stood firmly by the side of the Spanish Republic, had given practical aid to China. That power, the most reliable bulwark of peace, was the land of socialism, the Soviet Union.

But six years of unresisted international banditry, six years of constant "scuttle and run" policy by the democracies of the West, had so clearly brought the whole world on the brink of disaster, that we now witness a great upheaval of the people, demanding that a halt be called upon the bandits. This peoples' uprising began with the movement to aid the Spanish Republic, which brought the flower of democratic youth from the whole world into the Republican trenches in Spain, in the glorious International Brigade, and our own Mackenzie-Papineau and Abraham Lincoln Battalions. Now it has become a great storm of protest against Japanese banditry in China in which the whole labor movement in the English-speaking countries is already mobilized in a "boycott Japanese goods" movement. This upheaval of the peace-loving peoples of the capitalist democracies found its strongest, most far-reaching voice in the great speech of President Roosevelt in Chicago.

In the past few years, we Communists have been the sharpest critics of President Roosevelt, even while we were his



staunch supporters when he fought against the reactionaries for progressive policies. Our criticism of the President has been especially sharp against what we considered his cowardly surrender to the reactionary neutrality policy. All the more clearly then because of our past criticism of President Roosevelt's foreign policy, must we of the Communist Party declare our full and complete support to the line laid down in his Chicago speech. It is the only course which can save the world from a terrible catastrophe.

We have no illusions that the new course charted by President Roosevelt will be easy to execute. Above all we are conscious of the strong and bitter enemies who will oppose a positive peace policy with all their power. These reactionary forces own or control most of the daily press of the United States; they control many leading positions in the President's own party. They are working hand in hand with Hitler and Mussolini in world affairs. They will move heaven and earth to defeat the President and his policy. Only the active support of the masses of the people in the United States, as well as in Canada and the other democratic countries of the West, can overcome the resistance of the accomplices of fascism and carry this positive peace policy into effect.

We have in the United States a group of pacifist societies who, in the name of peace, are counseling unconditional surrender to the international bandits. Whatever their motives, such pacifists have become no better than the conscious agents of Hitler and Mussolini. The time has come to end the fascist menace to world peace. Everyone must line up on one side or the other. Whoever is opposed to collective action for peace, is an enemy of peace, an agent of the international bandits.

More than ever we are conscious that only a socialist reorganization of society can, once and for all, abolish the causes of war and bring permanent peace to the world. But the great majority of the people in the United States and Canada especially, are not yet ready for the fundamental solution of socialism. But they do want peace; they are ready to fight for peace; they have the leadership for peace of the head of the

most powerful capitalist nation, President Roosevelt; they have the People's Front in control of France, with a powerful will for peace; they see the iron battalions of the Spanish People's Army throwing back the invaders from their land; they see the great Chinese people uniting into a solid front of heroic resistance to Japanese invasion; they know above all they have the complete support of the great and powerful land of socialism, the Soviet Union.

Therefore, the masses know that it is possible to stop the war-makers now, the determination to do that job is growing throughout the world. The fascist war-makers can be stopped. They must be stopped. That is the task of all progressive humanity. To that task we dedicate our full strength.

Quarantine the fascist war-makers!

Unite the peace-loving peoples for collective action!

Stamp out international banditry!

*Address delivered at the Opening Session of the Eighth Dominion Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, October 8, 1937.*

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## VII

# Twenty Years of Soviet Power

## THE TRIUMPH OF DEMOCRACY THROUGH SOCIALISM

*Capitalism generally and imperialism especially transform democracy into an illusion, while at the same time capitalism gives birth to democratic aspirations among the masses; it creates democratic institutions; it sharpens the antagonism between imperialism, which denies democracy, and the masses, who strive for democracy. (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. XXX, p. 259, Russian Edition.)*

NOVEMBER 7 marks the twentieth anniversary of the rise of a new type of state, Soviet power, which began the building of a new type of society, socialism.

This event marked a new turning point in the history of mankind. It has made necessary for the whole world a re-evaluation of old values, a re-examination of all problems, a realignment of previous social groupings, a redirection of the course of human affairs.

It is my purpose to examine the achievements of twenty years of Soviet power in relation particularly to the problems of North American democracy, to the problems of the people of the United States and Canada.

