

JSA  
SEPTEMBER-  
OCTOBER, 1969

political  
affairs

Journal of Marxist Thought & Analysis

*50 years*  
*of the*  
*Communist Party*  
*U.S.A.*

1919-1969

\$1.25

Theoretical Journal of the Communist Party, U. S. A.

VOL. XLVIII, NO. 9-10      SEPT.-OCT., 1969

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POLITICAL AFFAIRS is published monthly by Political Affairs Publishers, Inc., at 23 West 26 Street, New York, N. Y. 10010, to whom all orders, subscriptions, payments and correspondence should be addressed. Subscription rates: \$6.00 a year; \$3.00 for six months; for foreign and Canada, \$7.00 a year. Single copies 60 cents. Second class postage paid at the Post Office in New York, N. Y.

## The Party of Marxism-Leninism

Hindsight can be a point of advantage. It can be a tool for extending and deepening one's foresight. Reflections on history can also add scope and depth to one's understanding of the present.

Past events cannot be changed, but from the vantage point gained through additional experiences, their significance and meaning does change. When placed under the laser beam of hindsight, only those factors, movements, forces and ideas that affected and influenced the course of history come into sharper focus. The rest of life's experiences disintegrate into memory as fads and fancies, into life's rejects.

Under the laser beam of history of 50 years of the Communist Party stands out sharp and clear. The Communist Party is one of the movements whose ideas and actions have materially affected and influenced the course of events in the U.S.A. It is a specific part of history because it has influenced history.

Clearly, it is not a fad or a fancy, and life has not rejected it. Therefore, a study of its history can add greatly to one's understanding of the present, and it is a necessary foundation for a clear vision of things to come.

No one has yet written a definitive history of the Communist Party, U.S.A. This is a weakness. Communists have been too busy making this history while reactionary and liberal historians have been busy distorting, falsifying and burying it. Only the outline of the Party's history was written by William Z. Foster in his *History of the Communist Party of the United States* (International Publishers, New York, 1956).

On the walls of a San Francisco Post Office, the great people's artist, Anton Refregier, depicted the history of California in a panorama of sweeping murals. For many years one of the murals was hidden from the public by a cloth covering it. This particular mural depicts a piece of history the authorities wanted the people to forget. It is history that influenced the course of events in a way not to their liking. It is a mural of the San Francisco general strike of 1934.

It is necessary to write a history of the Communist Party, and this we cannot do in one issue of Political Affairs. But we can begin

to paint murals of words, depicting some of the important contributions of the Communist Party during its 50 years of leadership and struggle.

The Communist Party takes part in movements and struggles with millions of other Americans, and this also makes history. But what is necessary is to turn the spotlight on its unique role and contributions.

### *The Importance of Marxism-Leninism*

The Communist Party is a working-class party. Its contributions are working-class contributions. This is the basis of its unique role.

The Communist Party is a party of Marxism-Leninism. It is the main fountainhead for the introduction and the development of this science in our land. There are no other Marxist-Leninist parties in the U.S.A. This role of the Communist Party has added a new quality to all phases of American life. It has greatly influenced the course of events.

It has given the working class a scientific basis of struggle. It has given the class struggle a direction—a revolutionary direction. It has helped to instill in the workers a consciousness of the class nature of capitalist exploitation, a consciousness of the class nature and class solution of the problems of individual workers. This has influenced the character of the class struggle. The Communist Party has nurtured and planted the seeds of socialism among American workers. The significance of this contribution will grow as the struggles of the working class move toward the historic point of a revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism. The injection of these ideas has in an important measure influenced the course of events.

Marxism-Leninism adds an important, unique ingredient to the total stream of intellectual life. To the historian it gives a science of history—an ability to see the relationships between causes and effects, to see in their interrelationship the influence of economic laws and the processes of political, cultural and intellectual activities as makers of history. It gives him the ability to see the relationship of individuals and classes as makers of history.

It lifts the study of economics from the narrow confines of statistics and abstract speculations. It rescues philosophy from the hopeless and degrading task of running interference for a dying economic and social system. It liberates thought from the dry rot resulting from confinement and separation from life, from narrow departmentalization. For culture, and art, Marxism provides a more mean-

ingful purpose, meaning that adds to its esthetic and emotional qualities.

Marxism adds a deep sense of dedication to one's fellow human beings in all fields of endeavor, whether intellectual or physical. Intellectual activity in the service of a dying way of life, itself warps and dies. Marxism rescues it from its destruction. Marxism rejects the concept of thought as the the activity of a "neutral" observer. It opens the way by which philosophers, economists, historians and cultural workers can escape from the confines of being merely observers and become active fighters for progress—fighters to change that which they may observe.

Marxism-Leninism has to some extent broken through the barriers constructed to isolate it and make it ineffective. This ideological "Maginot Line" consists of terror, imprisonment, obstructionism of every form, denial of employment, ridicule and ostracism. It takes the form of a conspiracy of total silence.

When the fortifications began to show cracks, the ideological custodians of the reactionary establishment introduced the study of anti-Communism as a substitute for the study of Communism. In the 50's, they still taught that "dialectical materialism is more than a delusion—it is a sin." But more and more they have had to give up this open farce. It began to backfire. Too many were discovering the real Marxism. Such primitive vulgarization brought only discredit to the would-be discreditors of Marxism.

### *Marxism Can No Longer Be Ignored*

The attack goes on, but they cannot now ignore Marxism or continue to use the primitive methods; hence they have shifted to more sophisticated methods. From the posture of rejection and frontal attack they have moved to that of "properly interpreting Marx," or to saying: "Marx was right in the past, but life has bypassed his ideas." Thus while the conspiracy of silence has been broken, and the vulgarizations do not go unchallenged, the struggle goes on.

There is an unprecedented demand for basic Marxist-Leninist literature. It has become an accepted area of inquiry in many colleges. This is no small achievement. Objective developments, of course, are an important factor in this shift. But the credit for the effective use of these factors must go to the Communist Party. If the Communist Party U.S.A. had no other credits, this invaluable contribution would itself be reason enough to uncover the murals depicting the 50 years of service to the working class and our people. But there is much more.

The ivory tower is not the vehicle for Marxism-Leninism, which is the science of revolution. It has broken through the ideological barriers because it has become a factor in the mass struggles, in the class struggle raging in our land. It influences and increasingly guides these struggles. This is its greatest contribution. Because it is impossible to separate the Communist Party in action from Marxism-Leninism, this is also the Communist Party's most significant contribution.

Years before the appearance of Marxism-Leninism and the Communist Party, there were rebels and heroic rebellions. But they were each doing their own thing. There were theories and there were actions and movements, but they were not related. Marxism-Leninism introduced a new quality to the struggles for progress. It exposed the class roots of capitalism; it turned the spotlight of rebellion to the class nature of capitalist exploitation. It pointed to the need for developing a class consciousness, a class approach to struggle. The history of the Communist Party is a history of developing a class approach, a class understanding of the struggle for progress.

Before Marxism-Leninism there were struggles aimed at reforming the existing society and there were rebellions against the "system" but the two remained in different orbits, very often antagonistic to each other, often cancelling one another out. Marxism-Leninism explains and unites the forces propelling movements of reform and those of revolution. It does not reject struggles for reforms, but injects a revolutionary context into them. Thus the struggle for reforms becomes the path towards revolution. There is no other path. To reject the struggle for reforms is to give up the struggle for a revolutionary transition to socialism.

Marxism-Leninism also rejects empty rhetoric about revolution and violence, rhetoric that has no relationship to leading masses in battle against the evil effects of capitalism. It rejects it because it remains empty talk. Thus, the history of the Communist Party is a history of struggle against reformism—the ideological dissipater of a revolutionary movement—and of the struggle against concepts of anarchism and other forms of petty-bourgeois radicalism which short-circuit the revolutionary process into meaningless discharges of sparks of revolutionary energy. The introduction of and the fight for concepts of mass struggle has greatly influenced the course of all struggles in our country.

#### *Unity of Theory and Practice*

The Communist Party in its very essence represents the unity of

revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice. Marxism-Leninism has influenced and is influencing the patterns of thought and moving them toward action. This comes from its very nature—to observe in order to change what is being observed. To observe, to uncover the laws of capitalist development, with the objective of being a factor in discarding it. To observe and dissect racism and chauvinism, not merely in order to condemn it, but to be more effective as a factor in uprooting and destroying it. To study and observe imperialism as an extension of capitalist enslavement, to understand its inherently aggressive and war-like nature in order to be a more powerful force in destroying it.

The understanding of the laws of capitalist development is a powerful factor in the struggle against capitalism. It gives the working class the ability to synchronize its actions with objective processes. It provides the revolutionary movement with guidelines on how to take advantage of weaknesses in the ranks of the class enemy. It is a necessary foundation for solving such tactical questions as timing, disposition of forces, nature of alliances, etc. It is an absolute necessity for a mass approach to struggles. Only by the use of this science is it possible for the advanced detachment of the working-class movement to determine when the objective processes and the subjective factors are ready for a new stage of struggle. Tactics and timing are, therefore, closely related to this scientific ongoing assessment of objective reality.

The Communist Party is a force combining thought and action. It is because it is the party of Marxism-Leninism that it has maintained an advanced position in all struggles—an advanced position that is closely related to the objective reality of each movement.

Communists have been the front-line fighters for the organization of trade unions. Communists have made class history in the struggle against the reactionary class-collaborationist policies of the reformist trade union leadership. Starting with William Z. Foster and his leadership in organizing the steel workers in 1919, the Communists have contributed leadership and drive to organizing the mass production industries, to the emergence of the CIO and now to the upsurge of the rank-and-file movements. The Communist Party initiated and led the struggles that won the present social security legislation including unemployment insurance.

Of all the political parties, the Communist Party is the pioneer in the struggle against the special system of discrimination and segregation practiced against 25 million black Americans. We are the pioneers in the struggle against racism and chauvinism.

Communists were in the leadership of and supplied the main body of the shock troops in the struggle against fascism. The Communists were the main body of volunteers in the struggle against fascism in Spain.

The Communists have at all times been in the front ranks of the forces fighting to stem the attacks of the ultra-Right. Because Marxism views the struggle for democracy as both a necessary fight for reform and a path that can lead to socialism, Communists are staunch defenders of democratic rights.

The Communist Party, U.S.A. has been and is the most consistent opponent of U.S. imperialism. This unshakable stand is based both on our uncompromising position against capitalism and on our firm position of working-class internationalism.

\* \* \*

These are only some of the contributions of which history must take note. We take note of them not to boast about them or publicly to record them. We note them rather as an inducement to encourage the study of Marxism-Leninism, because the 50 years of the Communist Party is 50 years of the application and development of Marxism-Leninism on the American scene.

We note them to encourage others to study our history; to stimulate others to paint the murals, both in words and colors, that will depict and draw the lessons of the 50 years of working-class leadership and struggles.

We note them so they can be the basis of ever greater achievement, of ever more effective leadership.

The U.S. today is the most powerful imperialist country in the world's history. Its ruling class is the sworn enemy of freedom everywhere. Our Party, therefore, holds it to be its special duty to extend full solidarity and support to the victims of U.S. imperialism, particularly to our brothers in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Their struggle is our struggle; their victory a victory for all mankind. . . .

From Preamble to Constitution of the CPUSA

## Formative Period of CPUSA

The Communist Party was born in Chicago on September 1, 1919. This is the commonly accepted date, although actually two Communist Parties came into being around that date—the Communist Labor Party on August 31 and the Communist Party on September 1. The formation of the two parties marks the beginning of the Communist Party in the United States. The Communist Party arose in two sections due to a split that occurred at the National Left-Wing Conference held several months before, not over principles but over tactics to be applied in regard to the Socialist Party Convention which was scheduled to be held at the end of August. The reasons for this I will discuss later.

A split in the Socialist Party developed in 1918-19 as a culmination of the historic struggle between working-class revolutionary socialism and petty-bourgeois opportunism which was carried on in the Socialist parties of the United States and other countries over a long time, and was sharpened to an extreme degree by the First World War and by the Bolshevik and other proletarian revolutions which followed.

William Z. Foster's *History of the Communist Party of the United States* (International Publishers, New York, 1952) gives a good and accurate account of the split in the Socialist Party and the formation and development of the Communist Party in this period. It is not necessary nor possible to detail them here. Since, however, the book is out of print, it may be useful to summarize at least the highlights of the period in which the writer participated as a founding member of the Party.

### *Opportunist Leadership of Socialist Party*

The Left wing in the Socialist Party and later the Communist Party arose because the Socialist Party was dominated by an opportunist leadership—a combination of Right and center opportunists who were incapable of meeting the needs of a world in crisis and revolutionary change demanding, therefore, a new type of party—a party of revolutionary socialism. James Weinstein and other writers refer to the Hillquit group in the leadership as a center group and give the impression that it acted as a sort of arbitrator between the Right and Left. Actually, "centrism" of the Hillquit type in the U.S.,

and that of Kautsky and like elements in Europe, as Lenin wrote, were a concealed type of opportunism working with the extreme Right wing and using sophistry, maneuvers and Marxian phrases to cover up the treachery of the open opportunists and supporters of the imperialist war. Hillquit was a master at such deception.

The war and the proletarian revolution in Russia, followed by revolutions on the continent, had a great impact on the workers in the U.S. Their fighting spirit rose, and though it did not reach the tumultuous heights of Europe, it was expressed in a vast strike movement. This included the militant three-month strike of 365,000 steel workers, led by William Z. Foster, the general strike in Seattle, the strike of copper miners in Butte, Montana, the 500,000 coal miners, and others. There was wide support for the Russian Revolution and strong opposition to the action of Wilson in sending American troops to Russia to help the counter-revolution. Discontent was high among the workers who were deeply disillusioned with the war. Soviet Russia had fully exposed the war's imperialist character.

The major immediate issue which led to a split within the Socialist Party was the acute discontent among the rank and file at the way the opportunist leadership had met the issue of the war. The Socialist Party leadership from the outset of the war in August, 1914, had opposed it but chiefly on pacifist grounds. It exonerated the treacherous Socialist Party leaders of Europe who had betrayed the anti-war resolutions of the Second International and supported their imperialist governments. The Left wing of the SP, while not at first clearly differentiating itself from the official pacifist policy of the Party, began to sharpen up its anti-war stand. It increasingly demanded a strong working-class opposition. This grew, after the emergency convention of the Socialist Party, which was held in St. Louis in April, 1917, shortly after America's entrance into the war.

There was also growing resentment among the Left elements in the Party at the compromising manner in which the Right-centrist leadership handled the Bolshevik Revolution and the matter of affiliation to the Communist International. Moreover, it was discontented with the lack of a militant program of action by the Hillquit leadership which would enable the Party to act as a vanguard in the tremendous struggles which were taking place at the time in the country.

#### *Right-Left Split Over War and October Revolution*

James Weinstein, in his recent book *Decline of the Socialist Party, 1912-1925* (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1967), takes issue with

the view of the Communists, and also of non-Communists, that differences between Right and Left existed over the war and the Bolshevik Revolution and were factors in the split. He cites the fact that Left and center had joined forces in adopting the anti-war resolution at the emergency SP convention.

It is true, writes Foster, that Right and Left had united in a compromise resolution which produced great enthusiasm, "even the Left being more or less taken in by Hillquit's anti-war demagoguery." The Left made a serious mistake in not insisting on the inclusion of a condemnation of the treachery of the Social Democratic parties in Europe for supporting their governments in the imperialist war, and revealing that this social chauvinism was the result of the whole line of opportunism followed by these parties for years.

However, there was soon disillusionment among the Lefts, writes Foster, because "many of the party leaders who had voted for the [St. Louis anti-war] resolution either failed to back it up in practice, or came out in support of the war." This also applied to a number of prominent trade union leaders who, while remaining in the party, without censure or rebuke by the SP leadership, supported the Compers war line. It applied to Meyer London, Socialist congressman from New York, who voted for the war appropriations in violation of the anti-war resolution. It applied to the New York socialist aldermen who supported the Third Liberty Loan in April, 1918, violating the Party's decision prohibiting such action. Far from unity, Foster states, there were sharp divergencies and growing friction between Right and Left on the war issue.

Likewise, it is true, that at first the SP leaders adopted tongue-in-cheek worded endorsements for the Bolshevik Revolution. Sentiment for the revolution was high in SP and working-class ranks. But in reality these leaders were hostile to the policies of the Bolsheviks, questioned the correctness of a proletarian revolution in Russia and at the first favorable moment showed their true position. They seized on the action of the Bolsheviks in arresting the Menshevik Social Democrats who joined the counter-revolution against the Soviet government, demanding their release. They soon came out against the dictatorship of the proletariat which the Bolsheviks established to safeguard the revolution and advance to socialism.

#### *Hillquit's Opportunist Role*

Weinstein, in the above mentioned book, cites without disapproval a speech at the ILGWU Convention in 1923 in which Hillquit remarked that "to the sober observer of world politics, the develop-

ment of the British Labor Party since the last election, is a more thorough-going revolution than the Bolshevik *coup d'état* in 1917. The latter was a dazzling historic adventure, while the former [the Labor Party McDonald victory] is a great historic event" (p. 246). Remarkable insight into the historic significance of the Bolshevik Revolution, on one hand, and labor reformism on the other!

At a later time, Hillquit denounced the establishment of the Soviet government "as the greatest disaster and calamity that ever befell the socialist movement."

On the question of affiliation to the Third International, the Hillquit leadership manouvered. It first tried to restore the Second International by electing delegates to the proposed Stockholm Conference in 1917 (which never assembled) and then supported the Berne Conference of the parties of the Second International in September, 1918, which was a failure. The Hillquit leadership proposed affiliation to the Third International under pressure of the Left Socialists who remained in the Party after the initial split. Hillquit took exception to a number of provisions in the 21 conditions of admission, and when the Communist International rejected his reservations, dropped the matter of affiliation entirely.

Opportunism in the world socialist movement, wrote Lenin, in his famous articles in 1914-1917 on the collapse of the Second International, "is no chance occurrence, sin, slip, or treachery on the part of individuals, but a social product of an entire period of history." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 247.) The main feature of opportunism is collaboration with the capitalist class, instead of pursuing a policy of class struggle against the capitalist exploiters and oppressors. "Opportunism means sacrificing the fundamental interests of the masses to the temporary interests of an insignificant minority or, in other words, an alliance between a section of the workers and the bourgeoisie directed against the mass of the proletariat." (*Ibid.*, p. 242.) It developed in the relatively "peaceful" period of 1871-1914, peaceful in the sense of no revolutions and no great wars, but not in the sense of no class conflicts.

During this period, wrote Lenin, the Socialist parties built unions, made propaganda for socialism, conducted electoral activities and grew in size and influence. These were important achievements which Lenin and the Communists recognized at the time of the formation of the Communist International. But in the course of this period, the Socialist parties were joined by many petty-bourgeois elements. Also, there developed a stratum of trade union officials and of privileged workers who liked the idea of class collaboration. They became a

bourgeois-minded stratum, receiving "crumbs from the table of their national capitalists and isolated themselves from the suffering, misery and revolutionary temper of the impoverished and ruined masses." (*Ibid.*, p. 243.)

The Left wing carried on an intense campaign against the opportunism in the Socialist Party, seeking to change its policies and leadership. It took part in the referendum for a new national executive committee and swept the elections, winning 12 out of 15 seats and 4 out of 5 international delegates. The Hillquit leadership, determined to stay in power at all costs, refused to seat the newly elected committee, invalidated the elections and began a purge, expelling Left-led state organizations and language federations representing the overwhelming majority of the membership. By that arbitrary and bureaucratic expulsion the Right wing split the Socialist Party.

### *The Left-Wing Mobilizes Its Forces*

Soon thereafter the Left wing called the National Left-Wing Conference on June 21, 1919 in New York, which was attended by 94 delegates from 20 cities representing the bulk of the membership. Although the Left wing split over tactics, it was united in its indictment of the Socialist Party leadership and in the political policies which later formed the basis for the programs of both Communist Parties.

The Left-Wing Manifesto which was adopted by the Conference condemned the whole political line of the SP leadership—root and branch. Foster wrote: "It accused Hillquit and Company of basing the Party program upon the petty bourgeoisie and skilled aristocracy of labor; of failing to support industrial unionism and the workers' economic struggles; of Gompersism [the class collaboration policies of Samuel Gompers, then head of the AFL]; of carrying on opportunist parliamentary policy; of sabotaging the struggle against the war; of opposing the Russian Revolution; of accepting a Wilsonian peace; of supporting the decayed Second International; and of generally carrying on a policy of reform which led not to socialism, but to the perpetuation of capitalism." (*History of the CPUSA*, p. 166.)

There was a serious omission in the Left-Wing Manifesto with regard to the Negro question. It failed to indict the segregation of Negro members in many Socialist Party branches in the South and the blatant chauvinism of many leaders, as well as the failure of the SP to take up a mass struggle against the severe oppression of the Negroes, particularly against the lynching campaign raging in the South.

The Left-Wing Manifesto, not only made a thorough criticism of the opportunism of the SP leadership, but analyzed the basic issues at stake and outlined a policy of militant struggle in both the industrial and political fields. "It proposed basing the party and its program upon the proletariat; full support of industrial unionism, relentless war against Comperism; revolutionary parliamentarism; support of the Russian Revolution; affiliation to the Communist International; and a program aimed at the abolition of the capitalist system and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat." (*Ibid.*, pp. 166-167.)

The Left-Wing Manifesto and the Communist programs were a long stride toward a Marxist-Leninist position. In its analysis of imperialism, the war, social democracy, the state, the nature of opportunism, the need for mass action as the decisive means to fight capitalism, etc., the Left wing surpassed the former Left wing oppositions.

#### *The Fight to Establish a Revolutionary Party*

The aim of the Left wing and the Communists in the USA in fighting for a revolutionary party—a party of a new type—was basically the same as that animating the revolutionary socialists throughout the world which joined together to form the Communist International in March, 1919.

Palmiro Togliatti wrote in 1959, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Communist International, that

... the guiding principle underlying the founding of the Comintern and its activities has its source in the scientifically established truth that capitalism has reached the last stage of its development, and that the historical period in which we are living is the period of collapse of imperialism and the revolutionary triumph of socialism. Hence the imperative need for a resolute, uncompromising fight to end opportunism in the working-class movement, to break completely with the old parties of the Second International and to create revolutionary parties, equipped with Marxist-Leninist theory and capable of acting as a vanguard of the working class to lead the struggle for socialism. . . . Hence, in conformity with Marxist principles, there arises the need for a strategy and tactics in keeping with the general character of the historical period and with particular situations. (*World Marxist Review*, November, 1959.)

Such was the perspective and program arising from the new world situation and the historical period into which society had entered—the new era opened up by the proletarian revolution in which the working class takes the center of the stage, an era which marks the

beginning of the transition from capitalism to socialism. It was around this outlook that the fight between Right and Left in the U.S., between revolutionary socialism and opportunism, between Right-wing social democracy and Communism took place.

The Right wing of the SP did not want and was unable to change in the direction of revolutionary mass struggle. It preferred to continue along the line of its bankrupt reformist policies which in time reduced the Socialist Party to a sterile sect.

At the same time there were serious weaknesses and mistakes of the Communists at the stage of the formation of the Party and in the immediate years that followed. They were of a sectarian-doctrinaire character, which the Communists fully criticized and which Foster substantially analyzes in his book.

#### *Sectarian Errors in Formative Years*

Sectarianism was expressed in the Left-Wing Manifesto and in the programs of the two parties in a dual-union line—that is, opposing, in principle, work in the AFL and advocating the arbitrary setting up of competing unions. It was also expressed in the rejection of partial political demands and in the reduction of parliamentary action to merely agitating for socialism and for revolutionary formulas. The need of the working class for allies in the struggle for socialism was not recognized.

Furthermore, the Communist Labor Party did not mention the Negro question while the Communist Party gave, word for word, the DeLeon formula that "the racial oppression of the Negro is simply the expression of his economic bondage and oppression, each intensifying the other. This complicates the Negro problem but does not alter its proletarian character."

As Foster wrote, the political basis of the "Leftism" was a wrong estimate of the general political situation in the U.S. "Much of Europe then was in a revolutionary situation. Moreover, the revolution in Germany, had it not been betrayed by the Social Democrats, could have spread widely, thereby directly affecting the United States. It was therefore quite correct for the American Communist Parties to have a general socialist perspective. Their mistake was in conceiving this in an altogether too immediate sense and in a mechanical fashion. They failed to make a clear distinction between a Europe devastated by the war and the scene of active revolutionary struggle, and a capitalist America enriched by the war and by no means ready for socialism. This faulty analysis contributed directly to the young Communist parties' underestimation and neglect of the daily struggles of



the workers for partial demands." (*Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.)

The Party had not yet learned that, as Frederick Engels wrote: "Marxism is not a dogma, it is a guide to action." This mechanical, doctrinaire approach of applying general Marxist principles of social development without regard to the specific history and traditions of a country, and to the conditions and relationship of forces at the time, were to impede the Party's progress at various times later in its history.

It was sectarian rigidity and doctrinairism on the part of the leadership generally which accounted for the weaknesses of the outlook and program of both parties. It was an inheritance from the old Left Wing. Foster, in his review of Theodore Draper's book, *Roots of American Communism*, which appeared in the May, 1957 *Political Affairs*, effectively exposed the book's claim to being an authentic history of the Communist Party. While containing useful information, it is hardly an objective treatment of the Party. Foster revealed it as "just one more bourgeois attempt to demean and distort the history of the CPUSA. . . . The author strives to prove that the CPUSA is an artificially created Russian political instrument without any basic connections with the American working class and its struggles for economic and political betterment."

Foster refutes this on the basis of the Party's hard fight for the interests of the American workers, and for democratic rights in this period. He writes "that while the fledgling Communist Party in the U.S., as in other countries, was profoundly influenced by the combined effects of the Russian Revolution and the newly organized Communist International, especially it represented the historic Left wing of the Socialist movement in this country, reaching back for many decades and reacting to the conditions, struggles and aspirations of the American working class."

The Communists expressed the aspirations of the old Left for a class struggle policy but also reflected the latter's sectarianism.

It was sectarianism, tendencies to exaggerate differences, and doctrinairism on the part of a number of the Party leaders and some of the language federations, which accounted for the split in the Left wing. It was a mistake not to attend the Socialist Party Convention as many had proposed, even though the group, which later formed the Communist Labor Party, was summarily thrown out of the Convention by the police on the call of the SP leadership. It was important to attend, if only to expose the bureaucracy of the leadership and to clarify the program of the Left wing fully before the Socialist movement of the country and the delegates at the SP convention, many of

whom hesitated between the Right and Left. It was an even worse error not to effect unity of the two parties, although negotiations took place between them.

The Communist parties proceeded to organize their ranks, enrolling the Left-wing forces of the Socialist Party. They were joined also by forces from other organizations in the general process of realignment of revolutionary elements. Among them were some Socialist Labor Party leaders, a number of Negro leaders attached to Socialist journals and revolutionary organizations, young Socialist leaders, prominent women Socialists, and others.

### *Reaction Unleashes Palmer Raids*

Fearful of the revolutionary wave in Europe, the militant struggles in the United States, and the danger of a revolutionary party founded on Marxism-Leninism, capitalist reaction unleashed a furious offensive against radicalism in general and the foreign-born and Communists in particular. The notorious Palmer raids occurred, in which thousands were rounded up and arrested, including members and leaders of both parties,\* as well as the I.W.W.

The Communists fought courageously in court for their principles and for democratic rights of free speech and assembly. They went on with their work of organization despite their virtual illegality. But the terror greatly reduced the membership of the parties. New strength came from the adherence of a group of former IWW members, headed by Big Bill Haywood, general secretary of the IWW, who joined in 1920. A considerable number of experienced trade unionists who had formed a Left trade union opposition in the AFL, headed by William Z. Foster, joined in 1921.

Within the CP and the CLP the need for unity became strong. It was an absolute necessity in the face of the government persecution and the widespread discontent and labor struggles in the country. Also, there was a growing realization of the need to overcome the severe isolation caused by the persecution. Members and leaders raised the importance of finding ways and means of reaching the broad masses of the people.

C. E. Ruthenberg, general secretary of the CP, wrote in the April 25, 1920 issue of the *Communist* that to be a party of action, the CP must participate "in the everyday struggles of the workers and by such participation inject its principles and give a wider meaning, thus developing the Communist movement." It was ideologically an important

\*See the article by Art Shields in this issue for a detailed account.

step away from the narrow sectarianism of the year before. Ruthenberg and other leaders of the CP not only favored this outlook but, together with Alfred Wagenknecht, general secretary of the CLP, and others, undertook negotiations which led to the unity of the two parties and the formation of the United Communist Party in 1920. However, this was not accomplished without opposition in the ranks of the CP, chiefly from a section of the language federations which carried out a secession and continued with the name of the Communist Party. They falsely charged the CLP with being centrists.

### *1920 Convention of United Communist Party*

The Convention of the United Communist Party took a big step forward in rejecting the line of dual unionism and also in strengthening party structure by making the autonomous language federations, which had been virtually independent parties within the Party, subject to the general supervision and control of the Central Committee.

Full unity of all Communist groups was finally achieved a year later in May, 1921. In these efforts at unity, the Communist International, which saw no important differences between the Communist groups and pressed for a line of mass activities, helped at every stage.

A decisive weapon for overcoming sectarianism and putting the Communists in the United States and other countries more firmly on the road to becoming real Marxist vanguard parties, was the views of Lenin, and particularly his work "*Left-Wing Communism—an Infantile Disorder*." Published in Russia in June, 1920, it reached our country in English translation a little later in the year. It made a powerful impact upon the Communist leaders and members, enthusing and arousing them. It helped enormously to make the break with "Left" sectarianism and to recognize the need for closest contact with the masses in the Party's work.

Soon after, the United Communist Party resolutely took the path of breaking its isolation and taking up broad mass work. It established the Workers Party on December 21, 1921, as a "legal" means of carrying on wider public agitation and activity and thus reaching broader sections of the masses. This was done through an alliance with the Workers Council group and many language groups which were not part of the Communist Party. Its membership was about 12,000 in 1921 and rose to about 16,000 in 1923 with the improvement in conditions of legality and the dissolution of the underground Communist Party. The "underground" CP was not dissolved at this stage. That was to come later.

Here mention must be made of a factional struggle which broke

out in the "underground CP," which continued to exist for a time after the formation of the Workers Party. The central issue was the question of the need and possibility of enlarging democratic rights and legality of the Communists by cutting down the activities of the underground party, since the Workers Party was effectively assuming the functions of the Communist Party in its mass agitation and activities.

On one side was a majority group led by L. E. Katterfield, known as the "goose caucus," and on the other side the Ruthenberg group, who were termed the "liquidators" by their factional opponents. The goose caucus was opposed to any weakening of the "underground." The Ruthenberg group was for restricting its activities and eventually liquidating it as unnecessary. At the time of the struggle, for which a special convention was called in Bridgeman, Michigan, in mid-August, Ruthenberg was general secretary of the Workers Party.

The vote on the question at the convention was evenly divided. When its deliberations were almost at a close, it was raided by the FBI. Seventeen delegates were arrested including Ruthenberg. Forty more were later jailed, including Foster. Ruthenberg and Foster were tried under the Michigan criminal syndicalist law, Ruthenberg being convicted and Foster released because of a divided jury. He was not retried, nor were the others. Their cases were finally dropped in 1933.

The aim of the government in making the raid was not only to keep the Communist Party illegal and to restrict the activities of the newly formed Workers Party, but also to affect adversely the big strikes then in progress.

Notwithstanding the raid, the situation in the country was changing in the direction of the restoration of some of the rights undermined during the Palmer raid period. The Bridgeman attack on the Party was widely condemned. The Party boldly and wisely seized on the new situation to achieve its desired goal of a complete public existence. On April 7, 1923 the Communist Party declared its full consolidation with the Workers Party. Thus the "underground" period of the Communist Party came to an end. The Workers Party changed its name to the Workers (Communist) Party in 1925 and to the Communist Party in 1930.

The Workers Party program was a big advance over the past programs. It contained both a maximum and minimum program, declaring that "the Workers Party will courageously defend the workers and wage an aggressive struggle for the abolition of capitalism." It gave a ringing endorsement to the Russian Revolution which, it stated, had ushered in "the era of Workers Republics." It demanded recogni-

tion of the Soviet government by the United States. But at its second convention, in December 1922, the Workers Party recognized the need to go further—to replace the capitalist government by a “dictatorship of the proletariat.” The *Daily Worker*, early in 1924 recorded the fact that it was accepted by the Comintern as a “sympathizing party.”