A few preliminary observations will be of value, by way of comparing the geographical and historical influences in the two great regions under examination.

### RUSSIA AND NORTH AMERICA

The territory known until 1917 as the Empire of the Tsar of Russia closely approximates in extent, in climatic con-

ditions and in richness of natural resources, our own North American continent. Its population is about 20 to 25 per cent greater. With such close similarity of the basic natural factors, however, these two areas have gone through sharply different historical developments. Both came under the impact of the rising capitalist system of Western Europe during approximately the same period, but with different results, due to a different inheritance from the pre-capitalist era.

Russia came into the world community and world market, that was brought into being by capitalism, with the heavy inheritance of a feudal system of economy and society rooted in centuries of slow development, a system with a highly developed superstructure of government, of state power. In contrast, North America was only beginning to be conquered by an immigration from Europe composed, in its great majority, of people in rebellion against the oppressions of the combined decaying-feudalist and early-capitalist influences of their homelands. The political superstructure imported with them had scanty roots on this continent, was maintained only by force from abroad, and was consequently soon shattered by the forces of democracy that grew rapidly under the influence of a capitalist economy at work on almost virgin soil.

In the years 1776 to 1787, the United States won its independence as a nation, and fashioned a stable state power, within which the only serious obstacle to unfettered capitalist development was the compromise with slavery. The bourgeois-democratic revolution was completed, in its most essential aspects, by the Civil War of 1861-65, and the consequent abolition of slavery. Canada won essentially the same level of historical development in the struggles of 1837.

In the tsarist empire, however, the enemy was much more stubborn and powerful. Although the same democratic forces were at work there, they could not break through; they were defeated again and again. The development of capitalism sapped and undermined the foundations of the old order; but at each period of crisis the feudal autocracy emerged triumphant through a combination of extreme repression, concessions

and foreign alliances. The result for Russia was an extremely backward and distorted economic development, and the almost complete postponement of the democratic revolution until the twentieth century, when it merged with the socialist revolution.

Thus it was, in brief, that these two great sections of humanity, Russia and North America, so similarly equipped in natural resources and population, came to the world crisis of 1914-1918 at the opposite poles of economic and political development. Russia was the most backward in every important respect; North America was the most advanced. Russia emerged from the World War with an economy shattered and prostrate, racked by famine, its old political superstructure broken and scattered to the four winds, its new infant system, Soviet power, fighting against a hostile world with its back to the wall, and spoken of deprecatingly even by its friends as an "experiment." North America emerged from the World War with an enormously strengthened economy, the world's banker, holding the debts of the other powers, and with, at least for a time, predominant prestige and influence in world politics.

What a contrast this was! Every philistine, every shallow thinker and vulgarian, could and did tell the world that North America was the promised land, that it had found the way to "permanent prosperity," that with the "American system" poverty was being abolished and the millennium ushered in. Henry Ford and the belt-line system of mass production were the new God. And with God in his heaven, all was right with the capitalist world. As for that curious and disreputable "experiment," Soviet Russia, everyone knew that it was prostrate and starving. Lenin was announcing the New Economic Policy and offering concessions to foreign capitalists; soon Russia would be safely back in the capitalist family, as the poor relation, tending the kitchen and doing the dirty work. Herbert Hoover contemptuously sent over the American Relief Administration, with some superfluous war-stores of wheat, expecting the 140,000,000 Russians to follow this wisp of straw obediently back into the capitalist harness. For all

sensible people, the issue was settled. North America owned and led the world! Soviet Russia was a starving beggar at the doorstep! Such was the appearance in the early 1920's.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE WITH THE INHERITANCE?

Today we call for an accounting of what has been done with this inheritance by North America, which inherited half the world's wealth and its leadership, and by Soviet Russia, which inherited ruin and starvation. The day of reckoning is here. To deal with the results of this reckoning, we are tempted to turn to some of the old Hebrew prophets, who celebrated the humiliation of the mighty and exaltation of the humble. Only the passionate words of an Isaiah could celebrate worthily the emergence of that "hungry beggar" of the 1920's as the "proud builder," who not only restored completely his ruined inheritance, but multiplied it five times over in the past ten years; or find scorn bitter enough to describe how the proud and mighty have squandered their inheritance and cast their people into the desolation of unemployment, labor camps, a declining standard of living and the threat of fascist destruction of civilization.

We are not of the line of Isaiah, however, who saw only the wrath of God in the humiliation of the proud and powerful. We find material causes for this confusion of the mighty, and turn to science for our explanations. If we cannot equal the brilliant imagery of the Prophets, perhaps we can compensate the loss by a deeper understanding of the dialectical paradoxes of our history.

Until the World War, North America had stood in the vanguard of world progress, politically and economically. Politically, it was the "purest" example of bourgeois democracy, that is, it had the least carry-over of feudal and semi-feudal remnants, and the broadest distribution of democratic rights. This is what removed the fetters from production, gave full sweep to the development of capitalism. But it was the full development of capitalism which undermined the economic

basis of democracy, and at the same time set a sharp limit to economic expansion and brought on the crisis.

American democracy arose upon the basis of the widespread distribution among the population of the productive economy of the country, privately owned and individually operated, chiefly the individual farm and the craftsman's tools. This economic basis of democracy for a long time reproduced itself, through the expansion of the original sparse settlements on the Atlantic seaboard over the continent to the Pacific, on the basis of free or cheap lands. With the disappearance of the frontier, this process was halted. At the same time, approximately, North America together with the capitalist nations of Europe entered the era of modern imperialism, of the predominance of finance capital, of monopoly, in its economic life. This was the period of rapid concentration and centralization of capital, the pyramiding of great trusts, the feverish search for new markets, for fields of capital investment and for sources of raw materials. It was the period of the division of the entire world among the great Powers—and the consequent rivalries and antagonisms that resulted in the imperialist World War.

American democracy, based upon individual private property, had made possible this unexampled expansion, which projected the United States as the chief world Power. But this expansion had simultaneously wiped out the economic foundation of the democracy which gave it birth. Individual private property in the nation's economy became more and more concentrated and centralized in the hands of a constantly smaller group of families, constituting the privileged class, the upper and decisive strata of the ruling class. Agriculture, which felt this process least sharply in terms of production, was completely overshadowed by the growth of industry and the cities, but even the individual farm producer fell into the clutches of finance capital through mortgages, usury and market monopolies. Individual craftsmen almost disappeared, replaced by the great armies of propertyless wage-workers in mass production, in which thousands and even tens of thou-

sands became cogs in a single big productive mechanism under a single impersonal corporate direction. Production was socialized—while ownership remained private but confined to a smaller and smaller group which, through economic power, became the decisive rulers behind the mask of a popular democracy. Political democracy was reduced largely to what Anatole France described as “the equal right of rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges.”

The World War, which brought America to full realization of this process, thus gave it the illusion of grandeur and power precisely at the time when it had prepared the general breakdown of the whole capitalist system. The tremendous productive economy could not, under the laws of capitalism, operate except under the stimulus of a constantly increasing mass of profits. These accumulated in the hands of a small class which, already exhausted in the search for new forms of wasteful consumption, could use these enormous funds only for further capital investment for further profits, or for war to conquer new fields of investment. Economic paralysis or war became the Hobson's choice facing a society not prepared to break the bounds of capitalism and pass over to a socialist system.

Thus it was that in 1929 and since, the old Hebrew Prophet's curse against the proud and mighty was visited upon North America in the hour of her apparent triumph. America's “sin,” which brought this vengeance upon her, was not, however, that of blasphemy against the ancient Prophet's Yahveh; it was the “sin” of having permitted the fruits of bourgeois democracy to destroy its foundation, of allowing control of the people's economy to pass out of the hands of the people.

During this same period of the humiliation of once proud America, the starving beggar, as our arrogant American capitalists considered Soviet Russia, emerged as the most rapidly progressing land in all fields—economically, politically, culturally—ever recorded in the history of mankind. Surrounded by a hostile world, with nothing other than its natural resources *and its superior system of social organization*, the Soviet



Union restored its wrecked economy, proceeded to multiply its wealth production to thirteen times that of the early 1920's, and more than four times that of 1929, advanced from last place in Europe to the first, and is now engaged in a race to catch up with and surpass the United States. The rate of growth of Soviet economy is five or six times that of the United States in its period of most rapid expansion.