On the Negro question it registered much progress over the past neglect. Discussing the “race problem” beginning with an analysis of the history of Negro oppression in the South, it stated that the “Workers Party will support Negroes in their struggle for liberation and will help them in their fight for economic, political and social equality.” It would seek, it said, to end the policy of discrimination followed by organized labor. Its task, it said, would be to destroy together the barrier of race discrimination that has been used to keep apart black and white workers and to “weld them into a solid union of revolutionary forces for the overthrow of their common enemy.”

Also, it decided to amalgamate all existing militant young workers’ organizations and to launch the Young Workers League of America, which took place in May, 1922. The Young Communist League had been organized a month earlier in April, 1922. In time, the Young Workers League merged with the YCL and assumed its name.

#### *Party Concentrates on Trade Union Work*

Central in the Party’s activities was trade union work. The Communists gave full support to the Trade Union Educational League, formed earlier by William Z. Foster, which carried on a big campaign for industrial amalgamation of the unions, for recognition of Soviet Russia and for a labor party, winning widespread support for these demands. With its active militant participation in labor struggles the TUEL, led by Communists but based upon a Left-progressive united front, quickly became an influence in labor’s ranks.

The Party made efforts to establish a labor party, jointly with other forces. In January, 1924 it established the *Daily Worker*, which proved a powerful weapon for the Party’s and labor’s struggles. It participated in electoral activities, putting up William Z. Foster for President in 1924. Thus the Party embarked on a vigorous program of mass struggle.

In his May, 1957 article in *Political Affairs*, Foster summed up the formative period of the Party and wrote that Communism showed “a basic adaptation and relationship to American conditions. Notwithstanding its intense initial sectarianism and dogmatism, the deep confusion and ideological uncertainty accompanying the ideological split, the ensuing splits in Communist ranks in mastering the principles

of Marxism-Leninism, the severe persecution by the government, the lack of previous experience in trade union work, and other handicaps—nevertheless the Communist Party, only two years after its birth in two sections, was able to come forward as an active factor in the national labor movement and in the current class struggle. This was a major achievement . . . indicating that Communism had genuine roots among the workers in this country.”

Later the Communist Party, as it acquired more experience, developed better Marxists, and learned to round out its revolutionary work, became in the latter twenties and particularly in the thirties and forties, front rank fighters for Negro freedom and for democracy, for the organization of the unorganized and in the founding of the modern labor movement. Its role was buttressed over the years by the victorious advances of socialist construction in the USSR, the Soviet Union’s leadership in the world fight for peace and the historic people’s front struggle to halt and defeat fascism.

It emerged, as Weinstein acknowledges in the introduction to his book, as the “central force of American radicalism.”

The Communists are distinguished from the other working class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement. . . .

The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer.

They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. . . .

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

## The Palmer-Hoover "Red Raids"

The American Communist Party—like the American working class—cannot be destroyed by the capitalist class. Many attempts to do this have been made by courts, vigilantes, assassins and slanderers. But the Party of socialism marches on. And the crisis of capitalism is more severe than when the Party was born.

The first all-out attack came in monster raids in more than 70 cities nearly 50 years ago. The raids were ordered by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, a Pennsylvania millionaire with presidential ambitions, but they were directed by his hatchet man, J. Edgar Hoover. Ten thousand Communists and non-party progressives were lawlessly arrested after dark on January 2, 1920.

I remember that night of terror well because I was helping Elizabeth Gurley Flynn—as a young volunteer—in her defense of the victims. Hundreds were beaten, many were tortured, seven died in prison. And Chief William J. Flynn of the U.S. Bureau of Investigation (now the FBI) boasted that "the backbone of the radical movement in America has been broken."\*

But the ideas of Communism had been growing on American soil for three generations. The Party's roots were too deep for the raiders to reach. And Hoover sadly admitted in 1969 that the movement he tried to kill was very much alive.

The Communist Party is receiving "widespread attention from the American people," Hoover's latest book\*\* says. And the *Daily World* "has a decided . . . appeal" to many outside the Party's ranks, the country's Number One anti-Communist conceded.

The night of terror on January 2, 1920 was the climax of a two-and-a-half year government crusade against revolutionary movements. This political witchhunt followed the declaration of war against Germany. The young American empire was seeking world power. And the witchhunt represented a sharp change in the class-struggle tactics of the ruling class.

Until 1917 anti-capitalist organizations were not outlawed by penal statute in the U.S.A. Revolutionary leaders were framed sometimes on

\**The Palmer Raids*, Labor Research Association, edited by Robert W. Dunn.

\*\* *J. Edgar Hoover on Communism*, Random House.

false charges of murder and other crimes. But these frameups were intended to suppress militant labor action rather than socialist movements. Thus Albert Parsons, August Spies and other heroes of the 8-hour-day movement were not prosecuted for membership in the International Workingmen's Association, an anti-capitalist organization. They were hanged on false charges of killing a Chicago policeman during a meeting on Haymarket Square on May 4, 1886. Nor was Tom Mooney indicted as a revolutionary socialist in 1916. He said framed on a murder charge because he led a street car strike in San Francisco.

In 1917 the Government began arresting revolutionary workers under a new thought-control law. It was called the "Espionage Act," although none of its defendants were indicted on spy charges. Their "crimes" were membership in anti-capitalist organizations, advocacy of peace and strikes for better conditions. Thus William D. Haywood and nearly 200 other members of the Industrial Workers of the World—a labor organization with a revolutionary ideology—were sent to penitentiaries while I.W.W. strikes went on in copper and lumber. Eugene V. Debs and other Left socialists got long terms for advocating socialism and peace. Altogether 877 men and women were convicted under this law between June 30, 1917 and June 30, 1919.

The Espionage prosecutions violated the Constitution and U.S. traditions. But the arrests were accompanied by a flood of chauvinist propaganda that confused many people. The prisoners were agents of a foreign power, the press said, although no such evidence came before the courts. Thus an alien color was given to the revolutionary ideas and to the struggles of the workers. This was done while the National Association of Manufacturers was describing the non-union shop as the "American Plan."

### *Hoover—Strikebreaker and Racist*

The redbaiters' "foreign power" was Germany at first. It shifted to revolutionary Russia after American armies invaded the socialist land. The first workers' republic was blamed for the strikes that swept the U.S.A. in 1919. This was the biggest strike year America had seen. And the Department of Justice and its hatchet man, Hoover, were national strikebreakers.

The biggest struggle came in the steel towns. The first national steel strike began on September 22, 1919, just three weeks after the founding convention of the Communist Party. This strike was a determined revolt against the 12-hour day, the 7-day week, the bosses' anti-union policies and the brutal thugs who policed the

company towns. It shook the U.S. and alarmed the ruling class. The steel trust, led by U.S. Steel, had seemed impregnable since it smashed the lodges of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers in its tin plate mills in 1901.

The difficulties faced by the strikers cannot be exaggerated. Nevertheless 365,000 workers left the mills. Most of them were foreign-born or the children of foreign-born parents. Many were members of the Communist Party through the foreign-language federations of the Socialist Party which joined the C.P. at its founding. The struggle was led by William Z. Foster, the future chairman of the Party.

J. Edgar Hoover once boasted that his undercover men broke the steel strike and the coal strike that followed. This was an overstatement. Hoover only helped the strikebreaking. All the power of the capitalist class was arrayed against the strikers for three and a half months. The steel towns became military camps. Tens of thousands of deputy sheriffs, thousands of state and local police, and 4,000 regular army troops under General Leonard Wood, attacked the strikers. Foster himself was kidnapped by vigilantes in Johnstown, Pennsylvania and threatened with death. Twenty-two strikers were murdered. A grandmother, an organizer of the United Mine Workers, Mrs. Fannie Sellins, was beaten and shot to death in the yard of the Allegheny Steel Company near Pittsburgh. Her picture—with skull crushed flat—appears in Foster's book *The Great Steel Strike and Its Lessons*.

This blood was not shed in vain. The steel magnates were compelled to abandon the inhuman 12-hour day after the battle was called off by the strike committee. This lengthened the lives of hundreds of thousands of steel workers. And the solidarity of the men, who followed Foster, proved that victory could eventually be won—as it was by the CIO steel union in the thirties. But the unions did not win recognition in 1919 and 1920.

Young Hoover made his strikebreaking boast in a report of the new "Radical Division" of the Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice. This division was set up on August 1, 1919, to handle Palmer's crusade against revolutionary movements. Hoover became its chief in his 25th year.

Hoover's undercover men were recruited from strikebreaking detective agencies. With the help of this scum Hoover arrested hundreds of foreign-born Communists, I.W.W.'s and other radicals on deportation charges during the steel and coal strikes and other struggles. The Radical Divisions' undercover men had many dirty assignments. Some joined Left-wing organizations as spies and pro-

vocateurs. Others compiled lists of alleged radicals. These lists were recklessly padded. Palmer claimed 200,000 names in his "red" dossiers. And Hoover himself wrote absurd memoranda and reports\* on Communism, Socialism, I.W.W.'s and black liberation movements for his underlings.

These memos and reports were stupid inventions. Thus Hoover asserted that the steel strike was called by the I.W.W. despite the well-known fact that it was called by a strike committee appointed by 22 international unions of the American Federation of Labor. The young witchhunter's words became hopelessly entangled when he discussed the Russian workers' revolution. The revolution, he said, was a case "where hysteria grips the public mind while vacillation, purposeless and fear in all magistracies stampede and trip, grow frantic and fall beneath the feet of mobs."

Hoover didn't try to hide his racism and his anti-labor bias when he discussed the black liberation spokesmen. Black editors aroused his wrath most of all. In a report that was sent to a Congressional committee the F.B.I. chief accused black editors of emphasizing the need of unorganized workers to organize. Hoover also quoted from a circular issued by black workers that he described as "radical." It said: "The Negroes . . . must unite with other workers in order to make their industrial power count to the utmost." Hoover noted that the Communists also urged organization of the unorganized.

He treated this as a sinister development.

In one report Hoover accused black editors of "sedition." He urged the passage of a "sedition" law to suppress black agitators and Communists. And his racism smelled like rotting offal when he described the black press as "insolently offensive" and filled with "defiance and insolently race-centered condemnation of the white race." The young red raider denounced black editors for their "feeling of race consciousness." He accused the black press of "insubordination." He quoted its protests against lynching as examples of this "insubordination." He implied black people should die like sheep.

"In all discussions of the recent race riots [of 1919]," complained Hoover, "there is reflected the note of pride that the Negro has found himself, that he has 'fought back,' that never again will he tamely submit to violence or intimidation."

Hoover distributed these Ku Klux opinions to every operative in the Bureau of Investigation. He thus suggested that they should deny protection to the black people, who were being slaughtered by

\*Max Lowenthal, *The Federal Bureau of Investigation*.

the hundreds in 1919. The G-Men were alerted to arrest black men and women under the expected "sedition" instead.

Another black victim was going to the stake in Mississippi while the anti-black "sedition" bill was before Congress, Max Lowenthal points out. Time and place of the burning had been given out and Governor Bilbo wouldn't stop it. James Weldon Johnson, a black poet, read the announcement to the House Rules Committee before the faggots were lighted. He told the committee that the bill would bring the jailing of black editors who protested this lynching. This "sedition" bill was defeated by the united opposition of the AFL and many liberals and progressives. But Hoover's racism continued. We recall the FBI interrogations of applicants for federal jobs after World War II: "Do you have Negro guests?" That was a usual question.

#### *"Red Raids" Hit Foreign Born*

The "red raids" were carried through under the Deportation Act of October 16, 1918. Millions of workers then were immigrants. Many were still non-citizens. Many had socialist ideas. It was expected that the mass deportations would weaken the radical movements. But the Deportations Act was also a war measure against Soviet Russia. There was growing opposition to America's intervention and the government blamed much of this on foreign-born workers. The government also hoped to use the Act against Ludwig C.A.K. Martens, the Soviet representative in the United States. Martens, a Russian engineer, was seeking trade and peace and was winning good will.

The Deportations Act was signed by President Woodrow Wilson after he began his undeclared and illegal hot war against the first country of socialism. Thirteen thousand U.S. troops were already in Siberia, where they kept the railroads running for Admiral Kolchak, the White Guard chief. Another 5,000 Americans were in actual combat in northern Russia from a base in Archangel.

Palmer and Hoover doubtless regarded the intervention as a super "red raid." Wilson's conscripts were part of a huge invading coalition. Winston Churchill called the intervention "The March of the Fourteen States," They must "strangle Bolshevism in its cradle," this flamboyant imperialist said.

Enemies were attacking the workers' state from every direction. The Soviet situation seemed hopeless in capitalist eyes. The Soviet people were living on a few ounces of bread a day. Many died from typhus.

But the Soviet people had an inner strength their enemies could not understand. The peasants were defending their land, the workers their factories and jobs. They were led by the Communist Party and the greatest political genius of the century—Lenin. And the enemies had a weakness that they hadn't foreseen. Discontent among conscripts was turning to mutiny. The Americans in Archangel, for instance, were shipped home after two Michigan companies rejected orders to advance. The enemies staged powerful offensives again, but the tide turned in the fall of 1919. Kolchak was running backward in Siberia. In November, General Yudenich, whose men lived on food from the United States, was reeling back from Petrograd. General Denikin was nearing collapse in the South. And the poet Mayakovsky later derided the would-be enslavers in the following lines:

They came and fought like mad,  
They marched on Petrograd,  
They got their arms in plenty  
From good old aunt Entente . . .  
They came supplied with tanks,  
With dollars, pounds and francs,  
They came and thought they'd win,  
But got their heads bashed in.

The imperialists were frustrated. Their overseas raids were collapsing. They cried for blood, and Palmer and Hoover hit back with their first "red raid" at home on November 7, 1919, the second anniversary of the October Revolution. They considered this date "the psychological moment to strike," the *New York Times* said the next day.

This was a preliminary raid. Its chief target was the Union of Russian Workers, a fraternal society that had a declaration against Tsardom in its constitution. The society's meetings and schools were raided in New York, Philadelphia, Detroit and 15 other cities. I found its New York Headquarters, at 133 East 15th Street, a wreck the next day. The school rooms, where immigrants studied English and mechanics, were littered with torn papers. Broken chairs lay all around. And the *Times* gave the following report about Hoover's captives: "Thirty-three men, most of them with bandaged heads, black eyes or other marks of rough handling," were taken to the immigration offices at Ellis Island. Another 150 were freed. Most of the freed men, said the *Times* reporter, "also had blackened eyes and lacerated scalps as souvenirs of the new attitude of aggressive-

ness which has been assumed by the federal agents against Reds and suspected Reds."

### *Communists Main Target*

The Palmer-Hoover demonstrations of fascist "law and order" were copied by other raiders. On November 8, some 700 New York cops raided Communist Party meetings throughout the city, arresting hundreds of men and women and beating many of them. These brutes in blue acted at the call of a State Senate committee, led by Senator Clayton R. Lusk, a professional anti-Communist and headline hunter. Citizens and non-citizens were arrested.

Police raids followed in Illinois and elsewhere, and soon many Communist leaders were in jail under bonds. The raids went on while the press spun fictions about the "nationalized women" of "Red Russia." The readers were told that the raiders were saving them from a fate worse than death.

The November 7 raid was only a prologue. Palmer and Hoover were preparing for the big blow. They made several more preliminary deportation raids. And on December 21, the army transport *Buford*, sailed with 249 immigrants. They were bound for Soviet Russia. The press warned foreign-born strikers that they might be the next to go.

Martens was to be the prime catch on January 2. Hoover signed a brief against him on December 29, 1919, in advance of his expected arrest. It falsely accused Martens of conspiring with the U.S. Communist Party. But Hoover's plot was frustrated by a liberal minority in the administration and by Marten's counsel, Senator Thomas Hardwick of Georgia, who had voted against the Espionage Act. "Not a shred of any evidence of a personal kind was produced," wrote Louis F. Post, the liberal Assistant Secretary of Labor in his notable book, *The Deportation Delirium of Nineteen-Twenty*.

The *Times'* allegation that Martens was "the real leader of the Communist Party of the United States" was exposed as a lie. And Martens was not deported, although he eventually left under pressure in 1921.

### *"Red Raids" Sweep Country*

In preparing for the big blow Palmer and Hoover recruited many additional operatives—some say a thousand. They were the toughest collection of underworld thugs who had gotten on the government payroll so far. They would have felt quite at home in Mussolini's fascist squads or with Hitler's blackshirts later, although

Louis F. Post merely calls them "rough necks" of the "strikebreaking variety."

Each raider carried a blackjack or heavy club. Some packed pistols. But none had search warrants that Friday night, January 2, as they burst into public meetings, Communist clubs, workers' banquets, fraternal society schools and private homes—sometimes pulling men and women from bed. Each squad leader, by instructions, sent reports to Hoover by phone or wire.

" . . . Mr. Hoover was in charge. . . ." Palmer told the Senate Judiciary Committee. Hoover has denied this. He told Bert Andrews of the *Herald Tribune* (November 16, 1947) that he "deplored the methods in which the raids were executed," and that he wasn't in charge. The answer is: "You're a liar, Mr. Hoover." Your role was given in confidential instructions sent to the raiders by Frank Burke, Assistant Director of the Bureau of Investigation on December 27, 1919. And you defended the raids several times before the Senate Judiciary and the House Rules committees."

The Communist Party, then four months old, received the main blows of the raids that swept the land from Maine to California. The *New York Times* told its readers in an editorial (January 5, 1920) that the Communists were attacked because they were active in the labor movement, because they opposed the oppression of the black people, and because they were against intervention in Soviet Russia. The *Times* gave this explanation in a twisted way:

Some of them [Communists] are making mischief, or trying to make it, in certain American labor organizations. One of their principles and hopes is agitation among the Negroes, regarded as victims of "economic bondage" and material for proletarian propaganda. These Communists are a pernicious gang. In many languages they are denouncing the blockade of Russia . . .

Ten thousand workers were arrested during Hoover's big night. This figure was given by Senator Thomas Walsh (D.-Mont.) of the Judiciary Committee—a liberal, who opposed the terror. And the *Times* flaunted a headline the next day, saying, "Revolution is Smashed."

There was no revolution to smash in 1920. But there was a Communist Party and it wasn't smashed. It adopted the necessary tactics to weather the storm. But some things were smashed besides furniture, typewriters and prisoners' faces. They were the promises of the Bill of Rights as the *Times* indirectly confessed in its reports of the raids:

Meetings open to the general public were roughly broken up. All persons present—citizens and aliens alike without discrimination—were arbitrarily taken into custody and searched as if they had been burglars caught in the criminal act. Without warrants of arrest, men were carried off to police stations and other temporary prisons, subjected there to secret police-office inquisitions, commonly known as the ‘third degree.’”

### *Brutality of Raids Exposed*

The third degree was savage. I remember a broad white scar under the eye of a Ukranian Communist, who came into Elizabeth Gurley Flynn’s office at 7 East 15th Street, months later. His face had been laid open by a blackjack in the Bureau of Investigation’s rooms at 15 Park Row.

And a young Jewish Communist told Elizabeth and me that he was beaten all over his body that night. Some of his hair was pulled out as the brutes jerked his head from side to side in the effort to get a “confession” that he belonged to the Party.

Hoover’s goons had a gay party the next day. The raiders had ripped Marxist portraits from Communist Party walls. The *New York World* reported (January 4, 1920):

The office force in the Park Row building had a lot of fun . . . with these photographs . . . They painted Karl Marx’s nose and punched a hole in his mouth. Then one agent raised the picture in front of his face like a mask, put a cigaret through Marx’s lips into his own and lit the end. He paraded around . . . to everyone’s delight.

Meanwhile the captives were suffocating. In Detroit 800 men were crowded tightly in a corridor of the Federal Building to lie down. “There was only one toilet,” said Garred, the custodian. He found 40 to 50 men in line for it, he told the Senate Judiciary Committee. “Some were unable to wait . . . the stench was unbearable.”

This went on for six days before the victims were transferred to other prisons.

Torture took different forms. In Hartford, Connecticut, men were put into a tiny cell over the boiler. Peter Musek, a worker from Bridgeport, was lying naked in unbearable heat when he heard a guard say: “Give him more heat.” Another heat victim, Semeon Nakhwat of Bridgeport, was beaten into unconsciousness during his thirteenth week in this prison.

Their affidavits—and many others—are found in the *Report on the Illegal Practices of the Department of Justice* by 12 noted

lawyers. This report helped to blight Palmer’s hopes for a presidential nomination. Its signers included:

Felix Frankfurter, Harvard law professor and future Supreme Court Justice;

Dean Roscoe Pound of Harvard’s Law School and another Harvard law faculty member, Zachariah Chaffee, Jr., author of the civil liberties classic, *Freedom of Speech*;

Francis Fisher Kane, former U.S. Attorney in Philadelphia, who resigned in protest against the raids.

Frank P. Walsh, former head of the presidential Industrial Commission, which exposed Rockefeller’s brutal labor policies, and

James H. Ralston, general counsel for the AFL.

Mr. Ralston had a distinguished record as a friend of the people. He had defended the Filipino republic, that the American imperialists overthrew. He repeatedly protested the “red raids.” And he told the House Rules Committee that “We have already sunk . . . to the level of police government that existed under Tsarist Russia.”

Samuel Gompers, AFL president, also denounced the raids. But his general counsel was bolder. Ralston was not afraid to discuss the raids with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the key figure in the people’s fight-back. She organized defense meetings in many cities. She got many unions to protest the terror. I remember, for example, the solidarity messages she received from the Chicago Federation of Labor, from local mine unions, from lodges of the AFL machinists and other labor bodies. She put the prisoners’ stories into the labor press. She got lawyers for the victims. She felt the sufferings of every one. And we are proud of the fight that the future chairman of the Communist Party made in that national crisis.

\* \* \*

The tide was turning against the raiders. And one Federal Judge, George W. Anderson of Boston, blasted the terrorists that Spring. “A mob is a mob,” said Judge Anderson, “whether made up of government officials, acting under instructions from the Department of Justice, or of criminals and loafers.” Judge Anderson freed nearly all the remaining New England raid victims under a writ of *habeas corpus*. From 800 to 1,200 had been arrested in New England, said Louis Post. No exact count was kept.

But before the *Deportations Delirium* ended several hundred more men and women were shipped overseas. Six died in the immigration station at Ellis Island. Another was driven to suicide in Boston’s



Deer Island prison. And the plot to murder Nicola Sacco, the shoemaker, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, the fish peddler, began.

The plot followed the murder of Andreas Salsedo, a friend of the martyrs. Salsedo was seized in a March raid by the Radical Division and kept illegally in the department's Park Row Building in New York City for two months while detectives tried to get a confession that he had printed an anarchist leaflet. He refused. His screams were heard by another prisoner. Before dawn, on May 3, he fell to his death from a fourteenth story window. Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested while organizing a protest meeting two days later. The Bureau of Investigation helped to convict them in a murder frame-up trial that followed. Hoover was the Bureau's No. 2 man then. And some of their blood is on his head.

But Hoover's main target was the Communist Party, although he has since admitted that the Party was guiltless of crime. He made this admission, under pressure, in a Department of Justice memorandum in October, 1924. It said:

It is, of course, to be remembered that the activities of Communists and other ultra-radicals have not up to the present time constituted a violation of the federal statutes, and consequently the Department of Justice, theoretically, has no right to investigate such activities as there has been no violation of the federal laws.

Hoover's confession is printed in *Federal Justice* by Homer Cummings, President Roosevelt's Attorney General. Hoover cannot forget it. Nor can he forget that his 50-year campaign to destroy the Party of socialism will be recorded as a failure by history.

... Because the Communist Party is guided by the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism, because it strives to draw appropriate lessons from the accumulated experience of the American and world struggles for social change, because it is organized according to the principle of democratic centralism, it is able to achieve that unity of world outlook and of action necessary to bring understanding and organized direction to the struggles of today and the path ahead. Its social science, Marxism-Leninism, embraces and builds upon the scientific, humanist and democratic heritage of all mankind, including the great contributions to this heritage by the people of the United States.

From Preamble to Constitution of the CPUSA

## The LaFollette Campaign of 1924

In 1924, the Workers (Communist) Party ran William Z. Foster, as its first presidential candidate in an independent campaign, after all the attempts of the Party to build a labor party, or farmer-labor party, independent of the two major parties, had failed. The Party refused to participate in the campaign of Senator Robert M. La Follette (R-Wisc.), who was running as an independent progressive candidate for President with wide support from labor, farmer, and progressive sections of society in general.

The wisdom of this Party policy was later questioned, by, among others, Foster himself, who said it was a mistake based on a sectarian approach then prevalent in Party ranks. Foster's 1924 campaign undoubtedly gave the Party, then just struggling out of its "underground" years, widespread publicity and helped to make its program better-known to the general public. But Foster only got 33,000 votes. LaFollette got close to five million, in an election where only 52 per cent of the voters bothered to go to the polls at all. LaFollette's campaign, in fact, was the biggest independent movement outside the two-party system ever to emerge in U.S. history, and if the Party had been associated with it, it clearly could have developed important ties with the most advanced sections of the labor and farmer movements, as well as with the progressive intellectuals and urban reformers.

Certainly, Party support would not have led to a LaFollette victory in 1924. But it might have played the role of the unifying element to keep the LaFollette coalition in existence after 1924, building on its already-existing strength (which was considerable) so that it could have been a powerful factor in the elections of 1928 and 1932.

If, after the massive failure of capitalism in 1929, there had existed in the U.S. a mass-based third party whose aims were to counter monopoly capitalism, it seems almost unquestionable that the entire history of this country would be different—perhaps very different—from what it is now. But there was nothing to hold the LaFollette coalition together after 1924, and it fell apart. LaFollette himself died in 1925, probably as a result of overwork.

Bourgeois historians often try to give the impression that the years 1919-24 were a period of total reaction, and it is true that during

those years labor, the Negro people, and the Left as a whole were subjected to fierce repressions by the capitalist ruling class. But the capitalists did not ride roughshod over their own laws and encourage the fascist violence of the American Legion and Ku Klux Klan for no reason: they were trying to beat the American working class to its knees, to show people who was boss. The tremendous wave of strikes, involving millions of workers in these years, shows that there was indeed a widespread resistance to capitalist reaction. Moreover, within bourgeois society, there were movements of opposition to reaction.

The Party during this period was having a tough time merely surviving all the attempts to destroy it. It was illegal and underground. At a stage when no one was altogether clear about the meaning of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, and in the conditions in which the Party was forced to exist at that time, it is understandable that confused ideas and factions based on these confused ideas hurt the Party's activities and program.

According to Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the English publication of Lenin's *"Left"-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, was of great value in helping to straighten out some of the American Left on the disputed questions of that day:

. . . particularly the chapters on "Should Revolutionaries Work in Reactionary Trade Unions?" and another on "Shall We Participate in Bourgeois Parliaments?" The answer Lenin gave to both questions was "Yes," which caused much debate here . . . and caused many to join the Communist Party." (*I Speak My Own Piece*, International, p. 277.)

Another source of clarification for American revolutionaries was the Third Congress of the Communist International in Petrograd in June-July, 1921, where Lenin said in his concluding remarks:

At certain times, there is no necessity for big organizations. For victory, however, we must have the sympathy of the masses. An absolute majority is not always essential; but for victory and for retaining power, what is essential is not only the majority of the working class . . . in the sense of the industrial proletariat—but also the majority of the working and exploited rural population. . . . And if, during the struggle itself the majority of the working people prove to be on our side—not only the majority of the workers but the majority of all the exploited and oppressed—then we shall really be victorious. (*Selected Works*, 3-Vol. ed., Vol. 3, pp. 686-87.)

Lenin's writings and speeches stressed the necessity of winning mass support through participation in every area and level of struggle where the exploited working masses were to be found. This was very important for American revolutionaries to understand, for then as now, some people were more interested in their own individual revolutionary "purity" in thought, word and deed, undefiled by contact with trade unions, elections and other capitalist snares, than they were in perhaps winning the socialist revolution.

#### *The Third Party Movement*

The good advice of Lenin and the Comintern, led American Communists to play a great role in setting up the Workers Party in December, 1921, as a "legal" party, committed to participation in trade unions and in elections to fight for the workers' immediate needs and eventually, for the establishment of a Workers' Republic.

At its Second Convention in New York in December, 1922, the Workers Party stated that it:

. . . favors the formation of a labor party—a working class political party, independent of, and opposed to, all capitalist political parties. It will make every effort to hasten the formation . . . of such a party and to effect admittance to it as an autonomous section. . . . A real labor party cannot be formed without the labor unions, and organizations of exploited farmers, tenant farmers, and farm laborers must be included.

Foster, in his *History of the Communist Party*, pointed out that this declaration broke with the 30-year tradition of the Socialist Party and Socialist Labor Party of opposing the formation of a separate labor party. It placed the Communists within the growing movement for an independent party of labor, the Negro people and all the exploited.

The third party movement had been gathering steam for some time, and was backed up by some powerful forces in American life. Foster lists some of them as: 1) local labor parties in Illinois, Connecticut, Michigan, Utah, Indiana, Pennsylvania, etc., led by the Chicago Federation of Labor; 2) the Nonpartisan League, founded in 1915 with its main strength in the Dakotas and Midwest among anti-monopoly farmers; 3) the Committee of 48, remnant of the "Bull Moose" Progressive Republicans who supported Theodore Roosevelt in 1912 and was a center for GOP progressives; 4) the Plumb Plan movement, led by Warren S. Stone of the Locomotive Engineers and William H. Johnston of the Machinists Union, and based on 16 railroad brotherhoods.

In 1917-20, faced with untangling the snarl of capitalist inefficiency in wartime railroad operations, the U.S. government took over all the railroads under a U.S. Railroad Administration and ran them very much more efficiently than "private enterprise" had been able to do. Glenn Plumb, general counsel for the Railroad Brotherhoods, offered a plan to keep the railroads under government control at the end of the war; it was not accepted and the government gave them back, but the unions were still fighting for the Plumb Plan.

In November, 1919, the local labor parties combined into a National Labor Party (NLP), headed by J. G. Brown who later joined Foster's Trade-Union Educational League (TUEL). In Chicago in 1920, the NLP merged with the Committee of 48 and some farmers' parties to form the Farmer-Labor Party. The FLP was headed by John Fitzpatrick of the Chicago Federation of Labor, a group with which Foster and the Communists had close and friendly relations. Foster was on the platform, when Fitzpatrick opened the convention of the NLP, shortly before the merger, with an appeal for "independence for Ireland and support of revolutionary Russia."

The FLP in 1920 asked LaFollette to be their candidate but he declined and the conservative Philadelphia *Public Ledger* wrote:

Fervent sighs of relief were heaved in both Republican and Democratic quarters today over the late news from the Chicago third-party convention. . . . Either a LaFollette or a Ford nomination, Washington politicians concede, might have thrown the presidential election into the House of Representatives (July 16, 1920).

Republican Warren G. Harding, whose sole qualification was that he "looked like a President," went on to win the 1920 race by a huge, seven million vote majority, while the FLP candidate got 250,000 votes all told. LaFollette remained in the Senate, where he began to hammer away at government attempts to sell U.S. naval oil reserves to private interests, something that would later erupt into the "Teapot Dome" Scandal and devastate the Harding administration.

#### *The People on the Move*

In 1920, American voters were so sick of Wilson and the war that they would have voted for Harding even if he had been stuffed with lint and hung from the ceiling by wires; but in only a very short time, the entire political situation underwent a change.

A very important factor in this change was the farm depression which began in 1921, as wartime supports were kicked out from under the farmers who had been encouraged by the government to

plant millions of new acres during the war. In 1921-24, three million farmers were forced off the land as prices hit rock-bottom; at the same time, the growth of farm tenancy was fantastic as millions of independent farmers in the Midwest were ruined and had to sell out and work rented land for someone else.

Another factor was the capitalist drive for the "open shop" nationwide, under the name of "The American plan"; there were massive strikes in the coal mines, the textile industry, and the railroads, and even the American Federation of Labor, led by Samuel Gompers, began to realize it would have to take some political action to stave off the capitalist assault. And it should be kept in mind that at this time, not only did the Railroad Brotherhoods advocate nationalization of the railroads, but the United Mine Workers led by John L. Lewis wanted nationalization of the mines.

A third factor was growing public disgust at the scandals involving the Harding administration. In the 1922 Congressional elections, the voters repudiated Harding. His seven-million-vote majority evaporated to nothing. Progressive Republicans were elected everywhere and now held the balance of power in Congress, where the GOP lead had been trimmed to 11 in the Senate and 17 in the House. The "Progressives" had not held such power since 1911, and La Follette was their recognized leader.

In February, 1922, the Railroad Brotherhoods' Plumb Plan movement, together with the United Mine Workers, International Ladies Garment Workers, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Non-Partisan League, nine state federations of labor, the Farmer-Labor Party, Socialist Party, National Catholic Welfare Council, Methodist Federation for Social Services, and a host of other groups, set up the Conference for Progressive Political Action (CPPA). The CPPA represented perhaps as many as three million workers. This important move was warmly welcomed by the Communists, who saw in it the beginnings of what could turn out to be a truly mass-based labor party. In June, 1922, the Workers Party went on record with that interpretation, even though the CPPA excluded Communists from its discussions, and in October, 1922, the Party published a booklet by John Pepper called *For A Labor Party*.

#### *Sectarian Mistakes in Building Labor Party*

In December, 1922, the CPPA called its second convention, where a motion by John Fitzpatrick of the Chicago Federation of Labor and Farmer-Labor Party to form an independent labor party was voted down, 64-52. Fitzpatrick evidently had an Irish temper, for

he reportedly said: "We can't fiddle around with these liberals," and stalked out of the convention, taking the FLP with him. This was done against the advice of the Communist representatives who were there, Charles E. Ruthenberg and William Z. Foster.

This placed the Communists in a difficult position: Fitzpatrick had gone out on a limb to argue in the CPPA that Foster and Ruthenberg ought to be admitted as legitimate delegates of a genuine workers' movement. The CPPA voted to bar them. The Communists also had developed close working relationships with the Fitzpatrick group in Chicago and could not afford to endanger them. Yet, if anything was clear, it was that the CPPA presented the real opportunity to build a genuine labor party, not the FLP.

The decision to go along with Fitzpatrick and the FLP, that is, to sacrifice the long-term Communist goal of building a labor party to the short-term advantages of holding on to established ties, probably is the beginning of the mistake that the Communists made.

This mistake, in turn, led straight into the disastrous attempt to form a party based on a coalition of the FLP and Workers Party. The FLP and WP issued a joint call for a conference in Chicago on July 3, 1923, of "all economic and political organizations favoring the organization of a Farmer-Labor Party." It was agreed beforehand that if representatives showed up at the conference speaking for at least 500,000 workers, the new party would be formed.

But at this point Fitzpatrick began to have second thoughts: he was willing to work with the Communists as long as they were just one tendency among many, but clearly the coming convention would be dominated by them. Heavy pressures were applied on him also: the AFL cut off its subsidy to the Chicago Federation he headed. By the time the convention opened, Fitzpatrick was arguing that "it would be suicide" to allow the Workers Party into the hall, and asked that all revolutionary groups be excluded. The convention rejected his plea and voted, 500-40 to establish a Federated Farmer-Labor Party (FFLP). Joseph Manley, Foster's son-in-law and a member of the Iron Workers Union, was named secretary-treasurer. By that time, Fitzpatrick and his allies had left the convention never to return.

Foster later wrote that only 155,000 people actually joined the FFLP: "In short, the FFLP had failed to win the masses." Not only that. The Communists had now not only lost out in the CPPA, but had lost their valued connections with the Chicago Federation of Labor.

In 1924, when it became nearly certain that LaFollette would

run as an independent, the Communists sought out advice as they had before, from the Communist International, on how they should proceed. Unfortunately, by this time, Lenin, the great leader of the October Revolution, was dead; the voice that dominated the Comintern Executive Committee meeting on this occasion was that of Leon Trotsky, who advised the American Communists to work against LaFollette. This singularly bad advice had an immediate effect in the work of the Communists attending the St. Paul, Minnesota, convention of state Farmer-Labor parties, in June, 1924.

The convention was eager to nominate LaFollette, and there was great consternation when delegate Benjamin Gitlow delivered a savage attack on the Wisconsin Senator; the convention then went on to nominate for its candidates two mine union leaders, Duncan Macdonald and William Bouck, on the understanding that if LaFollette endorsed the St. Paul convention, he would replace them as the convention's choice for president. There was almost no possibility of this happening. The Macdonald-Bouck ticket crumbled almost as soon as it was set up. The Communists were isolated and had little choice left except to run an independent Communist campaign, with Foster for President and (incredible as it may now seem) Benjamin Gitlow for Vice-President.

#### *Independent Movement for LaFollette*

In July, 1924, a CPPA convention attended by 1,000 delegates heard a LaFollette statement that he intended to run as an independent. LaFollette did not want a completely new third party at that time, but said: ". . . if the hour is at hand for the birth of a new political party, the American people next November will register their will and their united purpose by a vote of such magnitude that a new political party will be inevitable." LaFollette not only received backing from all the groups in the CPPA, but, in a move which reflected a complete break with the Gompers tradition, the AFL endorsed him and his running mate, Sen. Burton K. Wheeler (D-Mont.). LaFollette was also supported by Eugene Debs, Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, and Fiorello La Guardia, then a GOP Congressman from New York, who said: "I would rather be right than regular." LaFollette was also endorsed by the Socialist Party, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

LaFollette's program was of the "trust-busting" anti-monopoly type. It said nothing about prohibition, although LaFollette was known as a "wet," and did not say anything about the Negro people.

But in an unusually vigorous statement, LaFollette told the press and public that he was "unalterably opposed" to the Ku Klux Klan, then a powerful organization in the Midwest as well as the South. The Klan replied by calling LaFollette "the arch-enemy of the nation," promising to defeat him and to remain neutral between GOP candidate Calvin Coolidge and Democrat John W. Davis, neither of whom repudiated Klan support.

Coolidge was well-known for the statement he made while breaking the Boston police strike of 1919: "There is no right to strike against the public safety anywhere, anytime," and an even more revealing quote is his: "The business of this country is—business." In this respect he was not too different from the nonentity the Democrats had chosen after 103 ballots, John W. Davis, who said: "Big business has made this country what it is." He was, of course, speaking in a favorable sense. It is not surprising that labor gagged while trying to swallow these two candidates and went over to LaFollette.

#### *Communist Criticism of LaFollette*

The Communist criticism of LaFollette flowed from the pen of none other than Jay Lovestone, who wrote in the Workers Party pamphlet, *The LaFollette Illusion*:

Mr. LaFollette, the champion of the little capitalists, differs with Coolidge and Davis . . . primarily as to the best method of perpetuating the wage system . . . LaFollette is and has been trying to fly in the face of industrial development. The fact of the matter is that, economically, great industrial units are both desirable and inevitable.

Lovestone then went on to attack LaFollette for not demanding the immediate socialization of industry, which was the real solution.

What Lovestone wrote was undeniably true: LaFollette was the hero of the "little capitalists," small, independent farmers and craftsmen who were being wiped out by the growth of monopoly; he was not opposed to capitalism, and in fact, favored it; and to an extent, one could say that LaFollette and the movement which bore his name was opposing the inherent tendencies within capitalism toward monopoly. But by Lovestone's line of reasoning, we should end up calling LaFollette and the groups behind him "reactionaries." Communists logically would have been committed to doing everything in their power to favor the growth of monopoly, which in

effect, would place them in the camp of the enemy. But perhaps that is precisely where Lovestone wanted them to be.

LaFollette got 4,822,319 votes in 1924, largest ever for an independent candidate. One out of every six voters voted for him. The vote might have been a good deal larger if Communists had been available to steady those AFL leaders who began to waver at the close of the campaign.

Moreover, the Communists might have kept the LaFollette coalition together after its impressive achievements in the election. But, as it was, the fact that LaFollette did not "win" discouraged many who had no long-term political perspective. The CPPA broke up after the election, the AFL went back to its traditional "non-partisan" policy, and a great opportunity was lost to build a mass-based third party in the United States.

Under the influence of Lovestone's absurd ideas, the Workers Party surveyed these ruined hopes calmly and confidently, stating that there was no

. . . immediate possibility for the growth of a mass farmer-labor party. . . . Our chief task in the immediate future is not the building of such a farmer-labor party but the strengthening and developing of the Workers Party itself as the practical leader of the masses.

\* \* \*

This self-fulfilling sectarianism may be only too evident to people today, but it was not at all clear then. In the international working class movement, a great many of these questions were still being debated, and nowhere more fiercely than in the Soviet Union. The Workers Party, in 1922-24, made any number of valiant efforts to bring together what we today (who have not even begun to create it) would call an "anti-monopoly coalition." They did so under conditions where Communists were hunted down and persecuted by every reactionary force in American society. They maintained an "underground" Communist Party as well as a "legal" Workers Party, until 1924, when they were able to come out in the open. We cannot praise Party members highly enough for their work under such difficult conditions.

The real problem in the Party in 1924 was the growth of disruptive factionalism, based on both "Left" and Right deviations from Marxism-Leninism. The main danger was the "Left" variety which would have left the Party as a little "purist" sect, isolated

from political developments among the masses; but there was also an opportunist tendency to see American capitalism as victorious everywhere and to “accommodate” the Party to a society where no class struggle existed. Both these tendencies are still present today and an ideological struggle must be waged against them if we are even to approach the gains our comrades made in 1924.

Communists have no interests apart from the people, no narrow selfish “axe to grind.” To be a Communist is not a career. Anyone who is found to be self-seeking or egocentric, who is not capable of collective thought and action or amenable to criticism is eventually eliminated from our ranks, no matter how important a place he may occupy. “The greatest good for the greatest number” is the ethical concept of the Communists. Communists practice an enlightened self-interest in a passionate willingness to work unselfishly so that by freeing the workers from wage slavery all humanity is freed from greed and tyranny.

How are Communists different? In their intense and ardent devotion to a purpose in life that directs and fills their days and nights with efforts *in the interest of the people, to eliminate all exploitation and oppression*. Communists struggle unremittingly for all the immediate necessary interests of the people. There is no contradiction between helping to better organize unions, to fight for the extension of full democratic rights to the Negro people, and other such general political activities, and the ultimate goal of socialism which will come more quickly through the solidarity, class consciousness and understanding developed in just such day to day struggles of masses of people.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *Meet the Communists*, p. 13

## The Fight Against Trotskyism

The history of the Communist Party of the United States is a history of unceasing struggle against opportunism in all its guises. At one time or another the Party has had to do battle against outbursts of Right opportunism and revisionism or of “Left” sectarianism, and frequently against both simultaneously.

In June, 1929, hardly a decade after its birth, the Party was compelled to rid itself of Jay Lovestone and some 200 of his followers. Lovestone had developed a theory of American exceptionalism, according to which U.S. capitalism was exempt from the laws of development governing the rest of the capitalist world. On these grounds he concluded that a long-term period of prosperity lay ahead in which the class struggle in all its aspects would be greatly softened. Ironically, these Right-wing revisionist ideas were propagated on the eve of the 1929 crash which precipitated the worst economic crisis in history—a development which both the CPUSA and the Communist International had forecast. Lovestone, as we know, ended up as George Meany’s advisor on international affairs, masterminding the AFL-CIO bureaucracy’s pro-imperialist intrigues and CIA-financed wrecking activities abroad.

But Lovestone’s expulsion followed only by several months that of a Trotskyite faction headed by James P. Cannon, Max Schachtman and M. Abern. The three were expelled in October, 1928 as splitters, disrupters and political degenerates, and subsequently about 100 of their followers were ousted with them. The political ideas espoused by this grouping, though clothed in revolutionary-sounding language, were, as we shall see, no less opportunist, no less a surrender of the struggle for socialism than was the Right-wing revisionism of Lovestone. Indeed, the two groups found common ground after their expulsion, not least in their bitter hatred of the Communist Party.

In later years the Party had to contend with the Browder and Gates revisionist threats. But it also had to face upsurges of ultra-Leftism at various times. In fact, at the height of the battle against the Gates liquidators the Party was also confronted by ultra-revolutionary grouplets which left its ranks to set up “genuine” Marxist-Leninist parties. And later it had to deal with a grouping which formed the nucleus of the ultra-Leftist Progressive Labor Party.

Significantly, its ringleaders were expelled for conniving to liquidate the Party to escape the attacks on it under the McCarran Act.

### *The Nature and Roots of Trotskyism*

Trotskyism was long ago characterized by V. I. Lenin as a petty-bourgeois deviation from Marxism, as an expression of "Left" opportunism—of capitulation to the class enemy under a cloak of "revolutionary" phrasemongering. This it carries to an extreme, making its "revolutionary" posturing a basis for the advancement of policies which invariably serve the interests of reaction.

For most of the period of his political activity before 1917, Leon Trotsky was a Menshevik, who made a career of attempting unprincipled reconciliation of Menshevik opportunism and Bolshevism in the name of "centrism." The Soviet historian M. N. Pokrovsky, writing about the 1905 revolution in his *Brief History of Russia* (International Publishers, New York, 1931, Vol. II, p. 320), describes him in these words:

. . . During the whole period of its activity, the Petersburg Soviet had at its head a very intelligent and clever Menshevik, an adept in the art of combining Menshevik substance with revolutionary phrases. The name of that Menshevik was Trotsky. He was a genuine, full-blown Menshevik, who had no desire whatever for the armed insurrection and was altogether averse to bringing the revolution to its completion, *i.e.*, to the overthrow of tsarism.

Lenin himself wrote in 1910:

Trotsky . . . represents only his own personal vacillations and nothing more. In 1903 he was a Menshevik; he abandoned Menshevism in 1904, returned to the Mensheviks in 1905 and merely flaunted ultra-revolutionary phrases; in 1906 he left them again; at the end of 1906 he advocated electoral agreements with the Cadets (*i.e.*, he was in fact once more with the Mensheviks); and in the spring of 1907, at the London Congress, he said that he differed from Rosa Luxemburg on "individual shades of ideas rather than on political tendencies." One day Trotsky plagiarizes from the ideological stock-in-trade of one faction; the next day he plagiarizes from that of another, and therefore declares himself to be standing *above* both factions. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 391.)

These comments are typical of the opinions of Trotsky expressed repeatedly in Lenin's writings throughout this period.

In late summer of 1917, Trotsky joined the Bolsheviks. An ef-

fective speaker and writer, he was given every opportunity to play a leading part in the events to come. He became chairman of the Petrograd Soviet and after the October Revolution he was made a member and later chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee. He was thus an important figure during and after the period of the uprising.

However, he abandoned neither his old habits nor his old ideas. His super-revolutionism emerged some years later as a pretext for abandoning the socialist revolution, in the name of his pseudo-Marxist theory of "permanent revolution." This doctrine is the theoretical foundation of Trotskyism. Here is how Trotsky presents it in his book *The Year 1905*, written in 1922. He states in the preface:

It was precisely during the interval between January 9 and the October strike of 1905 that the views on the character of the revolutionary development of Russia which came to be known as the theory of "permanent revolution" crystalized in the author's mind. This abstruse term represented the idea that the Russian revolution, whose immediate objectives were bourgeois in nature, could not, however, stop when these objectives had been achieved. The revolution would not be able to solve its immediate bourgeois problems except by placing the proletariat in power. And the latter, upon assuming power, would not be able to confine itself to the bourgeois limits of the revolution. On the contrary, precisely to assure its victory, the proletarian vanguard would be forced in the very early stages of its rule to make deep inroads not only into feudal property but into bourgeois property as well. In this it would come into hostile collision not only with all the bourgeois groupings which supported the proletariat during the first stages of its revolutionary struggle, but also with the broad masses of the peasantry with whose assistance it came into power. The contradictions in the position of a workers' government in a backward country with an overwhelmingly peasant population could be solved only on an international scale, in the arena of the world proletarian revolution. (Quoted in J. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 383-384.)

In brief, the bourgeois-democratic revolution, even to solve its own problems, must lead directly to working-class political power and this in turn to immediate steps toward abolition of capitalist property relations. Thereby the working class is brought, almost from the beginning, into direct conflict with the peasantry and other sections of the democratic forces, for these non-proletarian elements, in Trotsky's view, have no role in the socialist revolu-

tion. In this the working class fights alone. And hence, particularly in a country where the working class is relatively small and the peasantry large, as in Tsarist Russia, socialism cannot be successfully established unless the socialist revolution is first victorious in other, more advanced countries. Says Trotsky:

. . . The socialist revolution begins on national foundations—but cannot be completed on these foundations alone. The maintenance of the proletarian revolution within a national framework can only be a provisional state of affairs. . . . In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the internal and external contradictions grow inevitably along with the successes achieved. If it remains isolated, the proletarian state must finally fall victim to these contradictions. The way out for it lies only in the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries. (Isaac Deutscher, ed., *The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology*, Dell Publishing Co., New York, 1964, p. 65.)

In short, the victory of socialism in a single country is impossible. In his book *The Year 1917*, which appeared in 1924, Trotsky argues that the victory of socialism is possible only in several of the principal European countries simultaneously. The task in Russia after the October Revolution, therefore, was not to engage in futile efforts to build socialism but rather to hold this in abeyance while working to “propel” the revolution abroad. Thus, under the banner of his “revolutionary”-sounding theory of “permanent revolution,” Trotsky counseled retreat and abandonment of the socialist revolution in Russia.

#### *The Fight Against Trotskyism in the Twenties*

Within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Trotsky's views were never accepted by more than a small minority. Nevertheless, in his efforts to force them on the Party he precipitated a factional struggle which lasted throughout most of the twenties.

In 1921, when the Civil War had barely ended and the country was faced with staggering problems, Trotsky launched a campaign to establish the trade unions not as democratic organizations of the workers but as dictatorially-run organs for managing production. Instead of permitting the question to be decided within the Central Committee, he and his supporters forced a full-dress discussion on the Party at a moment when the fate of the country hung in the balance. The discussion resulted in their overwhelming defeat.

In 1923 the Trotskyites again forced a discussion on the Party.

This time an all-out assault was launched against the Party leadership, which was attacked as a degenerate bureaucracy, and a campaign was conducted in the Party organizations to turn the membership against the leadership. In January, 1924 the Thirteenth Conference of the Party condemned Trotsky's factional campaign, and in July the Fifth Congress of the Communist International similarly condemned Trotskyism, characterizing it as a petty-bourgeois deviation.

However, in the autumn of 1924 a discussion was once more forced on the Party, this time in an effort to impose Trotsky's theory of “permanent revolution” on it. After a very extended discussion a joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission condemned Trotsky's conduct, warned him in the strongest language that he must desist and submit to Party discipline, and removed him from the Revolutionary Military Council.

But the discussions went on, with the Trotskyites joined by a “New Opposition” headed by Zinoviev and Kamenev. In October 1927 Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the Central Committee for their factional activities. Subsequently, in discussions preceding the Fifteenth Congress, 724,000 Party members voted for the policy of the Central Committee and 4,000—less than one per cent—for the Trotsky-Zinoviev line. Such was the accomplishment of the Trotskyites in the endless debates which diverted the Party from its most urgent tasks over a period of years.

The Fifteenth Congress, held in December 1927, expelled Trotsky and Zinoviev and 75 of their followers from the Party. Not long afterward Trotsky was expelled from the country. The Trotsky group applied for readmission to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in August, 1928. The appeal was unanimously rejected. The Congress characterized the group as “objectively an organ of struggle against the Soviet Power” and condemned the “counter-revolutionary political content of the Trotskyist platform.”

Trotsky's opportunist doctrine of the abandonment of socialist construction could only be rejected by a working class and a party which had gone through such Herculean efforts to achieve and retain political power. And needless to say, it could only be welcomed by every counter-revolutionary element in Russia and abroad. The continued pursuit of such a line after its overwhelming rejection by the Party, therefore, could only lead to unprincipled factionalism and to alliances with enemies of the working class. It could only lead to a process of degeneration ending in counter-revolution disguised in revolutionary verbiage and having as its main objective



the overthrow of the Soviet regime in the name of "saving the revolution." And this, history records, is exactly what happened to Trotsky and his followers. It is just such a counter-revolutionary sect, masquerading in the garb of "revolution," that Trotskyism became.

### *Trotskyism and the U.S. Party*

The struggle against the Trotskyites in the Bolshevik Party was not without its repercussions in the Party here. During this period the Workers Party (which later became the Communist Party) was itself split into opposing factions. Of this, William Z. Foster writes: "The labor party campaign of 1922-24 gave birth to a sharp factional struggle within the Workers Party, which was to continue, with greater or less intensity, until 1929. Grave inner-party differences developed over the strategy and tactics to be pursued in the fight for the labor party. The Party was split into two major groups which, in the heat of the internal fight, came to act almost like two separate parties, with their specific caucuses and group disciplines." (*History of the Communist Party of the United States*, International Publishers, New York, 1952, p. 221.) The rift was finally healed after the expulsion of Lovestone and his followers in 1929 and the six-year period of factionalism was brought to an end.

It was into this factional situation that the issue of Trotskyism was injected. On the whole the Party leadership of both factions joined with the Russian party in repudiating Trotsky's ideas. Thus the *Daily Worker* of December 20, 1924 reprinted from *Pravda* a review of Trotsky's book *The Year 1917*, entitled "How One Should Not Write the History of October." It was accompanied by a box containing the text of a decision of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party, instructing all Party newspapers to publish the review.

In subsequent months the *Daily Worker* published speeches by Zinoviev and Kamenev sharply attacking Trotskyism as petty-bourgeois radicalism. (Both of these individuals, as we have already noted, later allied themselves with Trotsky.) An educational campaign was conducted in the Party exposing the nature of Trotskyism and polemizing against it.

But not all in the Party leadership were opposed to Trotsky's views. There were some who were influenced by them and sought to promote them within the Party. Among these the leading light was James P. Cannon, who brought matters to a head in 1928 after

that we support and campaign for all genuinely independent socialist candidates *especially when they are counterposed to liberal politicians or peace candidates.*" (Emphasis added.) Such is Trotskyism's contribution to unifying the peace forces and developing independent political action.

Trotskyism has always sought to make capital of the struggles of black Americans, and with the upsurge of the black liberation movement it has, not surprisingly, made this a focus of its activities. It begins with the contention that the fight against oppression of the black people cannot be won without socialism. To be sure, there is more than a grain of truth in linking the struggle for Negro freedom with socialism. But the Trotskyites, in their typical fashion, proceed to make the two identical. Thus, the 1964 SWP election platform calls for "an anticapitalist alliance of all those who suffer discrimination and exploitation, black and white." (*The Militant*, April 6, 1964.) From this "anti-capitalist alliance," it is clear, are to be excluded all elements in the black liberation movement who are not prepared to fight for socialism. Thus does Trotskyism do battle against the unity of that movement—an all-class movement for freedom from national oppression—in the name of "fighting capitalism."

The Trotskyites look upon black nationalism as the revolutionary ideology among black Americans. A resolution adopted by the 1963 SWP Convention states: "Negro nationalism plays a function for the Negro people here in many ways like that which class consciousness plays for the working class." Hence "revolutionary socialists welcome the growth of nationalism." Correspondingly they call for the establishment of a separate black political party and favor the establishment of a separate black state. On the latter they quote Trotsky to the following effect:

... To fight for the possibility of realizing an independent state is a sign of great moral and political awakening. It would be a tremendous revolutionary step. ...

It is very possible that Negroes also through self-determination will proceed to the proletarian dictatorship in a couple of gigantic strides, ahead of the great block of white workers. They will then furnish the vanguard. (*Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination*, Merit Publishers, New York.)

George Breitman speaks of "the capacity of the Negro people to lead the working-class revolution to replace capitalism with socialism," and he proceeds to advise them on "How a Minority Can Change Society" in a currently circulating pamphlet of that name. Virtually

nothing is said about unity of black and white as the basis of the struggle for progress or about the need to fight racism among white Americans; there is only advice to the black people on how to be a vanguard.

Trotskyites are inveterate factionalists; indeed, they make a principle of factionalism, equating democratic centralism with the right to organize factions. Not only has this led to endless splits among the Trotskyites themselves; it has also formed the basis of their relations with other organizations on the Left. When they speak of "unity" with such organizations, what they have in mind is to penetrate, disrupt and destroy them. To these parasitic actions they have given the name of "the tactics of entrism."

A classical example is their merger with the Socialist Party in the thirties. By the time the merger broke up they had succeeded in wrecking the Socialist Party organizationally to such an extent that it was left a hollow shell of its former self. Of this achievement, Cannon writes in his *History of American Trotskyism*: "Comrade Trotsky remarked, when we talked with him, about the total result of our entry into the Socialist Party and the pitiful state of the organization afterward. He said that alone would have justified the entry into the organization even if we hadn't gained a single member."

As for the Communist Party, Trotskyism considers it the central obstacle to be removed from its path. For years the Trotskyites have sought to infiltrate it and to undermine it in every possible way. If they have not succeeded, it has not been for lack of trying. But more important, their failure is a tribute to the cohesiveness of the Communist Party to its constant fight against factionalism and for a common line and policy in its ranks.

Trotskyism has long been no more than a degenerate, counter-revolutionary sect masquerading as "Marxists" and operating as a parasitic excrescence on the Left. Clearly, the fight against this alien element did not end with the expulsion of the Trotskyites from the Party in 1928. It has continued throughout the years since then, and it will of necessity continue in the future until this voice of the enemy within the working-class movement no longer exists.

## Unemployment Struggles of the Thirties

Never did the domestic specter of Communism haunt the bankers, the industrialists and their representatives in Washington more than in the last months of 1929 and the early 30's. This was the period following the outbreak of the most deep-going economic crisis in the United States.

The sudden crash of the Wall Street Stock Exchange, in October 1929, gave a crushing blow to the self-serving promises of the ruling class that an unprecedented prosperity which it had long been enjoying would last forever. The long series of layoffs and cutbacks in working hours which had been held out to be merely temporary soon proved to be only the forerunners of unprecedented mass unemployment.

The newly awakened self-doubt and fears among the ideologues of capital, however, were not the result merely of the unprecedented mass misery and starvation which now became widespread. Unemployment, poverty and hunger were the constant companions of American capitalism, even in its more prosperous days. What now disturbed the ruling class was not only the tremors, which ran through its economic structure, but the rising tide of protest and resistance struggles on the part of its long-suffering victims.

At the outset, President Herbert Hoover attempted to reassure his class brothers and to pacify the people with repeated declarations that prosperity was "just around the corner." Organized charities and millionaire "philanthropists" tried to remove from public view the most glaring examples of human wreckage of the capitalist crisis by establishing free soup-lines and breadlines. Local Chambers of Commerce helped provide crates of apples for the unemployed to sell on street corners, in a desperate attempt to invoke the spirit of "self-help" and "free enterprise." And wherever the growing army of unemployed refused to be cajoled or slowly starved into silence, the ever-present police forces and jails were brought into service.

So it came about that shortly after its tenth birthday, the Com-

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The writer was secretary of the Unemployed Councils of Greater New York for the years 1932 and 1933, and was one of the organizers of the National Hunger Marches.

unist Party of the U.S.A. was put to the test of giving leadership and direction to the wave of spontaneous mass struggles of the unemployed throughout the country. However, to equip itself for this task the Party first had to settle accounts with Right-opportunist forces within its own leadership who refused to assume the responsibilities of a vanguard party of the working class. Jay Lovestone, during his short tenure as national secretary of the Party had echoed such capitalist-apologist views as those later published in the Hoover report on *Recent Economic Changes in the United States*, making wildly-optimistic predictions about a crisis-free future for "organized capitalism." But the majority of the Party, having wrestled with the complacent attitudes of this misleadership, and having rejected its theories of American exceptionalism and its forecasts of a Victorian Age for U.S. capitalism, was able quickly to rally for struggle against the effects of the crisis upon the lives of millions.

The removal of Lovestone from Party leadership by convention action in 1928, and his expulsion from the ranks together with his small band of incorrigible supporters, was accompanied by a new turn to the masses and serious efforts to organize for the solution of their most pressing problems. The Party was thus enabled early in 1930 to address itself to the American people through millions of leaflets, thousands of street corner meetings and appeals in the columns of the *Daily Worker* with the call, "Don't Starve, Fight!"

#### *Communists Lead National Protest*

The first nation-wide organized protest against the burdens of the economic crisis, being shouldered by the working people of the United States, was organized upon the initiative of the Communist Party. Together with the Left-led militant unions who constituted the Trade Union Unity League, the Party issued a call for simultaneous mass demonstrations on behalf of the unemployed to be held March 6, 1930, in the major cities of the country. Jointly signed appeals called upon the employed and unemployed to mass in the streets in protest against hunger and joblessness.

Huge outpourings of demonstrators responded in Cleveland, Milwaukee, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver, Philadelphia and other cities; 50,000 turned out in Chicago and Pittsburgh; 100,000 took part in Detroit and 110,000 in New York City. It was estimated that one and a quarter million men and women joined in this first nation-wide protest. The local police everywhere were taken by surprise. No one had expected such a show of strength and unanimity on the part of the victims of capitalism's operations, but everywhere

the police and local authorities tried to wreak their vengeance at the end of each meeting or demonstration. Club-swinging police, on horseback and afoot, attacked the demonstrators in the hope that if unemployment could not be ended, at least protest against unemployment could. Leaders of the Communist Party who were in the forefront of these demonstrations were singled out for arrest, among them, William Z. Foster, Israel Amter, Robert Minor and others in New York City.

The answer of the Communists was to call upon the unemployed to organize their ranks for greater struggle, for defense of their rights and their daily needs. The following weeks were devoted to reaching the jobless on the streets, in their homes, at the charity offices and in the shelters for the homeless with written and oral appeals to establish their own representative committees. Delegations were organized to present demands upon the administrators of breadlines and welfare organizations (most church-sponsored, in the absence of organized public assistance). Many a talented organizer and orator or writer emerged from the ranks to play an effective part in these activities.

The Trade Union Unity League meanwhile served to coordinate and give guidance to the mushrooming local committees among the unemployed. It called for a national conference in Chicago on July 4, 1930 to bring together their experiences and lay plans for future action. At that gathering 1,320 delegates were registered, representing unemployed groups across the country. They formed there an organization which was destined to play a historic role in defense of the very lives of the American people—the National Unemployed Councils.

From the very beginning, the Unemployed Councils drew into their ranks those workers most determined to combat the new calamity which had befallen them and their families with the sudden downturn of the national economy. Great numbers of Negro workers, in particular, joined the local struggles and played a leading part in the organized committees of the unemployed. Women played an active role, especially in the delegations which called upon local officials and charitable organizations, to demand emergency food and clothing for their children.

No federal system or legislation existed at this time to provide any form of social welfare or public assistance to those in need. The private charities, most of them denominational, were the chief known sources of what little aid was made available in the most extreme emergencies.

The employers took advantage of the growing desperation in the ranks of the working class to slash wages, in many instances 10 per cent and 20 per cent at a time. Hours of work and earnings were cut back in the name of "sharing the wealth," while speedup was enforced in an attempt to keep up output and profits. A major consequence, which overtook the employed as well as the jobless in every working class community, was a wave of evictions for delinquency in payment of rent. The county sheriffs and city marshalls, supported by local police, carried the meager belongings of evicted families into the streets. Whole blocks frequently gave the appearance that it was general moving day, but there was nowhere to move for lack of means to pay the rent.

#### *Against Evictions—For "Work or Wages"*

One of the first big tasks undertaken by the Unemployed Councils was the organization of resistance to evictions. Squads of neighbors were organized to bar the way to the dispossessing officers. Whole neighborhoods were frequently mobilized to take part in this mutual assistance. Where superior police force prevailed it became common practice for the Unemployed Councils to lead volunteer squads in carrying the displaced furniture and belongings back into the home after the police had departed. Council organizers became adept in fashioning meter-jumps to restore disconnected electric service and gas. The victims of unemployment were constantly taught that not they, but their exploiters, were guilty for the plight in which they found themselves. Not charity, but the right to a decent living and shelter, was made the battle-cry in every working class community where the Councils appeared. Literally tens of thousands of families were restored to their premises in the major cities during these struggles.

Little wonder than that the ruling circles and their spokesmen soon raised the cry of "Communism" against the unemployed movement. The organized committees and councils were not only effectively uniting employed and unemployed, white and black, but were challenging the sacred property rights of employers and landlords. As employed workers were rallied to defend their unemployed neighbors against eviction, so the Councils mobilized the jobless to participate on picket lines in support of workers' strikes against wage cuts and layoffs.