In the period when the American standard of living fell on the average by 50 per cent, the standard of living in the Soviet Union was raised by 400 per cent. While America was throwing 13,000,000 workers onto the streets, unemployed, of whom seven or eight million are still dependent upon the relief dole, the Soviet Union was not only abolishing all unemployment, but doubling the size of the industrial working class by absorbing peasants into the factories. While American agriculture was saved from destruction only by gigantic subsidies, paying for the curtailment and destruction of crops and cattle, Soviet agriculture had been reorganized on a collective, socialist, basis and doubled its production, with an increase of living standards on the countryside of immeasurable proportions—bringing a life of culture and security to the agrarian population for the first time in human history.

Above all, at a moment when democracy and culture are destroyed in half of Europe by the barbarian hordes of fascism; when they fight for their life in the rest of Europe; when China, the greatest country of Asia, fights against odds for its very existence; when democracy is under fire and threatened even in North America—at this moment, Russia, so recently the synonym of backwardness, steps forward with its new Constitution, shaped under the guiding hand of Stalin, a Constitution which is a new high mark in the achievement of democracy, such as in the past only a few great spirits could dream of, but which now comes to life in the everyday activities of 170,000,000 people.

The Constitution of the United States was for generations the most democratic in the world. But compare it with that of the Soviet Union.

The United States Constitution tolerated for generations the disfranchisement of the great majority of the population; for eighty years it confirmed slavery for one-tenth of the population; its grant of suffrage to the Negroes is still largely unrealized today; for over 130 years it excluded half the population, the women, from suffrage; citizenship rights begin only at the age of twenty-one years.

The Soviet Constitution provides universal adult suffrage, the only exception being those adjudged by a court as insane or guilty of a major crime against the state; the right to vote begins at eighteen years.

The United States Constitution provides unproportional representation; in the Senate, without which no law can be adopted, the four or five million voters of the twenty-four smallest states have equal power with the 35,000,000 voters of the twenty-four largest states. Within the states, unproportional representation is so common that it is reduced to a system with a special name, "gerrymandering."

The Soviet Constitution provides for absolutely proportional representation, with one representative in the highest Council for each 300,000 voters, and for the lower, Provincial, Councils one for each smaller bloc of voters in proportion. The equal representation in the Council of Nationalities, regardless of population, guards the special interests of the different nationalities in the Union, without the possibility of a minority veto over the majority.

The United States Constitution establishes a judiciary which in practice has become the supreme power, which is appointed for life, which is irremovable, and which is responsible at no time to the people or to their representatives.

The Soviet Constitution provides for the direct election, by the people, of all government officials, without exception and including the judiciary, for a limited number of years and with the right of recall.

The United States Constitution, in the Amendments constituting the Bill of Rights, denies to the national government the power to pass any laws limiting the civil rights of the

people, the most important being the rights of free speech, press and assembly. But it does not prohibit the states from making such limitations, and the struggle for civil rights is thus merely transferred to the states, where in fact they are in many cases limited; while in general, the realization of the Bill of Rights, insofar as this involves economic factors, is left entirely at the mercy of the capitalist ownership of the economy. The livelihood of the citizens, without which no rights have any meaning whatever, does not come within the scope of the United States Constitution at all.

The Soviet Constitution has as its very heart the specific guarantee of work at a living wage for every citizen, vacations with pay, free education and adequate leisure. The working day is limited to seven hours, with six hours for dangerous occupations. The rights of free speech, press and assembly are guaranteed by putting at the disposal of the Soviet citizens, through their organizations, all the meeting halls, public buildings, the radio, printing presses and paper, the supply of which is constantly being increased. The foundation for all these guarantees is the possession of the entire national economy by the people, and its operation for their common benefit, which is made permanent in the Constitution.

#### THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy, the control of state power by the people, acting on the principle of majority rule and the delegation of power to representatives periodically chosen by election, can be historically developed only upon the foundation of an appropriate economic system.

That democracy which developed with capitalism, and which, in its purest forms, gave capitalism its highest development, was originally based upon the widespread distribution of ownership in the basic economy of the country, which was an economy of individual production, chiefly agricultural.

With the growth of commodity production, exchange, the market, division of labor, the accumulation of capital, and

finally the rise of machinery, mechanical power and gigantic production units—as production took on more and more socialized forms, there took place the simultaneous process of divorcing the small owner from his property. This takes place through the normal operation of capitalist economy, accelerated always by state policy, and often by extra-legal fraud and violence. By varied and sundry means, the full development of capitalism always and necessarily means the creation of a small privileged owning class, monopoly capitalists, set over against a large wage-working class which has no ownership whatever in the means of production, and which comprises in North America the vast majority of the population.

Democracy in North America has thus been almost completely deprived of its original economic foundation. To the degree that democracy still lives under this developed capitalism, therefore, it must find for itself a new economic foundation. This is no longer possible in the form of individual ownership. All possibility of that has been destroyed beyond recall by machinery and mechanical power, making necessary large-scale mass production.

The illusion, fostered for a time by capitalist propaganda, of a democratization of capital by widespread corporate-stock ownership, was given its final death-blow by the last crisis. The only new forms by which democracy has achieved a very fragmentary and precarious economic foundation under modern capitalism, have been socialized forms—militant trade unionism, especially in its industrial form, and governmental intervention in economy under the influence of the democratic aspirations and demands.

The struggle for these new forms brings about a realignment of forces within the democracy—with the capitalists, their agents and dupes on the one side, fighting for maintenance and increase of their profits, and the producing masses on the other side, fighting for a better life at the expense of capitalist profits. This is the process that has brought the present chaos in the traditional political life of the United States and Canada.

For a time the monopoly capitalists are able to keep this struggle of the masses under their control, within certain limits, by trickery, fraud and force, by keeping the toiling masses divided and fighting among themselves instead of their common enemy. But finally, when all these resources fail them, when they see the masses uniting at last against them upon a program of social betterment at the expense of the capitalists—then the capitalists begin to destroy the democracy which in the past served them so well, but which now threatens to escape their control. They turn to fascism, the open, brutal and bloody dictatorship of finance capital, exercised by turning loose upon society the criminal underworld and declassed elements, organized and controlled by their enormous wealth, and the terrorist destruction of the organization of the people. They destroy democracy, always under the pretext that democracy is threatened with destruction at the hands of Communism, of Marxism, of Bolshevism. It is an infallible sign of the rise of fascism when, as in the United States today, such moderate democrats as President Roosevelt and John L. Lewis, who openly proclaim their allegiance to capitalism, are denounced by the Tories as "Communists."

Democracy today is destroyed in much of the capitalist world. It is fighting for its life in the remainder. It can survive under capitalism only to the degree to which there are successfully carried out such programs as those of John L. Lewis and the Committee for Industrial Organization and the economic reforms and the peace program of President Roosevelt. It will always be in danger of destruction so long as the national economy is owned and controlled by a small plutocratic capitalist class. The only final guarantee for democracy is the transfer of ownership of the national economy from the hands of the small, capitalist class into the hands of the whole people, that is, through socialism.

That is the main lesson to be drawn by us today, in the North American countries, from an examination of the achievements of twenty years of Soviet power in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union has been able, in a world where elsewhere

democracy is on the defensive or destroyed, to make a great new democratic advance, precisely because it has taken both economic and political power out of the hands of the enemies of the people, precisely because it has given to democracy a full and complete economic foundation, one which will endure, which will not be undermined and disappear as did the individual private property. Every advance of science in the Soviet Union, every increase in production and productivity, strengthens Soviet democracy and strengthens its economic foundation.

The Soviet Union has shown the way to the final and complete guarantee of democracy, and its fullest development. And such a democracy is unconquerable.

#### SOCIALISM AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

From all that has been said, it follows that the central political task of the day is to organize the working class, and around it the majority of the people, to fight for a better life, to obtain a measure of economic power, and to defend democracy against the attacks of the capitalists who are turning to fascism.

Such a majority of the toiling masses, organized to defend democracy and defeat fascism, will learn, through their experience and our teachings, that the full transition to socialism is the only final solution of our problems, the only final outcome of the struggle.