President Hoover offered, as his solution, a "stagger system" whereby more could be employed on a part-time basis with reduced earnings. William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor,

pompously followed suit, calling for a 30-hour week with a corresponding cut in wages. The Communist Party countered with its widely-publicized demand for the shorter workday and week without any reduction in earnings. The Government and the employers, it said, must shoulder the responsibility of providing either work or adequate financial relief. Out of these contentions emerged the slogan which appeared upon the banners of the unemployed and their councils throughout the continuing crisis: "Work or Wages!"

The number of unemployed grew to ten and twelve million; by 1933 it was estimated to have reached 17,000,000. The U.S. Department of Labor reported 200,000 children wandering across the country in search of food. City hospitals reported growing numbers of serious cases resulting from foraging for food in garbage heaps and hundreds of deaths from starvation. Yet the Government provided no comprehensive figures assessing the actual number of unemployed or part-time workers. At the same time unsold stocks of foodstuffs on which high prices were maintained, were regularly dumped at sea or burned in fields by profit-hungry corporations.

The spontaneous and isolated protests of the unemployed and the hungry now began to take organized and systematic shape. In one state after another mass marches converged upon the capitol and demands for governmental assistance were presented to the legislatures. It was frequently reported in the press that mass street demonstrations and other gatherings of the unemployed were followed by their participants swarming into nearby restaurants, eating their fill, and then departing with advice to the cashier to "charge it to the mayor." City halls became the regular target of organized delegations and the scene of mass rallies demanding emergency appropriations for the care of the needy.

Even in the rural towns the struggle against hunger was taken up in a collective manner. In the first days of 1931, an outraged capitalist press screamed that more than 500 farmers and their wives in the town of England—near Little Rock, Arkansas—had stormed the business district demanding food for their families and threatening to take it if denied. Most of the farmers in this town of about 2,000 population came armed. An emergency businessmen's conference wired the Red Cross for help and received authorization to distribute the demanded food on its behalf. In the course of such struggles the United Farmers League grew side by side with the Unemployed Councils.

Aside from contributing the organizational skill and personnel for the crystalization of a centralized movement, the Communist Party

supplied from its theoretical background and practical experience—drawing upon the history of the international movement as well—the central political focus for the struggle against the effects of the capitalist crisis.

Summarized in the most simple terms, the thrust of the unemployed councils, under Communist leadership and influence, was to place both the responsibility and the burden for relief for the suffering masses upon the government and the employers. Every speech, every article, every leaflet on behalf of the Unemployed Councils during this period emphasized, over and over again, the concept that a system of federal unemployment must be established “at the expense of the employers and the government.” The demand for federal unemployment insurance was first raised by the Communist Party and the Unemployed Councils. It was met by cries of indignation, not only on the part of avowed spokesmen for capital, but also by the class collaborationist officialdom of the A.F. of L. It was denounced as a “dole,” beneath the dignity of American workers. But the continued growth of mass unemployment and suffering, and especially the persistent growing struggles against their misery on the part of the unemployed, soon compelled gestures from these circles in support of some form of national unemployment insurance. However, intricate schemes were proposed for self-funded benefits to be derived from long-term contributions by workers themselves, during their period of employment.

#### *For Unemployment Insurance Bill*

Conferences of the unemployed, together with representatives from workers' organizations—including trade unions and newly-formed tenants' leagues—were held in many cities in the latter part of 1930 and 1931. Six hundred delegates met in New York City, on December 19, 1930, and reconvened a New York Conference for Unemployment Relief on January 13. They decided to send a delegation to Washington with a massive list of signatures, demanding that Congress enact a bill providing Federal Unemployment Insurance. House-to-house canvassing for signatures to such petitions was initiated. The *Daily Worker* of January 18, 1931 carried an eight-column headline on page 1, reporting: “Jobless Conference Plans 180 Hunger Meetings”; and below, there followed alongside the report, a 2-column editorial captioned: “Fight the Wage Cuts,” emphasizing the community of interest between the employed and the unemployed in the nation.

Taken up across the country was the campaign for enactment

of “the Workers Unemployment Insurance Bill.” Publicized as its major features were 1) Unemployment insurance at the rate of \$35 a week for each unemployed worker and \$5 additional for each dependent; 2) creation of a National Unemployment Insurance Fund to be raised by (a) using all war funds for unemployment insurance, (b) a levy on all capital and property in excess of \$25,000, (c) a tax on all incomes of \$5,000 a year; (3) the Unemployment Insurance Fund thus created, to be administered by a Workers' Commission elected solely by employed and unemployed workers. A Workers National Campaign Committee for Unemployment Insurance was established to conduct the petition drive.

The petitions carried the information that Congress was called upon to “pass the Bill in its final form as (possibly) amended by the mass meetings which ratify it and elect the mass delegation to present it to Congress, or as (possibly) amended by the mass delegation itself. The final form of the bill will follow the general line of the three points printed above.”

Thus the first national hunger march was given its objective to demand federal unemployment insurance legislation from Congress. The call was issued by the Unemployed Committee for the National Hunger March whose headquarters were in the national offices of the Trade Union Unity League in New York City. Signing the call were the Unemployed Councils of New York, Detroit, Cleveland, Boston, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New Haven, Buffalo, and Kansas City. Included in the official demands for which the marchers were to demonstrate was the demand for immediate cash relief to meet the winter needs of the unemployed while legislation was being enacted.

“The main demands of the millions of unemployed workers, whom the marchers will represent,” stated the Call, “will be for unemployment insurance equal to full wages for the unemployed and part-time workers, for special winter relief in the amount of \$150 for each unemployed worker and \$50 for each dependent, for the 7-hour day without reduction in weekly earnings, for the initiation of a federal program of furnishing work to the workers at union wages, for the abolition of the brutal terror and discrimination against Negroes and deportation of foreign-born workers, demands of the ex-servicemen [who were organizing to demand an immediate federal bonus payment to veterans of World War I-CW] and poor farmers, etc. The marchers will demand that all war funds be applied to unemployment relief and be administered by the Unemployed Councils. They will demand the enactment of the Workers

Unemployment Insurance Bill." The Call concluded by exhorting the employed and unemployed: "Intensify the local demonstrations and local hunger marches for unemployment insurance and immediate relief. Make the cities seethe with demands for food for the starving and shelter for the homeless!"

### *The National Hunger Marches*

The issuance of the Call for the first national hunger march to demand unemployment insurance legislation was quickly followed by police raids in many cities upon the headquarters of the Communist Party. Matthew Woll, Vice President of the A.F. of L. and acting President of the National Civic Federation, initiated a letter to every Congressman from the latter reactionary organization denouncing the National Hunger March as a "Communist attack upon the government."

Four caravans of marchers converged upon Washington from New England, the Midwest, the Far West and the South. They came to the federal capital on December 6 and 7, 1931 by truck and automobile. They stopped in every city on their route, to hold meetings explaining their purpose, and enlisting support. They carried banners including such slogans as "Employed workers—support the demands of the unemployed and part-time workers," "Unemployed workers—support the strikes of the employed against wage cuts," "Organize for the demands of the National Hunger March," "Build the Unemployed Councils."

A tired but enthusiastic band of 1,675 elected delegates from all parts of the United States finally marched up Capitol Hill. They attempted to present their demands at the door of the Senate Chamber, but were barred. When they appeared at the White House President Hoover refused them admittance.

The official rebuff in Washington in no way slowed down the campaign for immediate relief for the unemployed and for unemployment insurance. Instead, the captains of the Hunger March organized within the shadow of the Capitol for the assembled delegates to redouble their efforts. The caravans retraced their trek across the country, stopping again to hold report-back meetings in every city and to create new and larger committees and councils of the unemployed. A national day of demonstration for unemployment insurance was scheduled for February 4, 1932, and the swelled gatherings supported the call of the Unemployed Councils for a Second National Hunger March to Washington.

At the beginning of December of that year 3,000 delegates came

to the nation's capital, once again carrying the message of struggle for unemployed relief and insurance across the country. For days the marchers were blocked on New York Avenue, at the outskirts of the capital, by police barricades and heavily armed U.S. Marines. They bedded down in their trucks or on the concrete pavement of the highway for two nights, while calls for support were wired to workers' organizations and unemployed committees around the nation. Protests from unions, fraternal organizations and indignant citizens finally lifted the blockade. The Second National Hunger March paraded through the streets of Washington and up Capitol Hill. This time, Vice-President Charles Curtis, as Chairman of the Senate, found himself compelled to meet the unemployed marchers' delegation and to receive its petition for enactment of the Workers Unemployment Insurance Bill. The Speaker of the House, Jack Garner, received the delegation as representatives of the lower body.

Such were the mass movements and the struggles which awakened the consciousness of the American people to their right to government and employer-financed welfare. But more important, they proved to the American people their capacity to win their just demands.

### *Battle Won For Unemployment Insurance*

The first Unemployment Insurance Bill was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Congressman Ernest Lundeen Farmer-Laborite of Minnesota, in response to the Unemployed Council movement. An A.F. of L. convention went on record for the first time in support of the principle of unemployment insurance. Committees for the enactment of the bill spread through local unions and other organizations in growing numbers of cities and towns. Some city governments and state legislatures began to establish public relief agencies and to dispense limited assistance in cash and in kind to the most needy. The first system of federal Social Security, including a national unemployment compensation law, was enacted early in the "New Deal" administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in response to the years of mass struggle which immediately preceded it. New foundations were laid for greater struggles and greater achievements in the continuing march for social progress.

None of the achievements of this epic period in the life of the American working class were either spontaneous or inevitable. They were the hard-won products of careful planning, painstaking work, mass involvement and farsighted political guidance. In short, an ad-

vanced and purposeful leadership was required to elevate and coordinate the elemental struggles which arose out of the plight of the masses. This role was honorably fulfilled by the Communist Party.

Among some of the guiding principles of organization and struggle introduced into the unemployed movement of this period by the Party were mass mobilization in struggle, democratic organization and accountability, black and white unity in action, mutual support of employed and unemployed; and all directed to placing the burden for satisfying the immediate and ultimate needs of the people upon the employers and the Government, while educating masses—in the course of their daily experience—to adopt as their own the demand for the fundamental change to socialism.

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The time-honored need and validity of such inspiration and guidance, so long as capitalist exploitation lasts, is dramatically illustrated if one compares to the above-cited experience of our last generation a manifesto addressed: "To the Working People of North America!" Issued by the North American Federation of the International Workingmen's Association (the First Communist International) in the winter of the economic crisis of 1873, after the International had moved its headquarters from London to New York, this manifesto concluded:

We submit and recommend to you the following plans of organization . . .

The workingmen of one, two or more blocks form a district club, the district clubs combine to form ward committees, the ward committees will form a central body by deputizing three delegates . . .

The united workingmen thus organized will make the following demands to the respective authorities.

1) Work to be provided for all those willing and able to work, at the usual wages and on the eight hours plan.

2) An advance of either money or produce, sufficient for one week's sustenance, to be made to laborers and their families in actual distress.

3) No ejection from lodging to be made for nonpayment of rent . . .

More than 200,000 workingmen are residing in New York, and the same proportions are existing in almost every city and state of this country. Would it not be an easy thing for this vast majority of the adult citizens to put a stop to the vile practices of

capital, to the greediness and the pillaging habits of our modern highwaymen? Could or would any authorities, legislative or executive, be bold enough to resist our demands, if sustained by the undivided front of the laboring masses?

*Fellow Workingmen Arouse and Unite!*

But what is the precise relationship between the Communist Party of the United States and the Communist parties of other countries? There are ties and there is independence. It is important that we understand this relationship and that we help to lay the ghost of the false charge of "foreign agents" that again and again the capitalist press drags into print. The Communist Party in the United States is linked to the Communist parties and the vanguard parties of the working people in every country in the world by common ideological precepts—all Communists everywhere stand on the foundation of a common ideology. They are linked with the workers parties of the whole world on the basis of a common aspiration for the earliest realization of that flowering, joyful era of mankind which we Marxists call Communism. This common goal and aspiration which Communists and advanced workers in all countries pursue, is the second tie that binds us one to the other in a special kind of fraternity. But *there is no organizational or operational identity or tie-up between Communist parties—neither between our Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, nor between any of the parties of the world. . . .*

James E. Jackson, *Political Affairs*, January, 1960

## Breakthrough in Industrial Organization\*

. . . In July 1933, the Party called an Extraordinary Conference of 350 delegates in New York. This conference addressed an Open Letter to the Party outlining a program of militant struggle, stressing the need to concentrate upon building Party units and trade unions in the basic industries and to give all support to the growing mass strike movement. The conference urged the workers to "Write your own codes on the picket line."\*\* It played a vital role in preparing the Party for the big mass struggles ahead.

In 1933 the total number of strikers ran to 900,000, or more than three times as many as in 1932. The T.U.U.L. [Trade Union Unity League], headed by Jack Stachel (with Foster sick), led 300,000 workers in strikes, as compared with 250,000 independent union strikers, and 450,000 in the A.F. of L. The most important of the many T.U.U.L. strikes of that year were those of 16,000 auto workers in Detroit, 5,000 steel workers in Ambridge, 3,000 miners in Western Pennsylvania, 12,000 shoe workers in New York, 15,000 needle workers in New York, 18,000 cotton pickers and 6,000 grape pickers in California and Arizona, and 2,700 packinghouse workers in Pittsburgh. During these years, all the unions began to grow, the A.F. of L. by 500,000, independents by 150,000, and the T.U.U.L. by 100,000, giving the latter a membership of some 125,000.

### *The Big Strike Movement of 1934-36*

The mass strike movement that got under way in 1933 varied widely from the traditional craft patterns of the A.F. of L. It reflected clearly the principles, strategy, and tactics that had been so vigorously propagated by the Communist Party and the T.U.U.L. The strikes penetrated the hitherto closed trustified industries—steel, auto, aluminum, marine transport, etc.; they ignored the A.F. of L. dictum that union contracts justify union scabbery; they were industrial in

\* These excerpts are taken from Chapters 21 and 24 of *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, International Publishers, New York, 1951.

\*\* This has reference to the NRA codes in the first years of the Roosevelt Administration which were opposed by the CPUSA.

character; they embraced Negroes, unskilled, foreign-born, women, youth, and white collar workers; they struck a high note of solidarity between employed and unemployed; they used mass picketing, shop delegates, broad strike committees, sit-down strikes, slow-down strikes, and other Left-wing methods; they took on an increasingly political character; and they developed over the opposition of reactionary labor officials who wanted to stifle them.

The years 1934-36 intensified this radical mass strike period. The number of strikers was high and so was their militancy—1,466,695 strikers in 1934; 1,141,363 in 1935, and 788,648 in 1936. It was a time of both national industrial strikes and local general strikes. The workers fought mainly for wage increases and trade union recognition. . . .

The employers countered the rising strike movement, as usual, with a policy of violence. They mobilized their armed company gunmen against the strikers, they used the local police forces to beat and jail workers, they had the troops out in dozens of strike situations. In the big national textile strike, 16 workers were killed; many more were killed in the coal strike, the San Francisco strike, and in other bitter economic fights. All told, in 1934-36, 88 workers were killed in mass struggles. But the workers fought back and the strike wave continued to mount. . . .

The biggest and most significant national industrial strikes during 1934-36 were those of the textile workers and the bituminous coal miners, both A.F. of L. strikes. The national textile strike led by the United Textile Workers in September 1934, embraced 475,000 workers in 11 states, including large number of workers in the South. The strike faced great violence from the employers and the government. It was largely lost when the demands of the strikers were referred to an arbitration board and the strike was called off. The national bituminous coal strike of September 1935 brought out 400,000 miners, tying up nearly every important soft coal field. Within a few days the strike resulted in a victory. It put the U.M.W.A. back on its feet as a powerful organization, after it had been almost demolished in the fateful strike of 1927-28. There was also the Left-led National Lumber Workers strike of 41,000 lumbermen in the Pacific Northwest. Another highly important strike early in 1936, significant of the great wave of strikes soon to come in the trustified industries, was the successful strike of the rubber workers in Akron. . . .

### *The San Francisco General Strike*

The great general strike in the San Francisco Bay area, embracing



127,000 workers, took place during July 16-19, 1934. It grew out of a coastwise strike of 35,000 maritime workers. The Communist Party, which had a strong organization in California, gave the strike its full support and its influence was of major importance in the struggle. The historic strike gave an enormous impetus to the whole American labor movement.

The movement began in a drive from 1932 on, led by Communists and progressives, to organize the marine workers of the Pacific Coast. This drive culminated in a strong A.F. of L. longshoremen's union with Harry Bridges at its head, a demand for better conditions, and a coastwise strike of 12,000 of these workers on May 7, 1934. The Marine Workers Industrial Union (T.U.U.L.) headed by Harry Jackson, which won the leadership of decisive sections of the seamen, also called them on strike, and by May 23rd, the eight A.F. of L. maritime unions were out all along the coast. For the first time West Coast shipping was at a complete standstill. The conservative A.F. of L. leadership tried desperately to check the powerful movement, but in vain. Joseph Ryan, dictator of the Longshoremen's Union, was forced to abandon the strike and left the city. Bridges, head of the rank-and-file committee of 75, in tune with the militant workers, brilliantly outgeneraled the labor misleaders at every turn.

Enraged at the employers' violent efforts to break the maritime strike and also at their obvious determination to make the city open shop, the workers of San Francisco developed a strong fighting spirit. The Communist Party, which had many members and supporters in key A.F. of L. local unions, urged a general strike in all the cities along the Pacific Coast. To no avail, the top union leadership opposed the rising general strike spirit among the workers. In mid-June, Painters' Local 1138 sent out a letter for a general strike. By early July the influential Machinists Local 68, along with many other local unions, had endorsed the proposed strike. The police killing of two waterfront workers on July 8th—one of them Nick Bordoio, a Communist—added fuel to the flames, with 35,000 angry workers turning out to the funeral. On July 10th the Alameda Labor Council called for a general strike; on July 12th the San Francisco and Oakland teamsters went out; and on July 16th 160 A.F. of L. unions, 127,000 strong, tied up the whole San Francisco Bay region.

The strike was highly effective. Practically the entire industrial life of the great bay community came to a halt. The workers were powerfully demonstrating their resentment at the great economic crisis and their determination to have a better day under the promised "New Deal." Not a store could open, not a truck could move,

not a factory wheel could turn, without the permission of the General Strike Committee. Never was any American city so completely strike-bound as was the whole San Francisco Bay community during this great strike. . . .

The key to winning the great San Francisco strike was to spread it all over the coast, and still farther. . . . The Communists and the other Left and progressive elements, despite numerous minor mistakes, were quite aware of this imperative need to spread the strike, and they tried to do just that. But their forces were too small to accomplish it in the face of the formidable opposition. The "lost" San Francisco strike, in spite of all lugubrious predictions, had a stimulating effect upon the labor movement in California and all over the United States. The strike created one of the most glorious traditions in the entire history of the American labor movement.

#### *The T.U.U.L. Merges with the A.F. of L.*

During the first two stormy years of the New Deal about one million workers, largely unskilled and foreign-born from the basic industries, poured into the A.F. of L. unions. . . . The influx radically changed the situation in those organizations. It broke down the officials' no-strike policy, brought in a breath of democracy, weakened the bureaucrats' control, and made it more difficult to enforce the anti-Communist clauses against the Left. Besides, sections of the top leadership began to interest themselves in organizational work.

Recognizing that the conditions that had originally caused the formation of the T.U.U.L. were now breaking down, the Communists and other Lefts, always ardent champions of labor unity, began at once to shift their orientation toward a return to the A.F. of L. Already, early in 1933, they joined forces with the miners in their drive to re-establish the U.M.W.A., and in September 1934, the T.U.U.L. proposed trade union unity to the A.F. of L. In various industries T.U.U.L. bodies began to join up with corresponding A.F. of L. unions. This unity trend, however, did not sit well with the A.F. of L. top leaders, and William Green sent out a letter warning against the unity moves of the T.U.U.L.

In the spring of 1934 the Communist Party advanced the slogan, "For an Independent Federation of Labor," to be composed of the 400,000 members of the T.U.U.L. and other independents, but this policy was soon perceived to be incorrect and it was dropped. Instead the trend toward general labor unity was pushed vigorously by the Party everywhere. Early in 1935 the T.U.U.L. steel, auto, and needle trades unions voted to affiliate with the A.F. of L., the workers joining

as individuals where they could not affiliate in a body. On March 16-17, 1935, at a special convention, the T.U.U.L. resolved itself into a Committee for the Unification of the Trade Unions, with the objective of affiliating the remaining T.U.U.L. organizations to the A.F. of L. Four months later the T.U.U.L. disbanded altogether. . . .

### *The Formation of the C.I.O.*

The big labor struggles of the early New Deal years came to a sharp climax with the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.) in November 1935. This body was originally composed of representatives of the coal miners, textile, ladies' garment, men's clothing, printing, oil-field, cap and millinery, and metal miners' unions, with a combined membership of about one million. The Committee's purpose was the unionization of the almost totally unorganized millions of workers in the basic trustified industries. It was truly a momentous development, and the Communist Party gave its most active support from the start. . . .

Significantly, the eight A.F. of L. unions that launched the C.I.O. were all either industrial or semi-industrial in form. Their leaders — John L. Lewis, Philip Murray, Sidney Hillman, *et al.* — while basing themselves, like the Green bureaucrats, primarily upon the skilled workers, had learned that this policy did not necessarily involve excluding the unskilled from the unions. Because of the bitter experience of the post-World War I and economic crisis years, and also because of the great pressure of the rank-and-file workers for organization, they had become convinced that the unionization of the basic industries was an absolute necessity if the labor movement was to survive and progress. Later on, under the weight of the newly organized masses, this position led these leaders to adopt many progressive measures. Only in this narrow sense could they themselves be called progressives. . . .

The split in the ranks of the labor bureaucracy greatly accelerated the tempo of trade union progress. The Communists, who were a considerable factor in the A.F. of L. gave the opposition leaders all possible cooperation and support in their progressive role. In 1933, when the organization spurt began, the A.F. of L. leaders had tried to sort out the new union recruits according to crafts and distribute them among the respective unions, but this proving impossible, they assembled the workers into miscellaneous federal local unions. At the 1934 A.F. of L. convention, with 2,000 such locals existing, however, the issue had to be settled. There was a powerful sentiment for industrial unionism, with 14 resolutions demanding this measure. The Com-

unist Party vigorously stimulated this movement among the rank and file. Even the hard-boiled officials that make up A.F. of L. conventions knew that a maneuver had to be made. So the leadership put through a unanimous resolution which, while endorsing craft unionism, "wherever the lines of demarcation between crafts are distinguishable," vaguely recognized the need for industrial unionism and instructed the Executive Council to issue charters in various industries. . . .

During 1935 the Executive Council gave limited industrial charters to the United Auto Workers and the United Rubber Workers, but they refused national charters to the many new local unions in radio, cement, aluminum, and other basic industries. . . .

At the 1935 convention in Atlantic City . . . John L. Lewis and five other leaders introduced a resolution calling for the organization of the basic industries into industrial unions. . . . After a long and bitter debate the Lewis resolution was defeated by a vote of 18,025 to 10,924. The A.F. of L. leaders were willing to keep the industries unorganized, just so their own jurisdictional claims remained intact.

Undeterred by their convention defeat, the Lewis group a month later organized the C.I.O. and began the work of unionization. They launched active national campaigns in steel, auto, rubber, textile, and coke-processing. Huge sums of money were pledged by the eight cooperating unions. National organizing committees were set up, and new industrial unions were to be formed. The basic industries would be organized in spite of the A.F. of L. leadership.

The Green bureaucrats promptly condemned the C.I.O. for this action, and after considerable maneuvering, suspended its eight unions on August 5, 1936, for "dual unionism and insurrection" against the A.F. of L. . . .

Lewis, apparently taking it for granted that the organizational work had to be done outside of direct contact with the Green reactionaries, made no determined fight to maintain affiliation with the A.F. of L. On this tactical question the Communists disagreed with him. The Communists believed that inasmuch as Lewis had 40 per cent of the A.F. of L. unions behind him and a vast following among the rest of the labor movement, it would have been possible for him to beat the Green machine by a resolute fight. . . .

### *Building The C.I.O.*

The building of the C.I.O. unions was the greatest stride forward ever made by the American labor movement. It changed the whole situation of the trade unions and brought the working class to new high levels of industrial and political strength and maturing. In this

historic movement the Communist Party played a vital indispensable role. It acted truly as the vanguard of the working class.

The steel workers were ripe for organization. Many were paid as little as \$560 per year, as against a \$1,500 standard cost-of-living budget; and long hours and tyranny prevailed in the shops. The workers were inspired by the world-wide proletarian fighting spirit of the period. So the organizing work was immediately successful. By the end of 1938 the S.W.O.C., [Steel Workers Organizing Committee] which had virtually swallowed the old, fossilized Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, had 150 local unions with 100,000 members.

Meanwhile, dramatic and decisive events were also happening in the automobile industry. The United Automobile Workers, which had been formed by the A.F. of L. but later joined the C.I.O., succeeded in building, by December 1936, an organization of about 30,000 members. Demanding an agreement with the General Motors Corp. and being refused, the workers, whose earnings then averaged but \$20 per week, began to strike — in Atlanta and Cleveland. Finally, by January 1937, 51,000 were on strike, and they tied up 60 G.M. plants in 14 states, employing some 140,000 workers.

The center and decisive point of the strike was in the major G.M. plant in Flint, Michigan, the heart of this great industrial empire. There the workers, patterning their actions after a strike of rubber workers in Akron a few months earlier, and in line with workers' experience in France and Italy, occupied the plants. It was a "sit-down strike." The workers barricaded themselves in the workshops, set up a military-like discipline, beat off all armed attempts of company gunmen and police to recapture the plants, and threatened to resist with every means any attempt of the state militia to dislodge them, as the company was demanding from the governor. The solidarity of the workers was unbreakable, and after 44 days of struggle the great \$1.5 billion General Motors Corp. capitulated, recognizing the union and granting substantial improvements in wages, hours, and working conditions.

The G.M. strike, particularly in its key Flint section, was one of the most strategically decisive strikes in American labor history. It made the first real breakthrough for the C.I.O. into territory of open shop monopoly capital, and its effective sit-down tactics were a tremendous inspiration to the entire working class. The other C.I.O. campaigns thereafter went like wildfire with the sit-down tactic being used successfully in many places. On March 8th, some 63,000 workers of the big Chrysler Corp. won victory after a short struggle. Then, indeed,

the unionization of the auto industry proceeded with great strides.

In steel also, dramatic success was being achieved. On March 2, 1937, the country was amazed by the announcement of an agreement between the S.W.O.C. and the United States Steel Corp., covering some 240,000 workers in its basic plants. The agreement established the eight-hour day and 40-hour week, provided for a 10-cent hourly wage increase, and for grievance committees, seniority, and other improvements. At long last, after nearly half a century of struggle, the unions had finally blasted their way solidly into the greatest open shop fortress of them all, Big Steel.

These decisive successes in steel and auto, the heart of basic industry, did not, however, complete the organization of these two great industries. "Little Steel" — the Bethlehem, Inland, Republic, and Youngstown companies — held out and with traditional violence, in May 1937, smashed the strike of 75,000 of their workers. In the infamous Memorial Day massacre in Chicago 10 picketing workers were killed and over 100 wounded by the police. In auto also, the great Ford empire managed to resist the current groundswell of unionization. But both Ford and Little Steel, within the next four years, finally had to submit to the organization of their workers.

In the meantime, militant and successful organizing campaigns were proceeding in various other industries — radio and electrical, maritime, metal mining, textile, lumber, transport, shoe, meatpacking, leather, rubber, aluminum, and glass, among white collar workers, etc. — but a description of all these campaigns would pass beyond the scope of this outline. Suffice it to say that by the end of 1940 the C.I.O. unions encompassed some four million workers, a growth of over three million in four years. By the time of World War II it began to be an unqualified success, the heart of trustified industry was unionized. . . .

#### *The Role of the Communist Party*

The Communist Party fully supported the C.I.O. program of establishing new industrial unions in the basic, unorganized industries. Although the C.I.O. was split off from the A.F. of L., the Party in no sense identified this broad independent mass movement with the narrow Left-wing dual unionism which the Party had long opposed — despite certain deviations of its own during the T.U.U.L. period. The traditional Left dual unionism had the effect of withdrawing the militant elements from the unions and isolating them from the general labor movement in small unions, but nothing like this took place with the founding of the C.I.O. On the contrary, the C.I.O. was in every sense a broad mass movement. . . .

The Communists were well fitted to play their vital part in the C.I.O. drive. For years they had paid major attention to the question of organizing the basic industries, and they had assembled vast practical experience, as well as many mass contacts. They had conducted innumerable T.U.E.L. and T.U.U.L. strikes and Unemployed Council and Workers Alliance activities in many heavy trustified industrial centers. The Communist Party, with its system of shop groups and shop papers, also had valuable connections among the most militant workers in many open shop industries. The Left-wing had hosts of other such contacts in these plants through the various Negro, foreign-born, and other mass organizations in which it had an important influence. All of these connections the Party set in motion when the great organizing drive got under way. The 15-year struggle of the Party in the basic industries trained thousands of fighters, who later formed the very foundations of the C.I.O.

These basic contributions of the Communists to the building of the C.I.O. are now conveniently ignored or denied by the present Right-wing leadership. But occasionally some credit is given our Party. Thus Alinsky, in his "unauthorized" biography of John L. Lewis, which was written in close collaboration with the latter, says of the role of the Communists in building the C.I.O.: "Then, as is now commonly known, the Communists worked indefatigably, with no job being too menial or unimportant. They literally poured themselves completely into their assignments. The Communist Party gave its complete support to the C.I.O. . . . The fact is that the Communist Party made a major contribution in the organization of the unorganized for the C.I.O."\*

John L. Lewis, Sidney Hillman, and their co-workers were apparently convinced of the value of Communist cooperation, because from the outset the organizing work and the leading of innumerable victorious strikes were done by a combination of the Left-Center forces — that is, Lewis, Hillman, the Communists, and other progressives. This working combination although largely informal while Lewis remained president of the C.I.O. (up to the end of 1940) was a matter of common knowledge. . . . Practically everywhere, therefore, Communists became active and effective members of the big organizing crews. With the accession of Philip Murray to the presidency of the C.I.O., the Left-Center bloc was, for some years, even more definitely consolidated, and it became virtually a working alliance. The C.I.O. could not have succeeded upon any other basis.

\* Saul Alinsky, *John L. Lewis*, New York, 1949, p. 153.

The Communists worked very diligently to build and strengthen the Left-Center bloc. They refrained from grabbing for office in the new unions, and they gave unselfishly of themselves in the organizing work. As an example of the Party's cooperative spirit, in 1939 it liquidated its system of trade union fractions and shop papers. The Party's trade union fractions—educational groups of Communists in the local unions — were dissolved to end all fears that they were formed for the purpose of controlling the unions. The Party's shop papers, which had performed invaluable services in the initial stages of the C.I.O. campaigns, were also given up for the same general reasons.

It was this Left-Center bloc, the working combination of progressives and Left-wingers (mainly Communists), that carried through successfully the great organizing campaigns and strikes which unionized the basic industries and established the C.I.O. It was also this combination, throughout the ten years it lasted, that made the C.I.O. the leading section of the the American trade union movement and a constructive force among the organized unions of the world. . . .

The Communists are almost everywhere playing an important role in helping to forge victory for the striking workers, a victory in which the future of the whole labor movement and of all progressive America is involved. Those Communists belonging to unions directly involved in the strike struggles are, as was to be expected, in the forefront of the struggle on the picket lines, in helping to unify the workers, in relief activity, in the mobilization of mass support to their unions. In those areas and industries where the Communists are more numerous among the workers, or even if few in numbers have established themselves among the workers on the basis of their union activity, it is almost universally true that the strike struggles are better organized and a greater section of the workers is being involved. In such cases, mass picketing is more quickly developed and company provocations more easily met. . . .

Jack Stachel, *Political Affairs*, March, 1946

# Americans Defend the Spanish Republic

*The Communists of the United States may well be proud of the active part they took in the gallant defense of the Spanish Republic. It constituted the most glorious event in the entire life of the Party.*

William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States.*

Most of us who lived through the days of Republican Spain are alive and kicking and can tell how countless thousands came of age, politically, in that time and why they regard it as the most meaningful period of their lives.

The time has a transcendent moral for our day—the lesson of international fraternity. A world of people felt kin to the embattled Spaniards typefied by Pasionaria, Dolores Ibarruri, who said “It is better to die on your feet than live on your knees. No pasaran!” They shall not pass!

What man did in response to that outcry remains an index to their lives, for it is generally recognized that morally, Republican Spain, under the bombs of fascism, was the conscience of the world. Politically, we did not exaggerate when we said that the outcome of that bloody struggle (1,000,000 died) would determine whether there would be World War II. Nobody could reject the justice of the slogan we remember so well: “Madrid Shall Be the Tomb of Fascism.” That it did not become that is the fault of the Western bourgeois democracies—ours in the first place. Our government sealed the doom of the Republic when it refused aid and clamped an embargo on Spain’s right to buy arms.

The governments of the democracies allowed Hitler Germany and Mussolini Italy to intervene so massively against the Republic with arms and men that the conflict soon came to be called an invasion rather than a civil war. Called that by the world’s plain people, but their governments—with the exception of the governments of the

U.S.S.R. and Mexico—maintained the fiction that it was a civil war. The so-called Non-Intervention Committee they set up put the stamp of approval on a monstrous treason, the betrayal of a democracy, by closing up the borders of Republican Spain. Whatever aid came to the Republic from democrats throughout the world had to worm its way in as contraband—whereas the fascist importation of Messerschmitts, Capronis, Condors, tanks, ammunition, and armies of men by the hundreds of thousands to Franco’s cause was open, cynical, bestial.

The vast fascist intervention was, of course, designed to overthrow Spain’s Popular Front government—El Frente Popular—an unprecedentedly comprehensive and heroic effort of people of various classes (minus monarchists and monopolists) to stand together against a common foe—fascism. For nearly three years it held against terrible odds, held, in great part, because the Communists of that country inspired tremendous effort and sacrifice by their selfless example, giving themselves up to the national good.

## *The Movement to Aid Spain*

Communists all over the world, and we in the U.S.A., played our proud part, labored endlessly to mobilize all strata to come to the aid of the Republic: Pasionaria wrote of the time in her autobiography, saying, “not for one moment, then or now, have we underestimated the historic and revolutionary importance of the democratic bourgeoisie in the popular resistance of fascism.”

“No strike is ever lost,” Carl Sandburg wrote, and though the Republic went down, the mass relationships it built up around the world, the universal loathing of fascism it engendered, left an indelible mark on the time’s history.

One may doubt whether the United States could have achieved the degree of national unity it required to combat Hitler Germany in World War II were it not for the enlightening experience of having supported Republican Spain against fascism. The majority of our people, engaged in their historic counter-attack against the national hunger of the economic crisis, favored a victory over Franco. But that condition did not arise automatically. Truth about the war was necessary, action on behalf of that truth was imperative, and these factors were built up by dint of countless thousands of actions, resolutions, articles, organized endeavors in all fields. All this was sparked by the daily crusading of the *Daily Worker*, and its parent, the Communist Party.

The peak of this national effort was found in the enlistment

of more than three thousand Americans into the International Brigades, via the Abraham Lincoln and George Washington Battalions. They fought in the most bitterly contested battles and sustained losses higher than the bloodiest battles of World War I. About half the number of those who crossed the Pyrenees into Spain are part of the Spanish soil today. They came in response to the call of the Spanish government to counter the relentless influx of fascist forces into the combat. The Communist Party here played the major part in mobilizing the volunteers, in fact, an immense number of the volunteers were members of the Young Communist League or the Party itself. Many others came from the trade union movement, and also from the universities.

Their example enlightened liberal bourgeois components of our population, gave them heart and purpose. Spokesmen of this stratum were men like the accomplished journalist Herbert L. Matthews of the *New York Times*, men like Jay Allen of the *Chicago Tribune*, the writers Vincent Sheean, Dorothy Parker and numerous others. Take the example of Ernest Hemingway. It has been said that his greatest work, both as reporter, and more as novelist, was evoked by the Spanish people's heroism, and the national pride he, Matthews and others felt in the performance of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. I have good reason to believe that, for I knew both men in that war.

### *Hemingway's Tribute*

There is a unique sense of optimism in man's fate, and yes, of man's invincibility Hemingway revealed in the tribute he paid the volunteers in his famous elegy he sent the Marxist *New Masses* of February 14, 1939, "On the American Dead in Spain."

I believe that elegy can bear full reproduction in this article, for it, more than anything else written, reveals what the world felt about these Americans, so many of them Communists, and reflects how mankind regarded the International Brigades, headed as they were by Communists.

Remember, Hemingway, in much of his writings, is possessed by a sense of tragedy, that man is inevitably bound for defeat. In this piece he sees man as immortal through the works he does for his fellow-man. Here he came to see eye to eye with Communists, even though consciously, he never identified himself with Marxism-Leninism. He was typical of so many in that time. Here is the full quotation:

The dead sleep cold in Spain tonight. Snow blows through the

olive groves, sifting against the tree roots. Snow drifts cover the mounds with the small headboards. (When there was time for headboards.) The olive trees are thin in the cold wind because their lower branches were once cut to cover tanks, and the dead sleep cold in the small hill above the Jarama River. It was cold that February when they died there and since then the dead have not noticed the changes of the seasons.

It is two years now since the Lincoln Battalion held for four and a half months along the heights of the Jarama, and the first American dead have been a part of the earth of Spain for a long time now.

The dead sleep cold in Spain tonight and they will sleep cold all this winter as the earth sleeps with them. But in the spring the rain will come to make the earth kind again. The wind will blow soft over the hill from the south. The black trees will come to life with small green leaves, and there will be blossoms on the apple trees along the Jarama River. This spring the dead will feel the earth beginning to live again.

For our dead are a part of the earth of Spain now and the earth of Spain can never die. Each winter it will seem to die and each spring it will come alive again. Our dead will live with it forever.

Just as the earth can never die, neither will those who have ever been free return to slavery. The peasants who work the earth where our dead lie know what these dead died for. There was time during the war for them to learn these things, and there is forever for them to remember them in.

Our dead live in the hearts and the minds of the Spanish peasants, of the Spanish workers, of all the good simple honest people who believed in and fought for the Spanish Republic. And as long as all our dead live in the Spanish earth, and they will live as long as the earth lives, no system of tyranny will ever prevail in Spain.

The fascist may spread over the land, blasting their way with weight of metal brought from other countries. They may advance aided by traitors and by cowards. They may destroy cities and villages and try to hold the people in slavery. But you cannot hold any people in slavery.

The Spanish people will rise again as they have always risen before against tyranny.

The dead do not need to rise. They are a part of the earth now and the earth can never be conquered. For the earth endureth forever. It will outlive all systems of tyranny.

Those who have entered it honorably, and no men ever entered earth more honorably than those who died in Spain, already have achieved immortality.

We recognize that most of the present generation has been deprived of the truth about Spain and it would be well to supply the necessary background.

### *The Threat of Fascism Grows*

By the close of the twenties, fascism threatened to take over in most western countries. The world economic crisis had struck like a global hurricane—only socialist Russia was exempt. Fascist demagoguery could be heard in many tongues (Mussolini already had power in Italy, since 1922), in France, in Spain, in Britain, in central Europe, and in our own country. Hitler snatched power in 1933, just about the time Franklin D. Roosevelt became president. The fascist dictator crushed the Communists and the trade unions first, then in rapid order, the Jews, the liberals, all dissenters to whatever degree. Then he set about to conquer Europe—and then, the world, no less. *Duetschland Ueber Alles* . . . the Horst Wessel Song.

Fascism's tentacles were everywhere. France was threatened by the Croix du Feu and other similar organizations; England, by the Blackshirts of Oswald Moseley; in the U.S. we saw the Brownshirts, the Silver Shirts, the Black Legion, the KKK, then the Liberty League—and General Smedley Butler, high officer in the U.S. Marines, was approached by millionaires to lead a man-on-horseback march on Washington.

In Spain, reaction had mobilized to regain power after King Alfonso, the Bcurbon, was dethroned in 1931. In 1934, thousands of Asturian coal miners were massacred. Evidence exists that Nazi Berlin was already sounding out individuals among the reactionaries of Spain.

Undoubtedly, fascist Germany represented the greatest menace to the world. Dimitrov, in his report to the 7th World Congress of the Communist International, defined it as the naked dictatorship of the most brutal, most chauvinist, most aggressive sectors of monopoly capitalism.

German capitalism, under the Kaiser, had been defeated in World War I, and now Hitler fascism had bulled through to power by the aid of the biggest German monopolies—I. G. Farben, the Deutschebank, Krupps—all of them supported by Wall Street that wanted a spearhead pointed toward the socialist Soviet Union.

Hitler Germany initiated a program to recover its full military might and vied immediately with France and Great Britain for European hegemony. There were plenty of open, and many more

of concealed, partners of Hitler in the western bourgeois democracies who felt a solidarity with him. Had he not solved the labor question at home? Was he not the most aggressive of all anti-Soviets?

The Nazis formed the Anti-Komintern Pact with Italy and Mitsubishi Japan. Thus Hitlerism gained adherents in topflight circles in all capitalist countries—the Cliveden Set in Britain, the Liberty League and other Right-wing formations in the United States.

World tension grew. The Axis powers withdrew from the League of Nations as they rattled the sabre.

The U.S.S.R. took the lead to halt it. Maxim Litvinoff, Soviet spokesman at the League of Nations, expounded the doctrine of "collective security" to restrain Hitlerism. Repeatedly he called on the non-fascist powers to band together in a world peace front. Just as repeatedly he was rebuffed.

### *Communists and the Popular Front*

In 1935, the Communist International met in Moscow at the Seventh World Congress. There it developed the famous policy of the anti-fascist people's front. Instances of the urgent need for that policy were indicated by developments in France and Spain. Major sectors of the populace were alarmed by the peril of fascist domination. The Popular Front was conceived as a combination of all democratic strata—workers, farmers, intellectuals, small merchants, Communists, Socialists, Catholics and others—all who were willing to stand side by side against fascism and war.

Foster tells in his *History* how in February, 1936, "the workers of France led an offensive of the broad democratic forces that smashed the domestic drive of the French fascists for power, launched a vast sit-down strike movement, increased the membership of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) from 900,000 to four million members, and that of the Communist Party from 40,000 to 270,000. They elected a modified form of a people's front government in France."

Similar developments were taking place simultaneously on the other side of the Pyrenees. On February 16, 1936, the Spanish People's Front triumphed in the elections. The Left got 268 members in the parliamentary Cortes as against 205 for the reactionaries.

As always the moneyed classes refused to abide by democratic verdicts. So, on July 17, 1936, Franco led a revolt in Morocco, aided by Hitler and Mussolini money, military guidance and force.

The social-democratic prime minister of Spain, Largo Caballero,

confused and vacillating, failed to react with vigor; the revolt gained ground rapidly.

Who alive today can forget the role of the Communists everywhere—and here in the United States. We sounded the alarm from the very first moment, and mobilized all lovers of freedom and peace. The *Daily Worker* said, July 20, 1936, in a double, eight-column headline: "Spain Arms Labor to Crush Fascism; New Left Government Acts in Crisis." The subheads read: "Combat Squads Are Formed; Navy Loyal to Popular Front." And below that: "Workers' Revolutionary Committee Begins Distribution of Arms."

Every day of the war similar treatment of all news and feature articles from Spain, and on world developments on behalf of Spain. The foreign editor, Harry Gannes wrote in that first issue announcing the fascist uprising, that the Loyalists had adopted the slogan "Victory or Death." Later I was to encounter virtually that same slogan in Cuba: "Patria o Muerto—Venceremos" (Fatherland or Death—We Shall Conquer).

From the first day the *Worker* warned its readers of Spain's enemies here at home; they were the people's enemies everywhere. Two days after the fascists struck, the leading *Worker* editorial was bannered: "Hearst Raises Cry for Support of Fascist Terrorists in Spain." The subhead read: "His Choice In Keeping with his Sponsorship of Republican-Liberty League Combination in America."

### *The Nature of Fascism*

The Communist Party, U.S.A. taught countless thousands the nature of fascism, how it arose, whom it threatened. It proposed programs to defeat it, and worked tirelessly to achieve the projected goals. It spelled out Lenin's teachings that the capitalists rule by terror or by guile, using the one or the other, or both simultaneously, when it suited them best. It exposed the international ties of fascism; that it threatened democracy in all capitalist countries; that its first target was the labor movement. Its primary weapon was anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism. Building them up falsely as a bugaboo (Hitler's Big Lie), fascism cut down its opponents one by one. First it atomized its opponents on the basis of anti-Communism, then it crushed them.

The Communist Party in the United States set its sights on the Liberty League and similar formations of the Big Bourgeoisie. The election campaign of 1936 was on in full force; the question of Roosevelt and the New Deal was up for debate. The Republicans chose a Kansas reactionary—Alf Landon—as presidential candidate.

The American Communists showed the connection between the most dangerous sectors of U.S. capitalism with the fascists of Spain. History has amply demonstrated who was right in that time. Roosevelt won by a landslide.

An editorial in *The Communist* for December, 1936, said in part:

The overwhelming sweep against reaction creates favorable conditions for the advance of the forces of progress and peace, against the forces of fascism and war. Now is the time to build a genuine people's movement for peace . . . it showed that large sections of the American people are in sympathy with the struggles of the Spanish people to maintain their democracy. It showed that the American people will respond to a positive approach on the part of the Administration to cooperate with the forces of democracy throughout the world, and assist the friendly democratic Spanish government. The international significance of the election lies in the rebuke given by the American people to Hearst and other reactionaries who try to throw the United States on the side of fascism and the warmakers.

I went to Spain for the *Daily Worker* in 1937, and stayed there as its war correspondent for a year and a half. I saw the love of the Spanish people for the International Brigades, their feeling towards the American volunteers—the Abraham Lincoln and the George Washington Battalions.

### *Black and White Americans Fight for Spain*

The presence of our boys convinced the Spanish republicans that our people, at grass-roots, did not oppose them, that the arms embargo was the fault of monopoly power. They understood that. They saw our 3,500 boys come, get a few days of military training, and rush into crucial battles. They saw hundreds of black Americans among the volunteers; they saw some of the finest men America had produced die trying to halt fascism.

We were part of the great international tide that swept toward Republican Spain. Volunteers came from some 55 countries—from all continents and from all races. We held with Premier Joseph Stalin, of the U.S.S.R., when he said: "Spain is the cause of all progressive mankind." We saw that the U.S.S.R., of all the world powers, aided in whatever way she could, sent whatever could get through. Spain was far away at that time. Transport was hard to manage. Mussolini's pirate submarines patrolled the coast, torpedoed the big Soviet freighter, *Komsomol*. The Nazi Messerschmitts patrolled the skies; the Social-Democratic prime minister of France, Leon Blum, set up



non-intervention guards at the Pyrenees to prevent any help from going through.

The Soviet Union tried the impossible. Her best sons came to Spain. In Madrid, I saw Soviet fighter planes that managed to get there, shoot the Messerschmitts out of the skies, these aerial murderers who had had it all their own way, bombing men, women and children on schedule, three times a day, coming as regularly as the milk train, to kill.

Yet Spain held against the torrent of steel for three long years. The Spanish Communists played the decisive part in the resistance. Its policy of unabating support for the Popular Front, its stellar performance on the battlefield and the defense of Madrid from the outset, brought its ranks from less than 30,000 when the war started, to over 300,000 at its end.

Our Party established the warmest fraternal ties with the Spanish Party. Our leaders were frequently sent by our membership to speak to the people and the troops—and did so. We were central among the many U.S. forces helping to create moral and political support for Spain. Our members in the trade unions, in the political and cultural fields, stimulated the sending of delegations to go to the Spanish fronts. Many went to Spain, not only writers like Dorothy Parker, Lillian Hellman, young Jim Lardner (who enlisted) and many others, but more significantly, trade unionists from the newly-formed CIO came to see their members who had volunteered and fought in the ranks.

I remember meeting such heroic figures in Spain as Paul Robeson who sang to the troops at the front. Films were made that reached millions at home, like "Spanish Earth," with script by Hemingway and camera work by the eminent movie man, Joris Ivens of Holland.

Our comrades were among the leading figures on the weekly cultural magazine *New Masses* that played an honorable part in mustering support for the Republic. Hemingway appeared in *New Masses'* pages, Vincent Sheean, Dorothy Parker, Lillian Hellman, Dr. J.B.S. Haldane, Franz Boaz, Sir Stafford Cripps, Martin Anderson Nexø, Erskine Caldwell, Albert Maltz, Norman Rosten, Millen Brand and innumerable others of the arts and sciences, here and abroad, all came together in our pages for the cause of Spain.

Inspiring work was done by medical volunteers, headed by the great Dr. Edward K. Barsky, top-flight figures like Dr. Leo Eloesser of San Francisco, and other physicians. Nurses volunteered who did their noble work at the front as well. Who can forget the ardent

work of such an organization as the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy?

Great rallies for Spain were held at innumerable centers—from trade union halls to Madison Square Garden—not to speak of the tens of thousands in plain people's living rooms.

Everywhere the Communists explained the facts about Spain. Our press carried first-hand material day after day, week after week. Scores of pamphlets, published in huge editions, told the story of Spain. Our speakers brought the truth to factory gates, to trade unions, to the campus, to the communities. Veterans who returned spoke everywhere and were celebrated figures wherever they went. Millions became convinced we were right. Despite the unalterable opposition of the Catholic hierarchy to the Republican cause, Gallop showed that more than half of the lay Catholics polled, favored the Popular Front government.

#### *U.S. Government Fails to Lift Embargo*

Tragically, despite all this pressure, the Roosevelt Administration did not lift the embargo—it considered the countervailing forces too powerful, the Catholic hierarchy, for example, that had so strong an influence on such labor leaders as Philip Murray of the CIO, etc. (Roosevelt later admitted that his failure to lift the embargo was the greatest error his administration made.)

Enemies of Republican Spain conspired at the very top, in the State Department, to scuttle every effort made by anybody in the government or elsewhere to come to the aid of Republican Spain.

How right we, the Communists were; how criminally wrong our opponents were is amply proven in the testimony of Claude Bowers, U.S. Ambassador to Spain throughout the war. Consider his revelations in the concluding chapter of his autobiographical book, *My Mission to Spain*. He says, in part:

1) That after the first days of considerable confusion, it was plainly shown to be a war of the fascist and Axis powers against the democratic institutions of Spain.

2) That the Spanish war was the beginning of a perfectly thought-out plan for the extermination of democracy in Europe, and the beginning of a second World War with that as the intent.

3) That the Non-Intervention Committee was a shameless sham, cynically dishonest, in that Germany and Italy were constantly sending soldiers, planes, tanks, artillery and ammunition into Spain without interference or real protest from the signatories of the pact.

4) That Germany and Italy were using Spanish towns and people for experimental purposes in trying out their new methods of destruction and their new techniques of terrorism.

So he goes for many more points, saying at the conclusion that he had warned "long before Munich, that the next attack would be on Czechoslovakia."

He ends sadly:

I had informed Washington that our interests, ideologically, commercially and industrially, were bound up with those of democracy in Spain, whose government was recognized as the legal constitutional government, and that the victory of Franco would be a danger to the United States. . . .

With these views constantly sent to the State Department for more than two years I never received any comment from the Department. Now we know that there was a cleavage there even in the highest strata.

Now here is the Ambassador, an able, knowledgeable man admitting in 1945 what we had been saying to one and all throughout the war from 1936 to 1939. Had our counsel been heeded, and that of the great numbers who came to believe as we did, World War II could have been avoided. Madrid *could* have been the tomb of fascism.

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And yet, and yet, as Sandburg said: "No strike is ever lost." Our work, the sacrifices of our volunteers, the work and the will of millions in the United States was not in vain. Far from it. As I said earlier what we did in those years helped create the climate that permitted the establishment of the anti-Hitler coalition during the World War II years. Had that unity failed to materialize the Liberty Leaguers, the Hitler-lovers in this country might have carried the day.

Plenty of forces in the U.S.A. wanted to help Hitler, high-placed forces indeed. Had unity failed to materialize, our participation in the war could have been very different, to the enormous detriment of the world anti-Hitler coalition. Much might have turned out otherwise.

Therefore, we may well glory in the work our members, their sons in the International Brigades, and millions of Americans did in that time. Little wonder William Z. Foster called it the "most glorious chapter" in our Party's history.

## Observations on Struggles in the South

I cannot enjoy this day without looking back at the rough roads that I have traveled in life, particularly the roads that I have traveled in the South.

First there were the struggles in the early thirties to free the nine Scottsboro Boys, who were framed by the Alabama officials in 1931, on the charge of raping two white girls while riding a freight train in Paint Rock, Alabama. These nine boys were defended by the International Labor Defense and the Communist Party from the early period after the first frame-up trial until they all were free.

Nor can I forget the tough struggles of the unemployed black and white coal miners of Birmingham, Alabama and the South at large for relief to the unemployed masses in the rough years of the depression in the thirties — the struggles of the Alabama sharecroppers and tenant farmers in Camp Hill, Reiltown and Selma in 1931-35. They fought for the right to sell their farm products, for the 8-hour day instead of working from sunup until sundown in the hot summer days for 35 cents a day for children and 50 to 60 cents for grown-up people.

Nor can I forget the great struggles of the coal miners, ore miners and steel workers to build their unions in the early years of the Roosevelt period, in and around Birmingham. In those periods these workers would be driven off the street corners by the police of Birmingham and by the company dicks if white and Negro were found standing talking together, and arrested if they were found meeting in a hall or private home together.

I must especially point out the role that was played by the Southern Negro Youth Congress. It was organized in Richmond, Virginia in 1937, and led by black and white youth from all parts of the South, including the District of Columbia. There were chapters of this youth organization on many college campuses throughout the South.

The second conference of the SNYC was held in Chattanooga, Tennessee in April, 1938. At that conference Edward E. Strong was elected president, and it was voted that the next national conference be held in Birmingham, Alabama in 1939. It was also voted that the head-

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These observations were made by the author on the occasion of his 70th birthday last year. They represent reflections on 36 years of work in the South as a black Communist activist and leader, as a fearless fighter for freedom and progress under the most difficult of conditions.—*Editors*

quarters be moved to Birmingham. This was done, and the headquarters were set up in the Negro Masonic Temple on North 4th Avenue and 17th Street, where they remained until 1948.

This youth organization had a militant program for tackling the many burning problems of the Negro and white youth of the South, which served as its guide through all the years of its existence. It included the follow demands:

1. Equalization of education for the black youth in the South as compared with the white youth.
2. Parks and recreation centers for the black youth.
3. Abolition of the poll tax.
4. For securing to the Negro people the right to vote and the right to be elected to public office and to serve on juries.
5. Making lynching a federal crime.
6. An end to police brutality against the black people and labor.
7. No discrimination because of creed, color, or political affiliation.
8. The right to organize without intimidation by police terror.
9. The right to jobs at union wages and of unemployment benefits for the youth.

These were some of the many demands for whose achievement the Congress led the youth in struggle in the South under the leadership of Edward Strong, James Jackson, Esther Cooper Jackson, Louis Burnham, Henry O. Mayfield and others in this period of 11 years of united actions of black and white.

John L. Lewis, who was president of the CIO in those early years of SNYC, gave his support to this organization of black youth. Mrs. Roosevelt also lent her support to SNYC in its early years.

Some of the union locals in the South gave monthly financial support to SNYC. H. O. Mayfield, a Negro coal miner, was in charge of classes on labor history that were taught by SNYC Sunday afternoons to the black and white coal miners and steel workers. Those classes and discussions on the history of organized labor were very popular among the union members. Some of the SNYC meetings were held in the union halls of the CIO.

Black and white delegates were elected from the union locals of the CIO to attend the Southwide conferences of the SNYC.

In the early period of World War II, when President Roosevelt took the side of Britain and France in the period of the "phony war," the National Youth Congress mobilized in Washington, D.C. against the United States getting involved in that war for the conquest of markets in Europe. White and black union local members of SNYC attended that Youth Congress, financed by their locals. It was reported by some

of the Birmingham delegates that the President appeared on the balcony of the White House and told these thousands of young people, who were standing in the rain, that they should be at home, that they did not know what they were doing. He said he hoped that they could find some dry clothing and went back into the White House.

That afternoon, it was reported by some of the mine union delegates who were there, that John L. Lewis met with the youth and told them: "Your President did listen to what you had to say to him. You have a right to speak out in protest against this war. Go back to your homes and redouble this protest against your government's involvement in this war."

During the latter part of World War II, in 1944 or 1945, the Southern Negro Youth Congress held its Southwide conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The headquarters of SNYC was then in the USO center located on West Hunter Street. Some of the workshops were held in the same college halls where the Reverend Martin Luther King's funeral was held. Some of the discussions in those panels dealt with the same goals that the Reverend King gave his life trying to bring into being. Reverend King was a teen-age boy in Atlanta at that time.

Some real achievements for the Negroes in the South were made under the leadership of SNYC. Skilled jobs were won by black workers in some of the shipyards in Mobile, Alabama, in the Beckman McComb aircraft plant in North Birmingham, Alabama, and in the Bell aircraft plant in Marietta, Georgia. New public school buildings were constructed for black children in some sections of the South, and many other concessions were won.

The youth today, I am sure, would want to know just what happened with the SNYC and Negro-white unity. I will go into it briefly. When John L. Lewis resigned as president of the CIO after the membership did not support his endorsement of the Republican candidate Wendell Willkie in the presidential election of 1940, he began to raid other CIO unions, particularly in Alabama. For this purpose he used District 50, a catch-all section of the United Mine Workers. This began to wreck the militant programs of all the unions, including the coal miners. It opened up the gates for the Right-wing elements throughout the CIO, and politically to the KKK elements in the unions in the South, who were always against black and white unity, and were always against all Negroes who spoke out against their racist oppression.

With these new attacks, the militant black people and their white allies found it more and more difficult to cope with the onslaught in the CIO unions by these anti-unity elements who were out to destroy the black and white unity that had been built. The attack was carried

out by smearing these militant union members, by calling the whites Negro-lovers, and calling some of the Negroes who would not give in to them Communists. The SNYC was branded a Communist-front organization. In the South many of the black leaders never did support SNYC, just as some of them have since tried to work against Reverend King and the civil rights movement in the South.

But let no one fail to understand what the major difference was between the eleven-years' struggle of the SNYC and the following thirteen years of the civil rights struggle. SNYC was a new, militant organization that came on the scene in the South, with a program that shook the Southern ruling class and the KKK elements in their boots. At the same time it created mountains of problems for the old-line misleaders that had been bedded among the Negro masses for years. This created a rough road for SNYC to travel in seeking to unite the broad masses of Negroes and whites. Many black leaders would raise such questions as: who pays these young black people who have college scholarships but who are instead devoting their time to work in the SNYC headquarters without pay?

SNYC was able to check on the various companies in many sections of the South that had contracts with the government but were not carrying out the executive orders of the Fair Employment Practices Committee, which was supposed to see to the carrying out of Roosevelt's executive order, designed to give all workers a fair chance to exercise their skills to help win the war. This order was issued by Roosevelt in early 1941. But as late as April, 1942, these Southern companies had done nothing to comply with it by upgrading the Negro workers to skilled jobs in their plants.

Thanks to the work put forth by SNYC in getting out the facts about the noncompliance of these companies, the FEPC called a hearing in Birmingham in April, 1942. Several companies were summoned to appear before the committee and tell why they had not complied with the order. After that hearing, black workers were upgraded to skilled jobs in many plants in the South. Many of these jobs went to young black workers — jobs that black workers had never had a chance to work on before in history.

After that victory for the black youth, SNYC was branded as a Communist-front organization by the political rulers of the South and their supporters among the Negro people, and plans were laid first to break up the unity that had been built between the black and white workers. This was achieved through a wholesale red-baiting drive against SNYC and its leaders on the part of the KKK elements among white workers as well as certain elements among Negroes.

That was why SNYC was not able in the period of the thirties and forties to mobilize the hundreds of thousands that were mobilized in the civil rights actions in the South in the thirteen years. since the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. And the young Negro and white leaders of these later struggles in the South, and in the country as a whole today, must also understand that there are thousands of middle-aged people taking an active part in these struggles today who began to see the light of hope in those earlier struggles.

I want to point out to the young black and white leaders of the struggles today that the beginnings were made in those early years of struggle — first around the Scottboro Boys, and around the right of the sharecroppers and tenant farmers, the coal miners, the ore miners and the steel workers to organize unions of their choice; and later around the Southern Negro Youth Congress with all workers and friends taking an active part regardless of their color, their birth, or their religious or political beliefs. It was these struggles that first uprooted the old hangovers of slave oppression of the Negro people, and of labor in general in the South, and particularly in Birmingham, Alabama, and that raised the hopes of the black people throughout the South. This was the foundation of hope that the civil rights movement had on hand to build upon, under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King and his corps of leaders in the later period.

Reverend King, like the leaders in these earlier struggles, was sometimes railed and rocked by the blows that were hurled against him and by the allegations of the witch-hunters and red-baiters; but he was able to lead the Negro freedom forces to another new stage of advance toward full liberation and the right to self-determination of the black people.

It is my firm belief that the leaders in this new freedom drive today, young and old, black and white, must recognize at all times the important role that must be played by the united action of black and white working and struggling together around a basic program that will serve the needs of all the oppressed people in this nation. For the same monster of exploitation of man by man holds its iron heel on the necks of both Negroes and whites—with the Negroes pressed to the bottom by this oppression.

The oppressed white working masses, must be taught in struggle that to gain their freedom, they must unite with the black people and struggle with them to free both from this present society of half-free and half-slave.

At present there are some leaders among the black people who preach separation of the black and white masses. These people tell

the black youth that we must have a part of the U.S.A. to ourselves, separate from white Americans. To some black people this sounds very good. But these leaders should explain for us the following:

1. If the part of the South, that some of these people have suggested be given to us, has grown up into bushes and forests since the black people have moved out in their majority from this area, how and where will we get the tools and supplies to rebuild that area into shape fit for the black people to live in.

2. Since it is the big financial kings of Wall Street that own all of the basic wealth of the country and since they seek to protect their wealth and their interests, not those of the Negroes and poor whites, how will the Negroes be able to utilize the natural resources in the earth of the South for improving the conditions of the black masses.

3. To whom will we turn for the technical help, for the training of our youth to become scientific masters and highly skilled members of this Negro nation?

These are just a few of the many questions that must be answered. I hold that the answers can and will be found only in the united struggles and actions of the black people and their allies among the white working masses.

Therefore I feel that in this new and third stage of the black liberation struggle, these ideas and preachings of separation of the blacks from the whites serve only the purpose of confusion among black and white and make unnecessary problems on this road which we all must travel if we all are ever to be free in this country.

What is needed today is a program that will meet the needs of today—a program that all people can unite on and work to change this mass of confusion, regardless of their color, their religion or political beliefs, so long as they work to carry out this program. The basic industrial workers, who are at the kernel of production in this country, white and black, must be a central part of the leadership in this great task—not just the top labor leaders, or the students and professional people. It is the black and white rank-and-file workers in the mills, mines and factories of this country who have the know-how and the power to get things done. Their experience must be utilized in this great struggle today!

## Communists in World War II

The roots of World War II lie in the deepening general crisis of capitalism — the overall crisis of the system itself, which began with the breakaway from that system of Soviet Russia in 1917. They lie in particular, in the rise of fascism, especially of aggressive Nazism in the early thirties.

The pre-war decade was one of immense, turbulent struggles around the great questions which ultimately shaped the course of the war. Among the chief features of the early years of that decade were:

1. The Soviet Union was in the midst of its first five year plan, laying the foundations for a powerful socialist industry. News that its planned economy had eliminated unemployment was having a radicalizing effect on masses in the capitalist world, then in the throes of a prolonged, deep-going economic crisis.

2. The Nazis came to power in Germany, crushing the German Communist Party, the trade unions, all people's opposition and all bourgeois-democratic liberties with them, signaling a drive of German finance capital for world domination, for a redivision of the world by forceable means. Emboldened by the rise of Hitler, fascist Mussolini took the road to war. And the militarists took power in Japan, proclaiming as their goal the establishment of an "East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere" by force of arms.

Communists all over the world, recognizing fascism to be the rule of the most powerful, most reactionary, racist and predatory sections of monopoly capital, warned that the rise to power of the Nazis and Japanese militarists created an imminent danger of war.