The struggle for realizing socialism is, however, not the beginning of this process, but rather its outcome. Especially in the United States and Canada, economically ripe for socialism, the masses are not politically prepared. To make the immediate transition to socialism the question of the day would merely serve to split off the small minority of those who stand for socialism from the masses; to leave these masses, without our unifying and organizing influence, open to all the splitting and disruptive influences of the bourgeoisie; and thus to facilitate the coming to power of fascism and the destruction of democracy.

The People's Front against reaction, fascism and war—

that is the central task of the day. That is what all sincere democrats who resist fascism must also want, whether they agree with our socialist program or not. We can completely agree with such non-socialist democrats upon the united defense of democracy under capitalism. We never had, and never will have, a program of trying to force socialism upon an unwilling majority of the people. Within the People's Front for democracy and peace, we grant the full right of the non-socialists to propagandize us on the possibility of solving our problems under capitalism; in every effort to improve conditions under capitalism we will give our fullest energies for success, thus giving them the most favorable conditions possible for their program. At the same time, we ask for ourselves the freedom of educational work to explain our understanding of the laws of social development, of why we think socialism is necessary and finally inevitable. We are sure that before long life itself will convince the majority that we are correct.

This is the true relation of the People's Front to socialism. This is quite different from the distorted view, the opportunist sectarianism, of such Socialists as Norman Thomas in the United States, and some Commonwealth Federation leaders in Canada. These people, under the influence of Trotskyism, see in the People's Front an obstacle to or an enemy of socialism, instead of the pre-condition for the least painful transition to socialism, which it really is. Their position only reflects their shallow understanding of socialism, and of the laws of social development in general. They have the illusion, on the one hand, that by placing their "socialism" *against* the people's unity to resist fascism, they will thereby *force* these people to come over to socialism as the only alternative, however unwilling they may be. On the other hand, they have so little faith in their ability to *convince* the majority, by the simple compulsion of logic and experience, that they are afraid to join in a larger mass movement with a goal short of socialism, for fear of getting lost in the movement; they have no faith in themselves. In cutting loose from their old style of opportunist socialism, they got lost and fell into the trap of Trotsky-

ism, which began as opportunism disguised in Left phrases and is now fully developed fascism with the same mask.

Trotskyism is treachery reduced to a science. Defeated and driven out everywhere it shows its face openly. Trotskyism now works in a hidden manner, especially making use of confused liberals and Socialists like John Dewey and Norman Thomas, who have lost their bearings in the chaos of capitalist disintegration. In the struggle against this poisonous and wrecking influence, as in every other phase of the struggle for progress, workers and other progressives can learn much from the experience of the Soviet Union.

In putting into effect the new Stalin Constitution the Soviet Union has released the full forces of its vibrant democracy to cleanse its house of all the lingering anti-democratic and anti-socialist remnants that have hung on from the past and that have developed through the degeneration of weak elements. At this same moment the forces of world fascism, preparing for their supreme effort of war to conquer the world, made a big drive through their Trotskyite allies, fully to mobilize their spies and wreckers whom they recruited from among these rotten elements. The results of the clash between these two forces within the Soviet Union have not brought much comfort to Hitler, Mussolini or the Japanese militarists. With its house cleaned, the Soviet Union is driving ahead with its socialist construction, is completing its military defenses, and is holding out the hand of co-operation to all the democratic and peace-loving peoples of the world for organizing world peace.

The Soviet Union has defeated all its enemies, internal and external, and has successfully constructed its new socialist society, because it was guided by the genius of the greatest teachers of history, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. It will defeat all its enemies in the future.

The People's Front will be successfully formed and will defeat fascism, because its conception was in the same scientific understanding of the laws of history.

With the defeat of fascism in its warlike aggressions, the peoples of Italy, Germany and Japan, losing their fear of a



terrorism that lives only by constant victories, will turn upon and destroy the nightmare monster that today disturbs the peace of all the world.

With fascism wiped off the face of the earth, with the glorious achievements of the Soviet Union as an example, the rest of the world will find the transition to socialism relatively rapid and painless.

These are the main thoughts that arise from an examination of twenty years of Soviet power, of the triumphant emergence of the new society, which is showing the road for the entire world, which today stands as the most reliable protector of democracy and peace.

*Address delivered at the Eighth Dominion Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, Toronto, October 10, 1937.*



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