The historic 7th World Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow in 1935, reflecting the identity of views of all the Communist parties, laid down a policy of united struggle of all peoples against the fascist aggressors. The celebrated report to that Congress, "The United Front Against Fascism," delivered by George Dimitrov, hero of the Reichstag Fire Trial, is a classic widely read and studied to this day.

The Soviet Union, in advance of this Congress, had called for a policy of collective security — the concerted action of Britain, France, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. — against the fascist instigators of war. This call found a warm response among the peoples in the capitalist

countries; it contributed, among other things, to U.S. diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union.

A great anti-fascist movement arose in all countries, uniting the most diverse non-fascist and anti-fascist forces. The policy of the Western bourgeois governments toward these movements was either to try to ignore them or to seek to manipulate them for their own imperialist aims.

### *The Fight Against Fascism and War*

The leading role played by Communists everywhere, including the United States, in developing the united front in action against fascism and imperialist war is an epic meriting a book in itself. Here we can but outline some of the outstanding struggles and movements in which the Communist Party and the Young Communist League played decisive roles. Among these great movements, often involving tens and hundreds of thousands of people in street actions and in political and electoral struggles, were:

The movement in support of Ethiopia against fascist Mussolini's invasion.

The movement in support of China against invasion by militarist Japan, a movement in which tens of thousands demanded a halt to the shipment of scrap iron and war material to Japan and boycott of Japanese goods.

The heroic struggles of the Spanish Republic against Franco's fascist insurrection, in which thousands of American Communists and other anti-fascists served in the famed Lincoln and other battalions of the International Brigade, many giving their lives, and in which a massive campaign was conducted against the Roosevelt government's policy of "non-intervention" and its embargo on arm shipments to the Loyalist government.

Great, united movements of the American people arose in the struggle to halt the fascist aggressors and prevent the outbreak of a world war. Especially notable were the League Against War and Fascism (later to become the League for Peace and Democracy) and the American Youth Congress. The activity of such movements, in which Communists were acknowledged leading forces, helped clarify the great world and national issues for large sections of the public and helped prepare the climate and conditions which later finally determined the overall role of the U.S. in the Second World War.

Throughout these prewar years, the forces of peace and democracy had to wage a ceaseless struggle against the forces of appeasement in the U.S., against those in the ruling class and their representatives in

government who, like Minister Chamberlain of Britain, gave in to Hitler's aggression and sought to push him into war against the U.S.S.R.

One cannot understand certain key events of the immediate prewar period, such as the betrayal of Czechoslovakia at Munich, and the role of various governments in relation to it, without understanding the policy of appeasement of Hitler and the effort to drive him eastward.

The Soviet Union, consistently pursuing its policy of seeking collective action against fascist aggression, had declared again and again its readiness to come to the aid of Czechoslovakia under the terms of their mutual assistance treaties. Ignoring these treaties themselves, the Western imperialists continued to throw one small country after another to the Hitler wolves, hoping this bloody trail would lead to Moscow.

When the U.S.S.R. refused to be a cat's paw in this suicidal game, Right-wing social democrats and erstwhile liberals went into a frenzied rage against the Soviet Union and the Communists, all but forgetting the complicity and responsibility of their own imperialist governments for the appeasement policy.

It would be useful, therefore, to recall the words of a capitalist spokesman, Hugh S. Johnson, who had been a leading figure in the Roosevelt administration, spoken one year before World War II started. He said:

There is only one comforting thought in the whole dark future — Hitler, at least, seems to be headed in the other direction — toward the East and away from Britain, France, and eventually us. His "only friend," Mussolini, threatens English and French possessions in the Mediterranean, but his position and arms are weak, compared with Hitler's possible push to the East.

If Hitler continues his charted course as advertised, sooner or later he must collide with Russia and perhaps even with his "only friend." It might possibly be that the salvation of the democracies will be the tactics of the Chicago police when ganghood was in flower, to let the mobsters kill each other off. It saved trouble and expense and juice for the electric chair. And it was much more effective than police intervention in ridding the world of rats. (*New York World Telegram*, October 11, 1938.)

It was against such thinking and policies that American anti-fascists and Communists had to fight, as the fires of the Second World War spread across continents, soon to involve the United States itself.

World War II was a supreme test between the best and the worst

that mankind had produced, as expressed in the policies and courses of action of states, classes and parties. That the outcome was a victory for socialism and democracy is, of course, a matter of history. But the anti-fascist character of the war was not fully established as its dominant feature until June 22, 1941, when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union.

Before that, the course of the war was fraught with serious dangers of conversion of what started as an inter-imperialist war into a war against the first land of socialism.

### *U.S. Communists in Anti-Fascist War*

Along with Communists the world over, American Communists were in the forefront of the military, political and economic struggle to defeat the Axis. Fifteen thousand men and women members of the CPUSA and the YCL entered the armed forces and carried on in true Communist fashion, with courage and devotion. Over 30 per cent of the leadership from club level upward had taken up arms within nine months after the Pearl Harbor attack. Many never returned, among them Hank Forbes, district secretary of Pittsburgh, and Captains Alexander Suer and Herman Boettcher. Robert Thompson, along with Suer and Boettcher, received the Distinguished Service Cross for personal bravery.

Not all Communists had the opportunity to serve at the battlefield. Many were detained in military camps, or shipped off to isolated overseas bases, and many were denied promotions, reflecting conflicting policies toward the Communists on the part of the military.

On the home front, too, Communists were in the van of every attempt to strengthen the national war effort. They fought for a firm and consistent anti-fascist policy by the government; they led in the struggle for all-out war production; they were militant participants in all phases of civilian defense work; and they ceaselessly battled all "isolationists" and other reactionary compromisers and saboteurs.

Communist women distinguished themselves on all fronts during the war: in the armed forces, in the battle for production, in community defense work, and especially in taking over a large share of leadership in the Party in the absence of many men leaders at the fighting fronts.

But in the United States, the political influence of the defeatist pro-Hitler sections of the ruling class had not been smashed and routed. They continued to hold strong positions of power throughout the war, which carried over into the postwar period. And the debilitating Browder revisionism had a paralyzing effect on the CPUSA.

### *Phony Stage of the War*

For years, certain liberals and Right-wing social democrats have peddled a completely distorted picture of the development of the war up to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the effect of which was to obscure the machinations of the pro-Hitler forces, within the governments of the United States and Great Britain, to transform the war into a general capitalist assault on the Soviet Union.

When, following the Munich betrayal of Czechoslovakia by Chamberlain and Daladier, the U.S.S.R. concluded a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany and thereby frustrated the plot for a united capitalist attack upon itself, the liberals and Right-wing social democrats sent up a howl of rage alongside of which their demurrers against Munich sounded like the purr of a kitten. In their frenzy they equated the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany, dreamed up all kinds of "Nazi-Soviet plots" and pressed a growing campaign against the Communist Party, to which the Roosevelt Administration responded with arrests and prosecutions of a number of Communist leaders.

Having been forwarned by the Munich betrayal that England and France would not honor their pledge to come to Poland's defense, the Soviet Union was prepared to act alone to defend its security when Hitler attacked Poland on September 1, 1939, starting the Second World War. It quickly moved its Red Army divisions up to the Curzon line, which had been marked out by a League of Nations commission many years before as the proper border between The U.S.S.R. and Poland. It occupied the Western Ukraine Byelorussia (forcibly torn away in 1920 by the Polish militarism), blocking further eastward progress of the Nazi hordes. It sealed off their advance into the Baltic countries, the peoples of which took advantage of the new situation to rid themselves of their pro-Nazi governments and voted affiliation with the U.S.S.R.

As the Communists had foreseen, Britain and France betrayed their pledges to defend Poland. A period set in which quickly came to be known as the "phony war." Having built up Nazi Germany in expectation that it would attack the Soviet Union, the Western capitalist powers were horrified by the halt of the Nazi troops at the Curzon line. They found themselves with an unwanted war, the "wrong" war, one that was pointed more and more against themselves.

The "phony war" saw neither side make a military move against the other, while intense political and diplomatic maneuvers were waged to gain advantage one over the other in the impending attack on the

U.S.S.R. The imperialist contradictions between the two sides prevented their unity at the time.

Recognizing the situation for what it was, the National Committee of the CPUSA, meeting in Chicago on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the Party in that city (on September 1, the very day of Hitler's attack on Poland), called on the U.S. government to join "with the U.S.S.R. on behalf of peace, on behalf of the national independence of Poland and for a peace policy which would prevent new Munich betrayals." On September 19, it stated further: "The war that has broken out in Europe is the Second Imperialist War. The ruling capitalist and landlord classes of all the belligerent countries are equally guilty for the war. . . . It is not a war against fascism, not a war to protect small nations from aggression, not a war with any of the character of a just war, not a war that workers can or should support. It is a war between rival imperialisms for world domination."

The CPUSA called for all-out support to China and to all oppressed peoples in their struggle against fascism, for freedom and national independence. It urged a "Democratic Alliance of workers, toiling farmers and middle classes against the economic royalists and the imperialist warmakers." (Foster, *History of the CPUSA*, p. 387.)

The danger of U.S. military involvement against the Soviet Union was indeed real, as we shall see. American Communists fought the tide with might and main raising the slogans: "Keep America Out of the Imperialist War!" and "The Yanks Are Not Coming!"

In this, the Communists were by no means alone. The AFL declared: ". . . We demand that it [the U.S.] stay out of the European conflict." The CIO stated: "Labor wants no war nor any part of war." The National Farmers Union, the American Farm Bureau, the National Grange, the National Negro Congress, the American League for Peace and Democracy, the American Youth Congress and many others all went on record against U.S. participation in the war.

#### *Soviet Union Acts to Halt Provocations*

When the Finnish-Soviet war broke out on November 30, 1939, the liberal and Right-wing social-democratic camp completely ignored the fact that the Finnish government was headed by the fascist butcher and ex-Czarist, General Mannerheim. It ignored the fact that he was allied with Hitler and that Nazi forces were in Finland to help him open that sector of the Soviet border to the Nazi advance. Instead, it raged against "Soviet aggression against poor little Finland" and demanded that the U.S. come to Finland's aid.

Basically, the Finnish incursions against Soviet borders, which led

to the war, were provocations engineered by the British and French ruling classes to turn the war against the U.S.S.R. Roosevelt declared a "moral embargo" against the U.S.S.R., provided Mannerheim with a \$10,000,000 loan and supported the expulsion of the Soviet Union from the League of Nations. The pro-Mannerheim incitement in the U.S. led the press to print fantastic lies to the effect that 100 Soviet soldiers were being killed for every Finnish soldier killed.

Fed by this incitement, and with reaction smelling the chance to switch the "wrong" war to the "right war" against the U.S.S.R., a great clamor went up to send military aid to Finland. At the end of 1939, and in early 1940, a number of journals openly predicted that by the summer of 1940 the U.S. would be involved in war against the Soviet Union. These hopes and predictions were rendered vain when the Soviet armies smashed the "impregnable" Mannerheim Line and brought the war to an end, 15 weeks after it started.

The stopping of the Hitler hordes at the Curzon Line in Poland and the smashing of the Hitler-Mannerheim Northern salient by the Red Army were the two events of that period most misrepresented and lied about by the Hitler-lovers and Soviet-haters. But they were actually the two most important single factors in determining the future course of the war as a people's war against fascism. In these actions, the appeasement-minded Cliveden Set in England and the America First copperhead crowd in the United States, which wielded powerful influence in both governments, received their biggest setbacks.

For the first time, doubts began to develop about the invincibility of Nazism and the push-over the U.S.S.R. was falsely reputed to be. When, in September, 1940, Germany, Japan and Italy signed a military, political and economic alliance in Berlin (the Axis pact), even the *New York Daily News*, which had been a front-runner in the pro-Hitler, anti-Soviet drive, was constrained to editorialize: "We believe that the best thing that this country could do would be to get on better terms with the Russians."

A strong agitation arose for better relations between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. The American Communists, who had long campaigned for a world united front, inclusive of the USA and the U.S.S.R., against fascism, signaled a new turn in the course of the war. In a speech in Chicago on October 13, 1940, William Z. Foster called for a "people's policy in U.S.-Soviet relations" aimed at collective action to end Nazi aggression and restore peace. (*The Communist*, November, 1940.)

#### *U.S. Pro-Fascist Camp in Action*

The profascist forces in the U.S. stepped up their drive to align



the country with Hitler. In the spring of 1940, they formed the America First Committee, the closest thing to an open fascist party in the country until then. Among its leading lights were General Robert E. Wood of Sears, Roebuck, part of the *Chicago Tribune* cabal, Henry Ford and other leading capitalists and public figures. It claimed 15 million adherents, had public headquarters throughout the country and commanded a vast propaganda machine. While the Committee dissolved after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the forces which composed it continued to pursue its aims throughout the war and into the post-war years.

Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 transformed the course and direction of the war, bringing fully into dominance its people's, anti-fascist, national-liberation character. The anti-fascist stand of the Communist parties, the working class and the trade unions in practically all countries, was a powerful material force with which the capitalist governments had to reckon. They could not now pursue their anti-Soviet policies, by openly allying themselves with Hitler, without running the risk of dire consequences to themselves.

Believing that the U.S.S.R. would fall quick victim to the might of Hitler (now reinforced by the human and material forces of nearly all of the rest of Europe), the U.S. and British governments at last chose the course of aligning themselves with the U.S.S.R. Churchill stated that "any man or state who fights Nazism will have our aid." Roosevelt announced that the Soviet Union would receive lend-lease military assistance.

But the two imperialist powers did not overcome their anti-Soviet hatred so readily. Throughout the war, the policy of letting Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union bleed each other to death, lurked in the background and influenced many actions of the Atlantic partners, the most notorious of which was the long failure to open a second front in Europe.

On June 29, 1941, Herbert Hoover declared over NGC there would be "no possibility of bringing the war to conclusion except by a compromise peace" with Hitler against the U.S.S.R. (Foster, *History of the CPUSA*, p. 408.) The *New York Times* and Arthur Krock campaigned against aid to the Soviet Union on the amazing grounds that opposition to such aid in the U.S. was an insurmountable obstacle. Norman Thomas, who had spoken from an America First Committee platform, advocated a policy of letting Hitler and Stalin fight it out. And John L. Lewis, the most powerful figure in the labor movement, openly associated himself with the forces of appeasement of Hitler in a speech on August 5,

The Communist Party of the United States declared: "Defend America by giving full aid to the Soviet Union, Great Britain and all nations who fight against Hitler." And it called "for full and unlimited collaboration of the U.S., Great Britain and the Soviet Union to bring about the military defeat of Hitler." (*The Communist*, August, 1941.)

The Pearl Harbor attack by Japan caught the American government and most Americans completely by surprise. It completely shattered the hopes of the America Firsters, the erstwhile liberals and Right-wing social democrats for open military involvement of the U.S. against the Soviet Union. The sneak attack came as no surprise to American Communists. The National Committee was concluding a several-day session on December 7, 1941, when news of the attack came. Said William Z. Foster in his concluding remarks to the meeting that day:

As we, members of the National Committee and guests, are about to depart to our respective homes from this historic plenum, it is necessary that a few words be said about the effects upon the life of our Party by Japan's unprovoked war attack upon the United States this afternoon. At the outset let me say that we are not taken by surprise by this brutal aggression. Our long insistence that the United States was in urgent danger of fascist assault has been dramatically verified. For months we have been forecasting Japan's attack, and in the report of Comrade [Robert] Minor and others to this plenum its imminence was clearly foreseen. (*The Communist*, December, 1941.)

#### *Mobilizing People for Axis Defeat*

The Communist Party set to work to mobilize the people for the military defeat of the Axis powers. Its task was complex in the extreme. Most capitalists placed profits ahead of patriotism. The pro-Hitler, anti-Soviet forces were still powerful. Attorney-General Francis Biddle had been waging a persecution campaign against Communists and against progressive labor and public officials like Harry Bridges and Congressman Vito Marcantonio of New York. A. A. Berle and other copperheads were tolerated in the State Department and other branches of government. A number of coalition mass movements, such as the American League for Peace and Democracy and the American Youth Congress, unable to withstand the accumulated pressures of the attacks upon them, and incapable of shifting position as the character of the war changed, folded up. John L. Lewis looked upon the war as a favorable opportunity for strikes and let loose a number of anti-Soviet and red-baiting blasts, in some of which he was

seconded by Philip Murray, his successor as head of the CIO.

Of all the organized political parties in the country, the Communist Party was virtually alone in sizing up what had to be done and in elaborating comprehensive policies for all fronts to meet the country's war needs.

To be sure, the labor movement, in its overwhelming majority, was anti-fascist and officially on record for all-out war against the Axis powers. Foremost in this respect were the Left-led unions. But they were a minority and their ability to influence the labor movement as a whole was consequently limited. The anti-Soviet, pro-Hitler influence of Right-wing social democrats and Hitler appeasers was still predominant in many union leaderships. It was in such conditions that the Party undertook to help forge national unity for victory over the Axis.

The foremost political battle was the fight to open the second front in Europe. The Japanese militarist attack was seized upon by the pro-Hitlerites to shift attention from Europe to the Pacific, to delay the Western Front against Hitler.

After Pearl Harbor, Eugene Dennis wrote:

Some people think that the Japanese attack in the Pacific precludes all such possibilities [of opening a new front in Europe]. But this is not so. The treacherous attack of Japanese imperialism against our country . . . has made it even more necessary for us to hasten the defeat of Hitler Germany. . . . (*The Communist*, January, 1942.)

The Party waged a relentless struggle for opening the second front. Gradually, the demand for the second front was taken up by sections of the labor and people's movements.

#### *Battle for Production*

In the battle for production, the Party early put forward a program to speed the war effort and enhanced national unity while safeguarding the interests of the working class. As early as September, 1941, before Pearl Harbor, the Party, over the signatures of William Z. Foster and Robert Minor (Earl Browder was then in jail on charges of passport violation), put forward a correct class approach calling for maximum production on the basis of the following:

1. full enlightenment of the working masses on the issues to raise morale;
2. insuring a degree of well-being for workers commensurate with the country's resources;
3. safeguarding the right of organization;

4. measures against war profiteering, inflation and for a tax policy based on ability to pay;

5. real labor representation on all bodies that have to do with national unity. (*The Communist*, October, 1941.)

These policies were elaborated in a major editorial, "The Battle of Production" in the same issue of *The Communist*. Subsequently articles developed concrete programs and policies for the auto, steel and other industries.

The Party advanced a 10-point program for jobs for Negroes (Theodore Bassett, *The Communist*, September, 1941), and demanded enforcement of the 14th Amendment and repeal of the poll tax as means of strengthening the war effort. It waged a struggle against efforts of Trotskyites, and a black separatist movement sponsored by the Japanese imperialists, to pit "all people of color" against whites. It fought for unity of black and white to win the war. It put forward a 9-point program to advance the cause of Negro freedom in the fight for national unity against Hitlerism (James W. Ford, *The Communist*, September, 1941) and later an 11-point program for the mobilization of black manpower for victory.

Important gains were made by black workers in securing jobs in industry, but they were far from what was needed. The Party fought, although unsuccessfully, to win the labor movement to a policy of super seniority for Negro workers, thereby laying down a principle which underlies many demands of the present-day freedom movement.

#### *Consequences of Browder-Revisionism*

The release of Earl Browder from prison by Presidential commutation "in the interests of national unity" brought back into active leadership a man with tremendous prestige. At the same time it opened up a process whereby Browder led the Party from class positions through positions of "classlessness" to the brink of class-collaboration policies.

Where Foster and others in the national leadership advocated a full comprehensive wage policy (raising the basic wage rates and cost-of-living wage increases as well as increases based on productivity), Browder tied wages solely to productivity, opposing cost-of-living increases.

In a speech in New York, on May 14, 1943, Browder said: "Let us face it. Do we think we're going to win this war without any kind of burdens, without any sacrifices? We certainly are not. And the problems are going to get worse. Do you think we're going to

solve these problems with a slogan of 'equality of sacrifice'? We know very well that the bourgeoisie never has agreed to any equality of sacrifice and never will. The point is this is our war. If we don't determine to win it, it isn't going to be won. That is the only question and that is the only answer." (*The Communist*, June, 1943.) Thus Browder saw no role for the working class, other than to provide the work-horses and bear all the sacrifices.

This approach led to sacrifice and neglect of the interests and concerns of the workers and other sections of the American people, a shameful case in point being the forced relocation of Japanese-Americans from the West Coast to inland concentration camps, against which the Party failed to raise its voice.

Most costly of all was the growing inability of the Party effectively to mobilize and lead working masses in struggle against the defeatist and appeaser sections of the bourgeoisie, as a consequence of which they were never routed from public life and office and stayed around to help launch the cold war.

The question of mass struggle of the working people for consistent win-the-war, anti-fascist policies was not one that could be answered solely by firm adherence to the no-strike pledge, made by all organized labor and supported by the Party. To be sure, the voluntary no-strike pledge accorded with the sentiment of the majority of the workers, which was borne out by the great reduction in number and duration of strikes during the war.

The working class and the Negro people had need for other ways to express their views on problems facing them and the nation, which the labor leadership was ill-equipped to provide. Above all, the working class needed a united labor movement, organically and politically. Foster constantly pointed to the need for unions to become political, to cope with questions of foreign policy, financing the war, regulating prices and profits. "Questions of wages, hours and working conditions are also becoming constantly more political in character and are increasingly the concern of government. . . . During the recent years, American labor has grown up organizationally; now it must become adult politically," Foster wrote (*The Communist*, January, 1942). Foster, who even before Pearl Harbor had warned against a classless labor policy (*The Communist*, November, 1941) consistently fought for an independent class position of struggle, the sharp edge of which was to be directed at the America First, Hitler-loving capitalists.

Browder, busy spinning plans and schemes for a centralized war economy as the cure-all for *all* problems, had no ideas or proposals

for the independent political mobilization of labor and the people. His postwar vision of class peace and an "orderly" resolution of conflict between classes, led to policies during the war which could only result in tailing after the bourgeoisie and collaborating with it. From this position there quite logically followed the dissolution of shop and industrial organizations of the Communist Party, the negation of independent class positions and the dissolution of the Party itself into the amorphous Communist Political Association.

Fortunately, there was sufficient working-class strength in the Communist Party, and enough of a Marxist-Leninist cadre left, to rally around Foster and his co-workers. With the fraternal help of the brother parties, notably the celebrated Duclos article in the French Communist press, Browder's views were rejected and the Communist Party restored.

Despite the serious damage inflicted on the Party during the war by Browder revisionism, its working-class base and staunch Marxist-Leninist cadre enabled it to play a tremendous role in World War II, a role which is a glorious chapter in its history and one attained in extremely difficult conditions of persecution, harassment, slander and attack from many quarters. Through their courage and heroism, their sacrifice and devotion on the fighting fronts and on the home front, American Communists became even more integrally a part of the blood, bone and sinew of our great people.

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The ideological battles dealing with the status of black citizens in the United States are growing in intensity. The attacks of the racists have become fiercer. They see the inevitability of defeat in the rise of a morality that measures social worth in terms of contributions to growth and progress and not to color. They see their defeat in the monumental struggles by black youth who, on a nationwide basis, are carrying forward the heroic liberation-struggle traditions of their forefathers. But above all, the racists realize, that a guarantor of their defeat lies in the emergence into struggle of white men, women and youth, who recognize the menace of white chauvinism and the murderous deeds of force and violence which is its constant companion, and who, in their own interests, join up with the black fighters in the struggle for equality. . . .

William L. Patterson, *Political Affairs*, November, 1968

## Champion Fighter for Negro Rights

White chauvinism is an integral part of monopoly oppression of the Negro people. A whole host of bourgeois reformist, Social-Democratic, and outright fascist propagandists and government officials have long poisoned the atmosphere of our country with the racist "theory" of the "inherent inferiority" of Negroes.

The chauvinistic doctrine of white "superiority," designed to block the path of struggle for Negro rights and full emancipation, is as old as the American nation itself. This pernicious ideology has been systematically used by the white ruling class to divide exploited and oppressed masses, Negro and white, in order to weaken their forces and block the progress of their struggle against the common oppressor. Today, notwithstanding their claims about "defending democracy," the American monopolies, faced with growing mass opposition at home and abroad to their imperialist offensive for world domination, are fanning with unprecedented intensity sentiments of extreme chauvinist nationalism. This wave of chauvinism is directed especially against Negroes at home, and against the working classes and peoples throughout the world. . . .

At the time of the American Revolution, there was as yet no modern American working class capable of waging independent struggles for its own demands or for Negro rights. Indeed, a modern working class of sufficient numbers and strength did not arise in the United States until after the Civil War, although the northern workers played an important role in the military defeat of the Southern slavocracy. As Karl Marx wrote:

In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded. (*Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 329.)

Here, with startling clarity, Marx foresaw the Negro question in the United States as a special question of utmost significance to the working class in its immediate and basic struggles, and of utmost importance for the democratic development of the whole country. It is a historical fact that since that time the Negro people have

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These are excerpts taken from an article in *Political Affairs*, June, 1949. Author was Vice Presidential candidate of the Communist Party in 1932, 1936, and 1940. James W. Ford died June 27, 1957.

been a source of great strength to the democratic forces within our country and to the whole working class. That is why the capitalist rulers of our country have found it so profitable to fan white chauvinist sentiments and to strive to break, in every possible way, the developing alliance of the working class and the Negro people. That is why Marxist-Leninists have stressed for so long the vital importance for the white working class and all progressive forces, as well as for the Negro people, of the struggle to root out and destroy white chauvinism and to build a powerful alliance between labor and the Negro people.

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The history of the American Communist Party has proved the correctness of the views of Marxism-Leninism. By its unceasing struggles, our Party, founded in 1919, has made tremendous contributions not only to the winning of significant working-class victories of great immediate and long range interest, but also, immeasurably, to advancing the national liberation struggles of the Negro people.

Our Party, from its birth, has been the first and only political party to fight, in the North and in the South for the unconditional equality of the Negro people and for their full emancipation. . . .

Opportunist Social-Democracy flouted the miseries, sufferings, and revolutionary potentialities of the impoverished and cruelly oppressed Negro masses. Prior to the founding of the Communist Party, radical working-class groups in general—Socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, and dissident elements in the Socialist Labor Party—while claiming adherence to working-class internationalism and some even to Marxism, maintained erroneous views on the Negro question. They admitted the abusive nature of the capitalist system, and that Negroes were robbed and oppressed with special intensity. But admitting all this, they refrained from struggling for the *special* demands of the doubly-oppressed Negroes and particularly of Negro workers. They made fine speeches and verbal protests about the position of Negroes, but yielded in varying degrees to the bourgeois ideology of white "superiority." . . .

Nor was it an accident that the true policy of Social-Democracy began to show itself most openly after World War I, when the hunger program of Wall Street opened with an offensive against the labor movement and a drive to prevent the organization of the basic industries, to cut wages, unleash terror against the progressive forces, suppress the political rights of the workers, and violently intimidate and repress the Negro people. . . .

The Compers-Hillquit leadership in the trade unions and in the Socialist Party served as a transmission belt of white chauvinism from the monopolists to the labor movement. They alleged that Negroes were "strikebreakers" and that white workers would not join them in struggle or permit them to enter industry or the trade unions. As a reaction to this, the Negro petty bourgeoisie spread distrust of the labor movement among Negroes; they said that the white working class would never be the ally of the Negro people.

Both groups hindered the developing of working-class unity. Negro workers suffered all the miseries of the working class, and in addition, special, national oppression—jim-crow discrimination and segregation, and lynch terror. It was the Communist Party which sounded the warning that if labor failed to gain the confidence of the Negroes it would lose a valuable and indispensable ally in the struggle against capital while, at the same time, Negro workers would not be able to win full and equal rights to jobs and working conditions.

Only by waging an ideological struggle against the pro-imperialist views in general of the Social-Democratic and reformist leaders, and more particularly in regard to the problems of the Negro masses, was the Communist Party able to clear the path for working-class unity of white workers and the emerging Negro proletariat. By its struggles against white chauvinism and for Negro rights, our Party began to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence between Negro and white workers. Our Party began to popularize the statement of Marx that no nation can be free that enslaves another nation.

Our Party pointed out that although the influx of Negro workers in the northern industrial centers had provided the basis for a mass unionization of Negro industrial workers, the anti-Negro policy of the labor officialdom stood in the way of organizing these industrial workers. At its 1922 convention, the Party adopted a program calling for full support to the struggles of the Negro people for economic, political and social equality; for a struggle against white chauvinism; and for solid union in struggle against the common capitalist oppressors. The Party pointed out that precisely in those industries (such as steel) and in those areas (the South) where chauvinism was the strongest and where Negro oppression was the sharpest, the conditions of the white workers were the most degrading. The systematic exclusion of Negro workers from the trade unions stood in the way of organizing the mass-production industries. To support the Negro liberation movement, not in words alone, but with deeds, and to build a genuine solidarity of Negro and white work-

ers—this was the approach of our Party.

To carry out this program, an early task of the Party was to struggle against white chauvinism in its own ranks. Party members who were found to be affected by the poison of white chauvinism were educated on the nature and purpose of this bourgeois ideology, and those who persisted in their chauvinist views or practices were expelled. This policy won for the Party staunch supporters among the Negro people and among the best elements of the working class. . . .

In 1924, the Communists took part in the "race conference" of Negroes known as the "Negro Sanhedrin" which was held in Chicago. The conference was called by petty-bourgeois fraternal and other Negro organizations. Through its delegates, our Party submitted an extensive labor program which, however, was rejected by the petty-bourgeois elements. The potentially powerful revolutionary sentiment among the Negro people was in the early 1920's largely under the influence of petty-bourgeois utopianism, which diverted the attention of Negroes away from decisive struggle against the monopolist oppressors into channels of reformism, philanthropy, "return to Africa" movements, etc. In their servile acceptance of the imperialist theories of Negro "inferiority," "imitativeness," and "servility," certain Negro petty-bourgeois leaders denied the leading role of Negro workers in resisting imperialist terror and oppression and the possibility of common struggle of Negro and white workers against capital. They even went so far as to peddle the shameless slander that "Negroes [meaning themselves] consider themselves too dependent upon white America [meaning the white ruling class] to take any chance at losing the crusts thrown to them. . . ." They set themselves against the Communist policy of militant struggle, claiming that "every Negro knows that what he has obtained from white men has been through diplomacy." They held that resistance by Negroes would do "damage to race relations."

But by their action, which was discussed in the Negro press, the Communists succeeded in boldly presenting the Party's stand on the pressing labor and broad issues facing the Negroes and in laying the basis for further extending the idea of labor organization among them.

. . . At its Fourth National Convention, held in Chicago in 1924, the Party worked out a concrete program for abolition of all discriminatory practices against unorganized Negro workers, and for their organization in the same unions with white workers on the basis of complete equality of membership, equality of the right to

employment in all branches of industry, and equal pay for equal work. All slogans of equality which were current among the Negro masses and which expressed their aspirations for equal rights in social, political, and economic life were placed among the demands of the Communist Party: "for political equality, the right to vote, social equality, "economic" equality, abolition of jim-crow laws and also jim-crow customs not written into law, the right to serve on juries, the abolition of segregation in schools and the right of Negro teachers to teach in all schools; equal rights of soldiers and sailors in the army and navy without segregation (hotels, theaters, restaurants, etc.), and the abolition of all anti-intermarriage laws." (Resolution of the Fourth National Convention of the Communist Party.)

Our Party took up the struggle to organize Negro farm laborers, tenants, and sharecroppers (together with oppressed white farmers) and strove to bring such organizations into the stream of the general labor movement.

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The Communist Party's aim, always in the interest of working-class internationalism and of the liberation of the Negro people, was to imbue the Negro workers with class consciousness, to help them assume their historic place of leadership in the Negro liberation movement, and to crystalize their class consciousness into independent political action, with the white workers, against capitalist exploitation.

An instrument for advancing this struggle in the trade union movement was the Trade Union Educational League (T.U.E.L.) organized in 1921 and led by William Z. Foster, present Chairman of the Communist Party, and subsequently the Trade Union Unity League (T.U.U.L.), also led by Comrade Foster. The T.U.U.L. became the champion of Negro rights and the promoter of the struggle in the trade union against the white chauvinist Gompers bureaucracy. This fight was illuminated by the significant experiences which our Comrade Foster had gained in his work with Negro workers during the great steel strike of 1919 under his leadership, and during the Chicago packinghouse strike of 1922. . . .

The establishment of the C.I.O. in 1936 came after almost two decades of struggle led by the Communists and Left-wing trade unionists against the anti-Negro policy in the labor movement, particularly in the A. F. of L.

The toughest task which faced the unions that formed the C.I.O.

was organizing the Negro workers in non-discriminatory and unsegregated unions. The present leaders of the C.I.O. well know this. Mr. Philip Murray in particular knows this. It was the problem of organizing the politically and industrially disfranchised Negroes who, said the Communists, must be accorded the same social, political and industrial rights as white workers, the right to work in all trades, wage equality and admission to all unions on an equal basis. The steel, automobile, maritime, and other unions of workers in basic industry would have never been successfully organized, had they not tackled and solved the problem of discrimination in unions and on jobs. The successful creation of the C.I.O., based on the fight against Negro discrimination led by the Communists over a period of more than a decade and a half, also had its influence in the A. F. of L. As a result, there are today nearly two million Negro workers in the organized labor movement, as compared to practically none thirty years ago. Thus, the charge of reactionary Social-Democratic and other chauvinist trade-union leaders that Negroes were "strikebreakers" and that white workers "would not join with them" was shattered. . . .

The heroic struggles of the sharecroppers' union organized by Communists in Alabama in the early thirties electrified the South and had its repercussions throughout the land. The struggle of the sharecroppers' union at Camp Hill, Alabama, prevented the landlords from cutting off food supplies of tenants and stood off the terror of the Alabama landowners. During the years of the "Great Depression," Negro and white farmers and city dwellers, led by Communists, fought together against evictions and for unemployment relief. Some of these battles were furious and bitter. In Chicago, Cleveland and other major cities, powerful struggles were put up against evictions; in some cases, because of the brutality of the police, workers paid with their lives. Abe Gray was killed by police in Chicago, and soon afterward John Rayford was murdered by Cleveland police at an eviction protest demonstration. Ralph Gray, Negro sharecropper of Camp Hill, heroically gave his life in the fight of the starving croppers for bread.

At Gastonia, North Carolina, Negro and white textile workers led by Communists successfully organized into a textile workers union, and, for the first time in the South, white and Negro workers jointly waged a dramatic struggle in a major industry.

In all these struggles, the Negro question began to loom more and more as a special question. The Communist Party, through its own experiences in leading mass struggles, acquired a clearer under-

standing of the Negro question as a national question. By the firmer mastery of Marxist-Leninist theory, the Party came to a fuller scientific understanding of the Negro question in the U.S.A. as a national question.

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Broader experience and understanding was gained, for example, in the struggle for the freedom of Angelo Herndon, who was convicted by a Georgia court to twenty years on the chain-gang for his part in the leadership of impoverished Negro and white farmers struggling against unemployment and for relief in Atlanta, Georgia. It was gained in the defense of Orphan Jones (Maryland), Willie Patterson (Birmingham), Willie Brown (Philadelphia), and in the defense of literally hundreds of other victims of frame-ups and of attempted legal lynching of Negroes.

The crowning struggle was the epic fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys. This struggle reached international proportions. This was not only a battle to save the lives of nine Negro victims of lynch "justice." Through the effective leadership of the Party, that fight was transformed into a flaming symbol of the struggle against the oppression of an entire people based on the plantation system of the South and the survivals of slavery. The Scottsboro struggle exposed jim-crow, segregation, the ruined position of the Negroes in the lynch-ridden South, the impoverishment of the Negro middle class, the discrimination against Negroes in industry, as flowing from one and the same source, namely, the national oppression of the Negro people. . . .

Our Party was able to register these achievements because it understood that only by the cementing of a firm alliance between the working class and the doubly-oppressed Negro people can the democratic forces withstand and defeat the war-and-fascism offensives of the imperialists; that such an alliance is imperative for achieving the liberation of the Negro people from the yoke of national oppression; and that such an alliance, founded on the unshakable unity of the Negro and white proletariat, is imperative for the qualitative advance of the historic struggle to abolish capitalist exploitation and oppression, and establish socialism. Our Party won for itself the place of champion fighter for the liberation of the Negro people because it translated this understanding into daily struggle for the immediate needs of the Negro people and because it undertook earnest struggles against the cancerous ruling-class ideology of white chauvinism. . . .

## The Essence of Browder-Revisionism

The Browder-revisionist emasculation of Marxism-Leninism, presented under the guise of developing a "creative and non-dogmatic" analysis of what was alleged to be a completely new and "unprecedented situation," influenced the work and life of the Communist Party for a number of years. While the seeds of revisionism had been planted prior to the outbreak of World War II, they began to sprout during the war, reaching full bloom in Browder's misreading of the significance of the Teheran Conference of the Big Three—Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin—which took place November 28-December 1, 1943.

Earl Browder, who headed the Communist Party for fifteen years, had enormous prestige within and outside the Party's ranks. Yet, it took but a few short months of intense and unhampered discussion of the policies he projected for the overwhelming majority of the leadership and membership to free itself from the quagmire of Right opportunism in which those policies had landed the Party. It met the ideological crisis without a prolonged inner struggle which might have split the organization.

An article by the French Communist leader, Jacques Duclos, in the April, 1945 issue of *Cahiers du Communisme*, which detailed what the author called "a notorious revisionism of Marxism on the part of Browder and his supporters," triggered a deep-going re-examination of the Party's thought and action of that period. Duclos' article, received in this country on May 20, 1945, together with a letter sent to the National Committee by William Z. Foster, dated January 20, 1944 (the existence of which was not known to the membership, nor to a significant section of the leadership)—challenging Browder's position—served as the basis for convening a meeting of the National Committee on June 18-20, 1945. This gathering unanimously rejected the revisionist policies advocated by Browder and recommended his removal from all posts of leadership. A special Party convention held a month later, July 24-26, confirmed—with the sole exception of Browder himself—the stand of the National Committee and adopted the political resolution on the issues which had been placed before the convention.

This clear repudiation of Browder-revisionism was possible, first of all, because of the inner health of the Party. What was decisive, how-

ever, was the fact that the inexorable realities of world developments had already begun to expose the illusory conclusions Browder had drawn from the Teheran Conference.

### *Sees Peaceful World for Years to Come*

Browder revisionism was not confined to one or another aspect of Party policy. It represented a complete system of erroneous ideas which came into direct collision with the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, cutting across every theoretical and political question faced by the Party and the working class at that time.

The Teheran Conference, in its declaration, indicated that agreement had finally been reached on the opening of the long-delayed second front. It expressed "the determination" of the war-time allies "that our nations shall work together in war and in the peace that follows," and to make a peace that will "banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations."

This diplomatic agreement between the heads of the three governments became the foundation for the new political line Browder developed. He advanced far-reaching changes in the Party's policies which, had they been carried over into the post-war period, would have had disastrous consequences for the Party and the people whom the Party influenced.

Taking the words of the Teheran declaration at face value, Browder hailed the accord as "the greatest turning point in history," ushering in an entirely new era in world development. Speaking at a meeting in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on December 12, 1943—only days after the Teheran accord was made public, Browder declared.

. . . We must understand that when the socialist Soviet Union and the British empire and the great capitalist United States arrive at a common policy for the war and for the post-war reconstruction of the world, this is something new and therefore represents a policy that has no parallel in past history. . . . It means, in the first place, that Britain and the United States have closed the books finally and forever upon their old expectation that the Soviet Union as a socialist country is going to disappear some day. The socialist Soviet Union is accepted as a permanent member of the family of nations, and the policy of destruction of the Soviet Union, which has been a permanent feature of the policy of the great capitalist powers since 1917, is finally ended. In its place, the Teheran Conference has not only strengthened the fighting alliance of the anti-Hitler Coalition, but has established a relationship for peaceful post-war collaboration between the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States. (*The Communist*, January, 1944.)

In his book, *Teheran: Our Path in War and Peace* (International Publishers, 1944), Browder emphasizes this central thesis:

The policy of Teheran, as the opposite of Munich, provides the military guarantee for the elimination of Hitlerism from Europe, and the political guarantee of a stable peace to follow which will banish the scourge of war for generations to come . . . (p. 11.)

Thus, miraculously, the Teheran Conference overnight transformed the world. The fundamental contradictions between imperialism and socialism, between imperialism and the oppressed nations, as well as the inter-imperialist contradictions, were erased, wiped out of existence. U.S. imperialism had, by this declaration, divested itself of all ambition to dominate the world and henceforth would live in peace with the Soviet Union, playing a progressive, democratic role in world affairs. For, Browder emphasized, "Teheran represents a firm and growing common interest between the leaders who gathered there, their governments, the ruling classes they represent, and the peoples of the world." (*Ibid.*, p. 15.) U.S. imperialism, it would seem, sought the defeat of Hitler fascism, not to destroy an imperialist rival, but for the altruistic objective of defending freedom, the independence of peoples, from the encroachments of fascism—the enemy of all mankind.

It took but a short time for reality to shatter these utopian illusions. The artillery and air bombardments of World War II had hardly been silenced when the United States set out to subject all nations—large and small—to its dictation. Emerging from the war as the single, most powerful nation in the world—and sole possessor of the dreaded Atom-bomb—it assumed that nothing stood in its way to world domination.

Far from playing a progressive role, U.S. imperialism became the citadel of world reaction and aggression, with bases and armed forces in key positions to defend its interests in all parts of the world. The U.S. geared economic and military aid to its allies and former enemies to one purpose—to halt the working-class upheavals stirring in Europe, to bolster the weakened capitalist structures, to hold in check the developing national liberation uprisings. To camouflage its reactionary objectives, U.S. imperialism fanned the embers of anti-Communism with myths of a world-wide "Communist conspiracy" to subvert the entire world. Thus, rather than accepting peaceful coexistence of the two systems, U.S. imperialism unleashed a cold-war offensive against its heroic ally of yesterday, which it now presented as the major menace to world peace.



### *Monopoly Capitalism to Play Progressive Role*

Just as Browder saw the Teheran Conference shaping the character of international relations, so also did he envision the extension of "war-time national unity into the post-war period for an indefinite number of years," (*Ibid.*, p. 66.) "The American national unity which we have under examination," he wrote further, "of necessity includes, and must include, a decisive part of the big capitalists, that is, the men who exercise immediate and effective control of the national economy. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 69)

In an article in which he dealt with "native fascist trends," Browder examined the speeches of Virgil Jordan, then President of the National Industrial Conference Board, and those of Thomas E. Dewey, defeated candidate for the Presidency in the 1944 elections. In this article (*Political Affairs*, February, 1945), he explained why "decisive sections" of big capital could be relied upon to pursue a democratic road in the post-war era. He stated:

1) . . . the decisive sections of the American capitalists have abandoned the old policy of hard-boiled reaction and imperialism, and are seriously trying to adjust themselves to the democratic current and needs of the nation at war. There is no longer any decisive unity of the bourgeoisie around a reactionary program.

2) The democratic unity in America, extending over all class lines, is more and more crystallizing upon a program which . . . seeks a solution of the national problem in a new way that abandons the old capitalistic dogmas. . . .

3) . . . from now on we must be on the alert for the flank attacks of the masked enemies of national unity . . . these will be more dangerous than the open assaults from now on; but with the nation on the alert . . . there are bright prospects ahead for greater advances and victories for democracy. . . .

There can be no mistake here that Browder was referring to the decisive sections of monopoly capitalism, who now, according to him, were honestly striving to adjust to the "democratic current." Monopoly capitalism was no longer a moribund system, inherently reactionary. It had gone through a metamorphosis since it shed its "hard-boiled reaction and imperialism." Now it is destined to play a progressive and democratic role for long years to come. While the threat of fascism still remains, it no longer stems from the decisive sections of monopoly capital. The working class—in unity with monopoly capitalism—can now head it off.

### *Advocates Class Collaboration*

As one leafs through Browder's writings of this period, one finds hardly a mention of capitalist exploitation, as if it had completely disappeared. Neither is there a word of criticism of the high profits piled up by the monopolists during the war. Nor is there a word which would reflect recognition of the many unresolved grievances of the workers and the Negro people. No wonder, then, that Browder could readily arrive at the conclusion that "Class divisions or political groupings have no significance now except as they reflect one side or the other of this issue"—that is, of Teheran. (*The Communist*, January, 1944.)

The perspectives of Teheran were of such world-shaking import that, according to Browder, class antagonisms had disappeared and the class struggle could be relegated to oblivion. The harmony of interests between the working class and the decisive sections of the big capitalists would now bring a long-term era of class peace and class collaboration.

Knowing, however, that talk of class peace and class collaboration would not sit well with Communists and the Left as a whole, Browder presented his brand of class collaboration in a new garb. "We want to guarantee," he explained, "that the achievement of well-being and democracy for all within our country shall not proceed through crisis after crisis and struggle after struggle, but will be the product of intelligent collaboration of all intelligent men in America." (*The Communist*, July, 1944.)

Browder was not talking here about the "ordinary" class collaboration long advocated by the labor reformists and Social Democrats. This is a new kind of class collaboration; it has acquired "intelligence." No longer, therefore, need the working class—and other oppressed sections of the population—conduct struggles for improved living standards. For now there were "a sufficient number of men of vision and understanding" in the ranks of big capital who are convinced of the need to develop "a broadly conceived and definitely planned program of national and international expansion of well-being for all." (*Teheran*, p. 73.)

Annoyed that his words of wisdom were not picked up and followed through, we find Browder returning again and again to the subject. In a pamphlet *America's Decisive Battle*, published in March, 1945, he elevates his brand of class collaboration to one of a "higher type," saying:

The time is over-ripe for the emergence of a higher type of labor-

management cooperation. That higher type which must now emerge, without delay, is the coming together of the most responsible leaders of both capital and the trade unions with a common program for . . . the full utilization of the American economy after the war with a constantly rising standard of living for the entire population.

#### *For a Program To Make "Capitalism Work"*

Browder also supplies the "common program" that must emerge from this "higher type of labor-management cooperation." The point of "common interest" is to keep the American economy in full operation in the post-war period. "Our problem," he points out, "in the main, is thus one of finding an immediate substitute for the war market in terms of peacetime goods." (*Teheran*, p. 76.)

Proving that the Communists are ready to cooperate to make "capitalism work," he develops this "problem" in considerable detail. At home, Browder details, this means giving prime attention to the "human factor of production" by "measures to raise the income of individual producers on a broad enough scale as approximately to double the annual purchasing power. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 81.) Abroad, the need is to expand the foreign market by at least \$40 billion. And he indicates how to accomplish this:

I venture to suggest that Britain and America must arrive at an agreed economic policy for the joint development of the world markets on a huge scale, ten times the size of the pre-war markets, based upon the rehabilitation of devastated lands and the industrialization of the undeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, the Near East, Latin America and Europe. Since this requires free independent peoples everywhere, the colonial system must be dismantled as quickly as possible. . . . (*The Communist*, June, 1944.)

He envisions the elimination of Anglo-American competition by the need for the United States to recognize that the "colonial system" provided Britain with a "place in the sun." Therefore, Britain must get a share of the world market in compensation for "liberating" its colonies voluntarily. Thus, the "democratic" big capitalists of the United States would play a positive role in world affairs by leading toward decolonization and industrialization of the countries held in imperialist bondage, ushering a new democratic epoch which marks the "end of imperialism" and "empire building."

Having proven to his satisfaction that the U.S. capitalists were now ready to subordinate their private interests to the common good, he admonishes the workers that nothing could be more disastrous to the

realization of the great potentialities of Teheran "than an attitude of uniform and undifferentiated hostility to the ranks of big capital from the side of labor and liberal sectors of our democracy. . . ." (*Teheran*, p. 74.) Indeed, by the flourish of his pen, a new brotherhood of man has emerged, with the working class and all exploited at home and abroad finally getting their due through the magnanimity of the "intelligent" and "far-sighted" capitalists.

#### *Class Struggle Thrown Overboard*

Like other Right opportunists before him, Browder does not flinch from revising basic principles of Marxism-Leninism under the mantle of flexible application to "new" historic conditions. "For the first time," he writes, "we are meeting and solving problems for which there are no precedent in history and no formulas from the classics which give us the answers. . . ." (*The Communist*, February, 1944.) Thus, we American Communists are hewing a new path. The new historical moment requires new theoretical conclusions and new policies.

In much of his writings of this period Browder makes little reference to Lenin, since he had obviously thrown overboard Lenin's teachings on imperialism. Nevertheless, on the occasion of the anniversary of Lenin's death he wrote a special article entitled "The Study of Lenin's Teachings" (*Political Affairs*, January, 1945), in which he urges the study of Lenin's writings in order to see "how the human mind can grasp and command *the particular and unique historical present moment* only through a correct understanding of the past." He cites an example to prove this point. Browder notes that during the crisis of World War I, Lenin vigorously denounced the class collaboration of the Mensheviks calling for a class war against capital. Here we are in the United States, under entirely new conditions, doing the very opposite. In fact, "we who are proud to consider ourselves disciples of Lenin, are in practice collaborating with capital, and firmly denounce those who advocate a class war against capital in the United States."

For Browder, not only have class divisions lost their value in shaping the new world, but the class struggle—the very cornerstone of Marxism—is thrown out of the window as well. And with it, the role of the working class as the gravedigger of capitalism. To Browder, Teheran meant that the working class must accept the leadership of a "rejuvenated" capitalist class which is no longer its class enemy, since their interests are no longer irreconcilable. Hence, Browder's version of "American exceptionalism." The laws of capitalist development may apply in other countries, but not in the United States:

Whatever may be the situation in other lands, in the United States the consequence of Teheran means a perspective, in the immediate post-war period and for a long term of years, of expanded production and employment, and the strengthening of democracy within the framework of the present system—and not a perspective of the transition to socialism. (*Teheran*, p. 69.)

### *Rejects Socialist Perspective*

It would be understandable for a Marxist, explaining why socialism was not on the order of the day, to point out that while capitalism in the United States is over-ripe for the transition to a socialist society, the subjective factor—the working class and its allies—have not reached the level of consciousness to undertake this decisive struggle. But this is far from what Browder has in mind. He states bluntly that so profound have been the changes wrought by the Teheran agreement, that socialism will not come for a long number of years—if at all—and that great advances can now be made within the “framework of the present system.” He insists, therefore, that Communists have the obligation to remove from the American ruling class “the fear of a socialist revolution.” What is more, Communists are duty bound to subordinate their socialist convictions to the common program of the democratic majority and do nothing which might in any way disrupt this national unity—inclusive of the big capitalists. The task of Communists is to conform to the will of the majority. Thus, he says:

It is an obvious fact of American life that there is no existing or potential majority now that can be united in a program of action based upon the socialist perspective for our country. . . . Therefore, we must state clearly and definitely that the practical program which can bring together the majority in support of Teheran will accept the existing economic system as its base of operations and its starting point. (*Teheran*, p. 69.)

It required no great compunction for Browder to subordinate the socialist objectives in the interest of the “greater good.” For many years he had given assurances to the powers-that-be that socialism could come to the United States only as a result of a great disaster or because of their mistakes and incompetence. As far back as 1937, speaking to a convention of Massachusetts Communists, he said:

Proletarian dictatorship can become a practical order of the day 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 cooperate with everybody who

will help to win that higher standard of living for the masses. (*The People’s Front*, p. 239.)

In a debate with the rabid anti-Communist George Sokolsky, on March 21, 1943, held under the auspices of the magazine *New Masses*, Browder went much further:

. . . No ruling class in any nation has ever been overthrown by revolution unless and until it has brought disaster upon the nation by false policies, mistakes, shortsighted and overreaching greed, and incompetence. . . . No revolutionary party or leadership ever gained power or mass following except as the direct result of the crimes of the old ruling class. *Therefore*, the first step to avoid revolution is to give the people a reasonable hope of remedying the false policies and mistakes of their ruling class, of curbing their greed, of raising their competence for the tasks of the nation. (*Is Communism a Menace?* April, 1943, pp. 29-30.)

Here we have the most blatant rejection of Marxism. Instead of treating the objective laws—laws independent of the will of man—operating in capitalist society, which indicate the necessity of socialism, we get a subjectivist interpretation of capitalist development. Capitalism can live forever only if the capitalists would overcome their mistakes and incompetence; they can be assured of being free from the “threat” of revolution, if they would only improve the lot of the producers. Thus, scientific socialism has no foundation in reality; capitalist contradictions can be resolved without the necessity of socialism; capitalism leads to socialism only because the capitalists have not been ready to correct their mistakes, reduce their greed, improve their competence, share their wealth, and prove that under this system both the producers and the owners can prosper.

Browder makes no bones about it. As long as the workers can achieve a higher standard of living, they will remain wedded to capitalism. In fact, there need be no fear of the Communists, for they “are the most zealous workers for the removal of conditions making for revolutionary unrest,” because they devote much of their effort to secure improvement in the conditions of life of all working people. Actually, he assured Sokolsky, because of such activity Communists are really “the truest conservatives in the population.” Communists are ready “to support a capitalism in the United States after the war which is compatible with the interests and which takes into account the necessary problems of the people. . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 42.)

Browder was not trying to outsmart Sokolsky, or get into his good

graces. He presented this line of argumentation over and over again in his writings and speeches of that period. In his opus on Teheran he pledges the Communists to make "capitalism work" and to refrain from any criticism of the "free enterprise" system. Thus:

. . . Since we Marxists, who are convinced socialists, are accepting for a long period the necessity to cooperate in making capitalism work in America for the benefit of our people and the world, it would be rather stupid of us to gag at the necessity to listen respectfully to its pet-name "free enterprise." Therefore, we declare in advance our understanding that the democratic-progressive camp to which we adhere will adopt the defense of "free enterprise," that we understand this term as a synonym for capitalism as it exists in our country, and that we will not oppose it nor put forth any counter slogans. (*Teheran*, pp. 70-71.)

The task of Communists, to Browder, is no longer to help organize and influence the struggles of the working people, to heighten class consciousness and to help the working class and all oppressed to understand who the real enemy is.

Since he has shown that the working class and capitalist class can live together in peace and harmony, it was quite logical for Browder to put forward a solution to the special oppression of the black people in our country. In an article "On the Negroes and the Right of Self-Determination" (*The Communist*, January, 1944), he maintains that "The crisis of history has taken a turn of such character that the Negro people in the United States have found it possible to make their decision once and for all." They have decided in favor of "complete integration into the American nation." The Negro people, he wrote, are now convinced of the possibility of "the immediate achievement in this period, under the present system" of "complete equality." In making this decision, the Negro people have thereby "exercised their right of self-determination."

#### *Dissolution of Communist Party*

Having tied the working class to the chariot of capitalism, having announced that Negro freedom and equality is in the bag, having stressed that "narrow partisanship is a luxury which America cannot afford in this year of 1944" (*The Communist*, March, 1944), having put off the perspective of socialism to some very distant future, and having proclaimed that the Communists will do all in their power to help "make capitalism work," Browder took the next logical step. He called for the dissolution of the Communist Party.

American Communists are relinquishing for an extended period

the struggle for partisan advancement for themselves as a separate group, which is the main characteristic of a political party. The Communists foresee that the practical political aims they hold will for a long time be in agreement in all essential points with the aims of a much larger body of non-Communists, and therefore our political action will be merged in such larger movements. The existence of a separate political party of Communists, therefore, no longer serves a practical purpose but can be, on the contrary, an obstacle to larger unity. (*Teheran*, p. 117.)

The report of Earl Browder on the new policies that flow from Teheran was accepted by the National Committee of the Communist Party in January, 1944. The meeting also agreed to call a special convention to dissolve the CP and establish in its place a non-partisan educational association. And so, on May 20, 1944 the convention of the Communist Party was convened to vote its dissolution. The gathering reconvened to establish the Communist Political Association. In his report, Browder characterized the new organization:

. . . We have dissolved the Communist Party, and we are now forming a new non-party organization through which we expect to contribute to the common cause of the progressive majority of the American people. We will participate in political life as independents, through the established Party organizations of our progressive associates, without committing ourselves to any party label. . . . (*The Communist*, June, 1944.)

Thus, Browder's revisionism led inexorably to the abandonment of the working class, and the dissolution of an independent political party of the working class to serve as its vanguard. In keeping with this decision, all forms of organization based on the shops and industries were eliminated. Only the community clubs remained. These were soon transformed into loose, amorphous bodies, consisting of hundreds of members, which met irregularly.

This situation lasted one year. The Party was reconstituted. On February 13, 1946, Earl Browder was expelled for active opposition to the policies adopted and for refusal to subordinate himself to the will of the majority.

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One may ask: How come that the leadership and membership adopted the revisionist course presented by Browder? This can best be answered by quoting from the report of William Z. Foster to the National Committee of the Communist Political Association in June, 1945, which voted to reconstitute the Communist Party. For Foster

stood alone in rejecting Browder's crude revisionism from the very start. Thus, Foster stated in part:

First, I should say, it was because of an inadequate Marxist-Leninist training on the part of our leadership. Although in the Party many comrades opposed Browder's line and there was much uncertainty and uneasiness generally, the leadership was not able to penetrate his bourgeois sophistries and to expose their anti-Marxist character. The fact that our Party, throughout the war and even for some years earlier had been in collaboration with the pro-Roosevelt minority section of the bourgeoisie, gave Comrade Browder a convenient jumping-off place for his attempt to cooperate with the whole bourgeoisie. . . .

A second, and very decisive reason for our Party's falling victim to Comrade Browder's revisionism was the lack of political discussion and democracy in the Party. During the past several years we have allowed ourselves to depart widely from the principles of democratic centralism. Browder has been conceded altogether excessive authority—to such an extent, in fact, that his word virtually became law in the Party. . . .

In assessing the blame for the serious error our Party has made, the whole top leadership, especially the National Board, bears a heavy responsibility. For, despite Browder's excessive authority, if the members of the Board, or even a substantial minority of them, had taken a stand against Browder's opportunism he could have been defeated. Unfortunately, however, no such development took place. . . .

But the overwhelming share of the responsibility of the error rests with Comrade Browder himself. . . . It is not too much to say that had any other leader in the Party than Comrade Browder presented such a distortion of the Teheran Conference to our Party it would have been rejected as rank opportunism. But Browder was able to put it across because of his great prestige and his over-centralized authority. . . .

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## Black Liberation Impossible Without Communists

The Communist Party has a long and glorious record in the struggle for Negro freedom. This record has been deliberately blurred over and distorted by the enemies of the Party. Today, unfortunately, some who are sincerely working for Negro freedom parrot ruling-class falsehoods that the Communist Party has become "irrelevant."

Communists have made contributions which to this day illuminate the path to Negro freedom. For example, the growth and extension on varying levels of Negro and white unity came directly as a result of the Communists' pioneering efforts. St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton document this in their celebrated work, *Black Metropolis* (New York, 1945). They state:

During the early thirties, marchers in Left-wing demonstrations in Midwest Metropolis frequently carried placards bearing the slogan, "Black and White, Unite!" Close interracial cooperation became associated in the popular mind with "the Reds." Of course Negroes and whites, as we have seen, have always cooperated in Midwest Metropolis, but usually in white employer-Negro employee relations, or as Negro-white patron. These Communist slogans, however, signified something that was new to the city: a small band of white men proclaiming a total cooperation of Negro and white workers in a joint struggle to build a new society. Not even the Abolitionists had stood for that.

More recently Msgr. J. D. Conway, a courageous Catholic priest declared in the *St. Louis Review*, official organ of the St. Louis Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church:

The Communists were 26 years ahead of the U.S. Supreme Court, 35 years ahead of the New Frontier, eons ahead of some prejudiced politicians and who knows how much ahead of Congress and some of our reluctant bishops.

These writers display great courage in speaking the truth as they

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These excerpts have been taken from Chapter 15 in *Ghetto Rebellion to Black Liberation*, International Publishers, 1968.

see it. They also show a deep insight into social problems. Today their numbers are few, but tomorrow they will be far greater.

Through the 1930's and 1940's the Communists were pioneers in building the foundations of struggle against race and class oppression in ever-widening areas. They carried the fight against jim crow into every aspect of American life. They blazed the trail that revealed the real nature of Negro oppression and its real perpetrators. They introduced a new militancy into the freedom fight, reminiscent of the abolitionists and Frederick Douglass. They brought the nature of Negro oppression to the attention of the entire world and thereby made the fight against it worldwide.

In their ranks a new group of Negro leaders emerged, totally dedicated and totally committed to whatever would be required to free their people, regardless of personal sacrifices. Of these we shall speak later.

Drake and Cayton write:

With the Depression "the Reds" emerged as leaders, fighting against evictions, leading demonstrations for more adequate relief, campaigning to free the Scottsboro Boys. Their reservoir of goodwill was filled to overflowing, with even the *Defender* writing an editorial on "Why We Cannot Hate Reds."

"Respectable leaders," all during this period, fought against these struggles led by the Communists. But today some of these black leaders are forced by the circumstances of the times to adopt the same techniques and methods which only yesterday they condemned.

The leaders who oppose Communist participation in the black freedom movement claim that Communists are not truly interested in advancing Negro rights, but only seek to use the discontent of the Negro for the purpose of advancing the interests of a "foreign power," namely the Soviet Union. Hence, they claim, the Communists' interest in the Negro question is secondary.

To bolster this contention, some seek to exploit certain tactical errors made by the Communists during World War II. During that war, we Communists declared that the central task was to defeat Hitler, who represented the most reactionary, the most chauvinistic, the most rotten and the most decadent forces in the entire world. We maintained further that the emergence of a strong Soviet Union in the postwar world would be a key pillar in erecting a new world order based on social and racial justice.

Now, in the pursuit of this generally correct goal there was for a time a failure on the part of Communists to push the struggle for

Negro rights vigorously enough, out of fear of jeopardizing the war effort. Wherever Communists made such errors, we Communists today join in criticism. But it is one thing to criticize and another to use such errors in an attempt to destroy the validity of a broad basic truth.

What the Communists said during World War II, it is now generally acknowledged, was correct. Their far-sightedness in regard to the Soviet Union's role in the postwar world was prophetic. Today, more than two decades after World War II, the Soviet Union has emerged as the main force against national oppression, generating enough power to give to peoples of color the world over the confidence that they can break the shackles of world imperialism. Were it not for Soviet power, offering an alternative to the domination of imperialism, it is doubtful that over one and a half billion people could have succeeded in freeing themselves from colonial oppression.

During the cold-war years the ruling circles of our country, using anti-Communism to undermine the people's movements, demanded the expulsion of Communists from all areas of American life. The word "Communism" has been made synonymous with the devil. Hundreds of Communists were jailed. Many were deported. Many more lost their jobs and were excluded from chosen fields and professions.

Many former Communist sympathizers and friends were forced to run for cover. The assault of reaction led many weaker ones to "cry for mercy." Never in the annals of American history has an organization been subjected to such persecution. It is doubtful if any other organization could have survived such attacks. Yet, though the Communist Party was compelled to raise millions of dollars to defend itself, it still had the capacity to strike some heavy blows against jim crow and segregation at the very time when its enemies and even some of its friends were declaring it impotent.

The veteran black Communist leader, William L. Patterson, at a time when he himself faced jail and had the job of providing legal and mass defense for thousands of his Communist co-workers, struck telling blows against jim crow and segregation. He organized and led many historic civil rights struggles during those years. Just as he had organized the campaigns to free the Scottsboro Boys and Angelo Herndon during the thirties, he now took to the bar of world opinion the court frameups of Willie McGee in Mississippi and the Martinsville Seven in Virginia.

In the early 1950's Patterson presented in Paris a petition to the UN against genocide, documenting cases of lynching in the South,

both in courtrooms and public squares. This was one of the boldest and most comprehensive exposures ever made of the lynch system in the United States. . . .

The acquiescence of certain civil rights leaders in a policy of purging Communists has proven costly. It has been reliably reported that some of these leaders met regularly with the FBI and were briefed on who was and who wasn't a Communist. Thus J. Edgar Hoover had the power to purge dedicated fighters for Negro freedom from the ranks of their own organizations. . . .

Anti-Communism (and with it the purging of Communists) is harmful to the nation as such. It is a product of a sick society, mirroring the insanity which has gripped a large segment of our ruling class. It has harmed the interests of the American people more than it has hurt Communists themselves. We have spent hundreds of billions of dollars and have fought several wars, yet socialism continues to spread to all points of the earth. No more than King Canute can we command the tide of history to recede. It is the American people who bear the growing costs of the vain efforts to do so.

If purges of Communists are harmful to the nation in general, they are even more harmful to the struggle for Negro freedom—because their purpose is to deprive the black revolution of the services of some of the most dedicated and self-sacrificing forces our people have ever produced. Especially tragic is the spectacle of white forces, in many instances outright racist elements, dictating to Negro organizations which Negroes may participate in freedom's fight and which may not—compounded by the acquiescence of some so-called "respectable," "responsible" or "safe" Negroes to such a policy.

It is this policy which sought to deprive the liberation movement of such great freedom fighters as the late Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, the late Benjamin J. Davis, the late James W. Ford, William L. Patterson, Henry Winston, the late Edward E. Strong, the late Louis Burnham, James E. Jackson, the late Pettis Perry, Hosea Hudson, and countless others, living and dead. These are names which, along with such a renowned fighter as Paul Robeson, would bring honor to any people any where in the world in their quest for freedom. Today's freedom fight rests on the solid foundation that these men did so much to help build in the thirties, forties and early fifties.

Dr. Du Bois devoted almost a century to Negro freedom, and yet reaction dared to strike him down. Thanks to a grateful African nation and an outstanding leader, Kwame Nkrumah, this great man was able to spend the last years of his life in full human dignity

in Ghana, and to continue to strike blows against racism, colonialism and imperialism. This was with no thanks to many of his former pupils and colleagues who deserted him when reaction reared its ugly head.

Paul Robeson became the main target of reaction in Negro life during the period of McCarthyite hysteria. Here was a giant among men. His powerful voice was raised in concert halls, on public platforms, at home and abroad, always in defense of Negro rights. For this he won the undying hatred of the white ruling class. At Peekskill in 1949 a lynch mob tried to kill him. Again many cowardly Negro leaders sat on the side lines and were silent as Robeson was attacked for advocating actions to destroy the whole institution of jim crow. What he fought for has become commonplace in the Negro movement today, as his book, *Here I Stand*, testifies.

James W. Ford, twice a Communist candidate for Vice President of the United States, was an architect of the forward thrust of the Negro movement in the thirties and forties. He was a prime mover, alongside A. Philip Randolph in building the National Negro Congress in 1936. The Congress set the pace during that period for the entire Negro movement. It helped elevate the whole struggle to new and higher levels.

To obtain full economic, political and social equality for Negro citizens requires not only Communist participation in freedom struggles but a strong, influential Communist Party as well. For Communist and Left progressive forces are prepared to do everything required to win freedom for Afro-American people. No other force is prepared to play such a role alongside of and in the Negro movement.

Since the early thirties when white Communists, almost alone among whites, advanced and fought for full equality, other white forces have increasingly come into the struggle. In the latter part of the thirties, through the forties and fifties, a new force consisting of labor (especially the CIO) and New Deal liberals emerged as advocates of Negro-white unity. In recent years, while many liberals of the New Deal days, along with corrupt labor officials, have backtracked, new forces have come forward: students and educators on college campuses and a significant section of religious groups. . . .

True, there are many staunch and dedicated people who have emerged in recent years. They are symbolized by the Moores, the Reebes, the Schwerners and the Liuzzos, who have paid for their convictions with their lives. Dedication and courage, together with an understanding of the need to make changes in our social system

and a readiness to fight for such changes, are necessary to hasten progress on all fronts.

The broader white forces are prepared to work for a partial solution, for adjustments in the system that bore and nourished jim crow and segregation. They are not yet ready to work to uproot that system, to change the economic and political power structure of the country as a whole, as are the Communists and other Left forces. Yet, without changing the system, we cannot conceive of the black man's securing his full equality and his freedom.

The Communist Party, as we have pointed out, was the vanguard force promoting Negro and white unity at the grassroots level in an earlier period. It compelled a number of concessions to the black people, and played an important role in preventing America from goose-stepping alongside Hitler and the Axis powers. . . .

Interracial unity, though still a prerequisite for meaningful social changes for both black and white, as it existed in the past is inadequate today. The black man has found that he can be integrated and still remain a second-class citizen. This is true not only in regard to the power structure, but also in many of those institutions and organizations among the people who proclaim that they represent both black and white. In recent times, the Negro found that he is often an unequal partner even in his own civil rights organizations.

The problem, therefore, requires more than proclaiming the necessity for the unity of Negro and white. What is needed is a force that will create situations in which black people have equal voice with white majorities over all matters pertaining to the general welfare, and complete say over the internal problems of the black communities. The problem now is to guarantee the equality of a black minority in a majority white society. Setting norms and standards to reach this goal is the challenge to all pro-democratic white people. It is in this respect that the Communist Party still remains the outstanding force working in the white community. Once again it is called upon to pioneer in the field of race relations. . . .

When struggles reach a point of indecision, when they stray onto paths of secondary importance, the result is a feeling of frustration, hopelessness and a sense of going around in circles. For these reasons an organized force is needed, advanced in thought, revolutionary in practice and outlook, a force that is on top of the total picture. It is necessary to have an organized force that at each moment of indecision can break the pattern of going around in circles, that can answer the question: "Where do we go from here?" Only a force

that understands the overall nature of capitalist society, the inherent laws that make this society tick, that understands the role of classes can indicate the path ahead. Only a movement that has a clear concept of the new and higher social system that will replace capitalism can give clear answers. It uses science as a tool with which to probe all factors in depth and thereby gives the mass struggle a higher level of consciousness, a vision, a deeper sense of confidence. A movement that knows where it is going cannot be defeated.

The Communist Party is such a force. This explains why it is a veteran in this battle. It has a proven record in the struggle for equality. It can make an even greater contribution. The path to black liberation involves not only a program for the immediate period but also a long range program for socialism. Both are unattainable without the participation of Communists.

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. . . In our view, the essence of the concept "black power" means that everywhere, without a single exception, the Negro people must win their full equality. In areas where they constitute a majority they must have the rights of a majority. This means that in places like Lowndes County, Alabama, the Negro people have every right to elect their own officials to office. It means that where the Negro people are a minority they must also have equal rights—that is, the right to share in power, in leadership, the right to have black sons and daughters elected to any and all posts of leadership in accord with their capabilities, without any discrimination whatsoever. It means that in coalitions of whites and Negroes, the Negroes can never be treated as second class participants but must be treated as absolute equals, without whose consent no decisions are made.

This does not mean that black will go it alone and white will go it alone. It means that a new, more basic relationship must arise which takes into account the common interests of both. It means that in mass organizations and movements, including the trade union movement, the allegiance of Negro membership cannot be taken for granted on the part of the white members. It must be fought for and must constantly be won by combatting every form of white supremacist views, and by making clear to the white workers that any backtracking on this fundamental question places their own union and class interests in jeopardy. Of course, black power is a democratic slogan; it is not in itself the full answer.

Henry Winston, *Negro-White Unity*, pp. 23-24.



## Communists in the McCarthy Era

When periods of outstanding contributions by the Communist Party to our country are considered, attention is usually turned to the 1930's and almost never to the period of McCarthyism. Among many, this period is thought of as a wasteland, a period in which the democratic masses were frightened into silence and retreated without much of a struggle, and in which the Left and the Communist Party seriously declined, often for lack of backbone. This view held that we entered the 1960's with a small, relatively isolated Communist Party, that had lost much of its fighting spirit due to its accommodation to retreat.

An objective study of this period will show that the Communist Party played the decisive role in mobilizing opposition among the people to the dangers of world nuclear war and of fascism at home. It also took the brunt of the McCarthyite attack. If it had not acted so clear-sightedly and heroically, the shape of the political situation in our country in the 1960's would be far different.

During World War II a coincidence of interests existed in the armed struggle with the fascist countries, a coincidence that put the U.S.S.R. on the same side with the imperialist United States and Great Britain, that put the main sections of monopoly in the U.S. on the same side with masses of the people in a democratic, anti-fascist, world-wide struggle to the death. Contradictions among these diverse forces were for a period less sharp, or expressed themselves within the over-all coincidence of interests in fighting Germany, Italy and Japan.

### *Cold War Abroad and at Home*

Before the country at the end of the war was the question of whether the wartime alliance with the Soviet Union would continue, and thus guarantee the advance of peace, democracy, national liberation and socialism, or whether it would break up, with U.S. imperialism striving for world domination and moving toward a world atomic war. At home the issue was whether conversion of the economy to a peacetime basis would take place at the expense of the working people, or whether the welfare needs and democratic rights of the people would receive consideration.

There were those who did not see that such a choice of direction confronted the country, that the contradictions between monopoly

capital and the people's interests would reemerge, and that monopoly would begin to move in a reactionary direction. There were many forces in the old anti-fascist coalition that fell for the demagoguery that Truman was continuing the fight for democracy, which now was threatened by a new menace—the spread of Communism.

Immediately following the war there was a mass upsurge, as expectations among the people were running high and the sharp problems they immediately faced, such as runaway prices, came as a jolt. Nearly two million workers in steel, auto, electrical, farm equipment and meat-packing engaged in long, militant strikes for higher wages, provoked by the companies in 1945 and early 1946. The Communist Party played a major role in these strike struggles. Monopoly capital used them as an excuse for the introduction of anti-labor legislation, finally resulting in passage of the Taft-Hartley Act on June 23, 1947.

There was an upsurge among the Negro people, the veterans and other groups around their special demands. Certain forces like Philip Murray, head of the CIO, went along with the upsurge. However, this mass upsurge took place within the framework of a gradual break-up of the old coalition. After 1947 the process speeded up. A sector became more militant and moved Leftward, but major sectors of the coalition, under the leadership of class-collaborationist and Right-wing social-democratic labor leaders, broke away to follow in the wake of the Truman cold-war policies.

Throughout the entire period, the ideological justification for the international and domestic policies, for the war drive and McCarthyism, was anti-Communism. The line was: Communism by nature was aggressive, subversive and anti-democratic. The Soviet Union intended to conquer the world by invasion and/or subversion against the will of the peoples. The Communist Party of the United States was a part of this scheme. It took orders from Moscow. All of its members were secretly working for Moscow and all were at least potential spies and saboteurs. Senator Joseph McCarthy and his supporters actively propagated this falsehood. The Truman and Eisenhower Administrations also spread it, and even many liberal elements opposed to McCarthyism accepted it.

Increasingly those who took the path of struggle were reduced in numbers and split up, mainly through the use of anti-Communism and intimidation. The narrowing and decline of the forces for peace, democracy and social progress continued until 1953, when they began to grow again, bringing the reactionary trend of the country's direction to a temporary halt by 1955.

The war with Japan had not yet concluded when the 13th National

Convention of the CPUSA met on July 26, 1945, rid itself of Browderism, and in its main political resolution made the following estimate of the situation:

. . . the most aggressive circles of American imperialism are endeavoring to secure for themselves political and economic domination of the world. . . .

If the reactionary policies and forces of monopoly capital are not checked and defeated, America and the world will be confronted with new aggressions and war and the growth of reaction and fascism in the United States. (*Political Affairs*, September, 1945.)

In November, 1945, the National Committee said:

While the American people must now as never before, augment and intensify their fight and direct their heaviest fire against the Tafts, Hoovers, Du Ponts and Hearsts, they must at the same time place direct responsibility upon the Truman Administration for its imperialist course in foreign affairs. (Eugene Dennis, *What America Faces*, New Century Publishers, March, 1946, p. 24.)

Two weeks after the arrest of the National Board of the Communist Party under the Smith Act in 1948, Eugene Dennis, the General Secretary, reported to the 14th Convention. He stated:

The development of fascism in the United States now appears as a serious and threatening menace. The process of fascization, most directly engendered by monopoly's war drive, itself in turn serves as a key internal instrument to facilitate and accelerate Wall Street's preparations for World War III. (*The Fascist Danger and How to Combat It*, New Century Publishers, August, 1948, p. 6.)

Reaction in the U.S. moved step by step—from the Truman Doctrine to smash democracy in Greece, to the Marshall Plan to use economic leverage to force the Communists out of the French and Italian governments; from the construction of a world-wide network of military bases to the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance and similar alliances in other areas. Its policy of rebuilding German militarism as its ally and instrument in Europe led to the Berlin crisis. From arms to British and Dutch imperialism in Iran and Indonesia, it moved to military support for Chiang Kai-shek in China and to the June, 1950 invasion of North Korea.

All of this was part of the preparations to encircle the Soviet Union and attack it. The U.S. with its monopoly of the A-bomb attempted atomic blackmail. Meetings and negotiations with the Soviet Union were ruled out. The UN was converted into a tool of U.S. aggression

in Korea. Truman and General MacArthur threatened use of the A-bomb against North Korea and China.

### *Reactionary Offensive Grows*

Domestically, monopoly capitalism sought to destroy all resistance to these foreign policies and to prevent the development of a broad, militant social movement. To break up the wartime coalition and mass upsurge, reaction concentrated on the Communist Party in order to isolate it, and on labor in order to isolate its progressive sector. A combination of concessions and repression was applied to the labor movement. From a rejection of the cold war, the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan in 1946-47, the Murray forces retreated by October, 1949 to the point of expelling 11 progressive-led internationals with a membership of 900,000 from the CIO for failure to support the Marshall Plan. Afterward, continued raids seriously reduced the membership of these unions. Many CIO and AFL unions put Communist exclusion clauses into their constitutions.

As early as 1946, Congressman Schwollenbach, a Truman Democrat, proposed outlawing the Communist Party. In the next year a series of bills, such as the Mundt-Nixon Bill were introduced, taking final shape in the McCarran Act of 1950, the year the Korean war began. In 1952 the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act was passed, and in 1954 the Communist Control Act, adding to the repressive measures of the McCarran Act.

Eugene Dennis was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee in April, 1947. He refused to testify on the grounds that the Committee was illegal, since Rankin of Mississippi represented an area where Negroes were barred from voting. He was jailed for contempt of Congress. Many went to jail for refusing to give lists or tell their beliefs and affiliations; among them were Dr. Edward Barsky and others of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee, the Hollywood Ten, Carl Marzani and Richard Morford.

Particularly significant was the contempt citation and blacklisting of the Hollywood Ten, a blacklisting which spread throughout the cultural and mass media and which still holds sway in many areas. This case came in early 1947 and was a warning to rank-and-file democrats and progressives that even such well known cultural figures as John Howard Lawson, Dalton Trumbo and Ring Lardner, Jr. were not immune to attack by reaction.

Attorney General Tom Clark built up his "subversive" list, and Attorney-General Herbert Brownell under Eisenhower added to it, until it contained 240 organizations. HUAC listed 608. About 150

Communist Party leaders, national and district, were arrested under the Smith Act between 1948 and 1956. It was not until 1964 that the last of the imprisoned Party leaders were released, having served terms ranging from 2 to 8 years. Those who were political refugees for a time, such as Henry Winston, Gus Hall, Bob Thompson and Gil Green were meted the longest sentences.

Deportation and denaturalization proceedings were carried out against several hundred people, including Party leaders like John Williamson, Claudia Jones, Ferdinand Smith and numerous others. Irving Potash was imprisoned under the Smith Act, twice deported and jailed for illegal entry. He, Betty Gannett and others who cannot be deported, because the country of their birth will not accept them, must report regularly to the immigration authorities and are subject to constant surveillance.

A federal "loyalty program" was adopted and "loyalty" oaths were embodied in some 32 state laws, such as the notorious Feinberg Act in New York. Under these laws, many thousands of public employees were fired. Large numbers of teachers were hounded out of their jobs, and innumerable workers met with economic reprisal.

#### *Fanning Anti-Communist Hysteria*

HUAC and the McCarthy Senate Internal Security Committee played leading roles in creating an atmosphere of hysteria and in the headline persecution of hundreds of workers and professionals called as "unfriendly" witnesses. HUAC was the source of much of the repressive legislation and was responsible for the many contempt citations. Under its aegis, blacklisting of workers and intellectuals became a common practice and stoolpigeons became a familiar phenomenon. FBI harassment of workers at their place of work, and among their neighbors, became widespread and even descended to the depths of following and intimidating young children of progressives.

Spy frameup headlines filled the papers—Alger Hiss, Dexter White, Morton Sobell and the Rosenbergs. Within the hysterical atmosphere that prevailed the false charge was propagated that the Rosenbergs and Sobell had given the secret of the A-bomb to the Russians and thus shifted the military balance to the side of those who were out to attack us. Despite a mountain of evidence to the contrary, and in the face of a world outcry that produced a last-minute clemency plea from the Pope, the Rosenbergs were executed in 1953 after a three-year struggle to save their lives.

As time went on, the range of those attacked by Senator Joseph McCarthy and his committee became broader and broader. He con-

centrated on the government and especially on those connected with foreign policy, in an attempt to drive an already reactionary policy even further to the Right. Finally, Secretary of State Acheson and President Truman were attacked as "soft on Communism." The Democratic Party was charged with "20 years of treason," and even the Pentagon, the Voice of America and the U.S. Information Service libraries abroad came under attack.

Black leaders were especially singled out as targets. Paul Robeson was the target of a fascist mob at Peekskill in 1949, and was forbidden to travel abroad. Dr. Du Bois was handcuffed at 84, as the head of the Peace Information Center, on charges of being a foreign agent. William L. Patterson was cited for contempt of Congress after being cursed out and threatened physically by racist Congressmen. Henry Winston was blinded because of criminal neglect and chauvinism by prison authorities. There was a resurgence of "legal" lynchings in the cases of Willie McGee, the Martinsville Seven, the Trenton Six and others on trumped-up charges. Police brutality grew. Organizations like the KKK and the White Citizens Councils increased in size.

Benjamin J. Davis, Jr. was forced out of the New York City Council after the proportional representation law was abolished. In 1959, Vito Marcantonio, though increasing his vote, was forced out of Congress through a combination of the Republican, Democratic and Liberal parties to defeat him. In 1952 reaction scored further victories in the Congressional as well as the Presidential elections. Following the 1952 elections McCarthyism was really riding high.

#### *The Fight-Back Movement*

Every step of the way the Communist Party fought the reactionary onslaught. Its struggles set the stage for the upturn in resistance that led to the turning of the tide in late 1954 and 1955. Sharp battles were fought, nearly all of them led or initiated by the Party. But, there were many faint-hearted liberals who collapsed or even joined the red-baiters so that at times the Party fought nearly alone.

There was the strike wave in 1946 and the struggle to prevent the CIO from endorsing the cold-war policy. There were veterans' demonstrations. There were major peace actions, among them the American Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace on March 2, 1949 and the National Labor Conference for Peace in Chicago in October, 1949, which brought 1,200, mostly rank-and-filers together. Some 15,000 went to Peekskill in September, 1949 to hear Paul Robeson sing. By March, 1950, 2½ million signatures were collected on the Stockholm Peace Pledge to ban the bomb.

Following the start of the Korean aggression there were many mass protest meetings. One such meeting on August 2, 1950 in Union Square, New York, was violently broken up by the police. Women for Peace organized many actions, including a demonstration by 1,000 women at the UN on October 24, 1950. An American People's Congress for Peace was held in Chicago on June 29, 1951. Some 5,000 attended, including 1,500 Negro representatives and 300 delegates from AFL and CIO local unions, despite the atmosphere of intimidation created by midnight raids on the Communist Party and generally growing terror. This Conference was organized by the American Peace Crusade and the Youth Peace Crusade. Gradually sentiment to end the Korean war became a majority sentiment and compelled Eisenhower to end the war in Korea.

Following the cease-fire, peace activity continued, centering on pressure for big-power negotiations, for banning the bomb, against provocations off China's shores, and for trade and person-to-person contact with the people of the Soviet Union. After a long campaign, 100 college student governments succeeded in gaining the admission to the U.S. of a Soviet student delegation.

The crushing of the Bill of Rights was fought with militant courtroom struggles, putting the blue-ribbon jury system on trial, and with picket lines, demonstrations and mass meetings. Much literature was distributed on the various cases and there were large-scale amnesty campaigns for political prisoners. The movement to save the Rosenbergs reached great proportions, becoming world-wide in scope.

As time went on, major people's organizations began to see the danger to themselves in this wave of repression, and passed resolutions against the Smith and McCarran Acts, and against McCarthyism in general, especially after 1952. Among them were the CIO, the NAACP, the National Student Association and the ADA. Prominent labor and other leaders spoke out. When McCarthy tried to have the book *Robin Hood* removed from public library shelves, youth across the country began wearing green feathers. The "Joe Must Go" movement, with buttons and meetings, led eventually to moves in Congress to impeach McCarthy. NSA passed a Student Bill of Rights and organized annual academic freedom weeks. The result was the defeat of some of the most rabid McCarthyites at the polls in 1954, and finally the Senate censure of McCarthy in the same year.

The Civil Rights Congress, headed by William L. Patterson, played an important role in these struggles as it did in relation to the "legal" lynchings of that period. William Patterson presented a notable "We Charge Genocide" petition to the UN in 1951.

Among other noteworthy events in the struggle for black freedom was the NAACP Conference of January 15, 1950, attended by 5,000 in Washington, which demanded anti-discrimination, anti-poll tax and anti-lynching legislation, housing, etc. On October 27, 1951, 1,052 delegates meeting in Cincinnati formed the National Negro Labor Council, which for a number of years played an active role in fighting job discrimination. In 1954, the Supreme Court decision against segregation in education was handed down, and soon afterward the NAACP Youth Work Committee organized mass lobbies of thousands of youth in Washington for implementation of this decision and for other demands.

The Communist Party, despite the attacks on it, played a role in everyone of these actions and the Labor Youth League, formed in 1949 as a Marxist youth organization, and itself under severe attack, played a major role in all youth developments.

The Communist Party alone, right after the Second World War, correctly assessed the direction of U.S. monopoly capital and the roots of the fascist danger. Eugene Dennis, in his report to the 14th National Convention, cited three causes:

1. The drive for a "new world war to attain world domination," to meet the new stage in the general crisis of capitalism caused by the spread of socialism and new level of national liberation struggles.
2. The effort to meet the danger of a postwar cyclical crisis of overproduction by forcing the economic burden onto the backs of the workers.
3. The immense growth of state monopoly capitalism during the war, leading to intensification of exploitation and spread of oppression, and the fear of the "rising might of the new people's anti-monopoly party and coalition, the increased role of the working class leadership in it and the growing influence of the Communists," and a loss of "faith in the possibility of governing effectively by bourgeois democratic methods."

#### *Reactionary Offensive Not Yet Fascism*

Gus Hall, reporting as National Secretary to the 15th National Convention on December 28, 1950, noted that "since our 1948 Convention our country has been pushed dangerously down the road toward fascist rule and atomic world war." He added: "Each step in the war drive is accompanied by another step toward fascist rule." And further: "The present and the future of our people, our working class, our country, are tied to the struggle for peace in general and more specifically, to the defeat of the war aims and policies of Wall Street.

This has been and must remain, the central task of our Party."

Among the masses of people there was a failure to see the acute danger of world atomic war and of fascism at home. In the Party and the Left, especially from 1949 to 1953, there were strong tendencies to view war and fascism as inevitable.

William Z. Foster, in his writings on the war danger, started from an assessment that the world peace camp when fully mobilized was stronger than the war camp, that war was not fatally inevitable and peaceful coexistence was possible. Within ruling circles in the U.S., he wrote, there was the "war now" tendency of the Knowlands and McCarthys and the "war later" approach of other sections of monopoly—a difference in tempo not objective, but one which the people's intervention could make use of.

In an article entitled "Is the U.S. in the Early Stages of Fascism?," Foster stated that there continued to be a sharp fascist danger stimulated in the first place by the war drive. He noted:

The Party must particularly answer the specific questions as to whether or not these trends have now brought about such a qualitative weakening of bourgeois democracy in this country that we can be said actually to be in the beginnings of fascism. We have learned from the disastrous experiences of the labor movement in other lands that nothing is more hazardous than to mis-evaluate the fascist danger. If this danger is overestimated it can lead to the abandonment, as hopeless, of practical means of struggle and to Leftist moods of "let us go down with our flag flying." . . . (*Political Affairs*, November, 1954).

He said further:

That attack has not reached the stage of actual fascism, early phases or otherwise. Bourgeois democracy has been badly damaged, but not basically abolished. The workers and other democratic strata still possess the elementary rights to organize, to strike, to vote and to discuss the various issues confronting the country.

Some of the Party's statements, particularly that of the National Committee of June 15, 1951, on the imprisonment of the National Board, fed the notion in the Party that fascism was upon us and led to actions that surrendered positions prematurely, including the separation of the main leadership from the rest of the Party organizations in the name of securing its ability to function. Thus it was necessary at the Party Conference in 1953, and in Foster's article, to combat fatalistic notions.

### *Positive and Negative Aspects of Fight Against McCarthyism*

In meeting the severe danger of war and fascism, the Party faced the problem of developing its united front policies. The Party generally viewed the most rabid advocates of war and fascism—Vandenberg, Taft, Knowland, McCarthy, Jenner, Velde and others—as the spearhead in a division of labor for a policy of Truman and Eisenhower moving toward war and fascism. The McCarthys opened the door for the Trumans and Eisenhowers to move further to the Right and, in turn, the policies of Truman and Eisenhower guaranteed that the McCarthys would grow stronger. The task was to direct the sharpest fire at the open reactionaries because broader masses could understand this, but this had to be linked to the main objective of halting the Rightward direction of Truman and then Eisenhower.

There were tendencies in the Party, in the beginning, not to pay much attention to McCarthyism for fear of feeding illusions that the only problem was McCarthy and a few of his extremist supporters or of giving credence to the belief that McCarthy's objectives were good, only his methods were wrong. Among democratic masses the Party had to fight to show the connection of McCarthyism with the war policy of the main sections of monopoly, to show the common anti-Communist ideological underpinnings.

There were also opposing tendencies, to fight McCarthyism in isolation and only with respect to its broadest victims, while withdrawing from the difficulties of defending the Communist Party itself, tackling the Big Lies of "Soviet aggression" and Communist "subversion."

The Eisenhower Administration was characterized by the Party as even more reactionary than that of Truman, as representing the preferred party of big business. It was expected that it would step up the Korean War and the repressive drive. However, the Party in its 1954 Program and elsewhere indicated that McCarthyism and the Eisenhower Administration were not identical.

It was clearly correct to show the connection of the policies of Truman and Eisenhower with those of McCarthyism, and to warn against reliance on tactical differences with McCarthyism. It was correct to point out that only the development of a broad people's coalition struggling for peace, democracy and economic security could halt the direction. But very little advantage was taken of inter-monopoly differences and the progressive forces did not expect to see Eisenhower and Truman respond to democratic pressures. Yet Eisenhower shortly moved to end the Korean war, made some con-

cessions in the area of civil rights and, alongside of repressive moves which continued throughout his administration, clashed with McCarthy at the Army-McCarthy hearings and in the censure of McCarthy by the Senate. And he finally responded to the pressure for big-power negotiations at Geneva and Camp David. Ex-President Truman responded sharply to the McCarthy attacks.

In electoral policy, the 14th National Convention of the Communist Party looked to the Progressive Party in 1948 as the instrument of mass breakaway from the two-party system and the base of a people's anti-monopoly party led by labor. In his report to the 15th Convention in 1950, Gus Hall drew the conclusion from the 1948, 1949 and 1950 elections that "the masses had not yet learned from experience to see through the two-party farce and to recognize the need for an independent political movement based on the working class. The masses did not see the Progressive Party as a practical alternative. . . ." Explaining further why the 1948 Wallace vote was so much less than the predictions, he said that "most Americans do not like to cast what they consider a 'wasted vote' when they go to the polls. They 'play to win.'"

The Convention concluded that a presidential ticket rather than a full-blown party would have been better in 1948.

The 1953 Resolution of the National Committee reviewed the 1952 electoral victory for reaction and concluded that the Party's policy in opposing Eisenhower and Stevenson, making the peace issue the central question and supporting the Progressive Party ticket, was correct. Within that framework, the main weaknesses were expressed as:

1. A rigid third-party line which failed to sufficiently uphold a policy of united front and of coalition approaches on issues and in congressional and senatorial races. This was particularly the case in areas where the most notorious symbols of reaction ran as incumbents.

2. The failure within the framework of a correct policy of basic attack on both parties and tickets to sufficiently direct the sharpest first against the Republicans. (*Political Affairs*, July 1953.)

Writing as a political refugee in his own country, under the name of John Swift, Gil Green expressed himself similarly.

To have said that a basic condition for the support of any candidates for Congress was how they stood on peace, in practice, frequently meant support only for Progressive candidates. . . . The Democratic opponents of McCarthy, Jenner and Potter . . . did not depart from Truman's foreign policy. Yet, it was imperative to join with organized labor and with other anti-fascist forces to

help defeat the McCarthys. . . . Their defeat would have had the *objective* significance of a repudiation of McCarthyism and blatant anti-Communism in the eyes of the world and national opinion. ("The Struggle for a Mass Policy," *Political Affairs*, February, 1953.)

The Party Resolution took a similar position with regard to strengthening the Party's united front approach and overcoming its relative isolation. And in 1954 the Party did single out for defeat the most rabid warmongers and anti-Communists and helped to build broad coalitions. The elections were marked by the defeat of a number of such people and by some growth in Negro representation.

In the 14th and 15th Conventions, the Party placed the struggle for Negro rights as decisive in the struggle against McCarthyism and the war danger. In his report, Gus Hall said: "It is impossible to wage an effective and consistent fight for peace, democracy, equal rights and economic security without at the same time giving the most active support to the national liberation movement of the Negro people."

Whenever reaction is on the rise, among its first and sharpest attacks are those on the Negro people. Racism and chauvinism are major weapons of reaction to divide the people. Space does not permit us here to examine the Party's theoretical or strategic approach in this period to Negro liberation, or to evaluate the inner Party campaign against white chauvinism, or the role of Foster's article, "Left Sectarianism in the Fight for Negro Rights and Against White Chauvinism." (*Political Affairs*, July, 1953.)

#### *The Turn in Fight Against McCarthyism*

It is always difficult to estimate the relative weight of different factors in bringing about major social changes. The military defeat of U.S. imperialism in Korea, and the breaking of the atom bomb monopoly by the Soviet Union, contributed centrally to the ending of the Korean War, to the partial detente with the Soviet Union, to the resumption of Big Power negotiations and postponement of the direct drive toward world war. In turn, these events had a big effect on undermining the repressive drive toward fascism in the U.S., spearheaded by McCarthyism.

The consistent peace policy of the Soviet Union and its peace initiatives undermined the Big Lie among the masses of our people and made more difficult the pursuit of the war policy in its most virulent forms, as well as of anti-Communism at home. The political resistance of the world's peace forces to U.S. international policies, expressed in

the Stockholm Appeal, the Five Power Peace Pact Appeal, etc., were also influential.

World sentiment played a big role in halting the McCarthyite drive as the pretensions of the U.S. as the world defender of democracy were exposed. The same can be said on the question of black freedom. As McCarthy spread the net wider, and as the Party more effectively mobilized wider opposition, McCarthyism became a hindrance to the carrying out of the main lines of U.S. policy.

The opposition to the war in Korea and to the cold war grew to mass proportions, as did the fight against McCarthyism. The growth of the Negro liberation struggle and the fight of workers on the job for better wages and working conditions, despite calls for national unity and a wage freeze, also played their role. Our Party, in fact, played the leading role in mobilizing the opposition. If it had failed to see the dangers, if it had caved in before the repression, if it had been less effective in mounting mass opposition and in steadily improving its mass approach, the shape of the objective situation in which the new movements of the 1960's developed would be far different.

The Party did not succeed in mounting a smashing counter-offensive that could wipe the Smith, McCarran, McCarran-Walter and Taft-Hartley Acts from the books and establish a government that would move in the direction of peace and democracy. These laws had to be fought well into the 1960's, following the Frankfurter decision in 1961 which upheld the registration provisions of the McCarran Act. These laws threaten now to be revived, but the rapid march toward world war and fascism, was halted, at least for a time, creating the possibilities for the development of the movements of the 1960's under more favorable conditions.

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Any tendency in our Party to develop the struggle against white chauvinism as an academic and scholastic discussion must be rejected. The struggle on the ideological front is as much a class battle as the struggle on the economic and political fronts. The development of a scholastic debate on chauvinism in our Party could only result in turning our Party away from struggle on economic and political front for Negro rights and would thus strengthen the main expression of white chauvinism in our ranks, passivity in the struggle for Negro rights. This would be the surest way to guarantee the continuation and growth of chauvinism. Further, many expressions of chauvinism come into the open and can be combated effectively only when Party organizations and comrades are confronted with mass tasks in connection with the struggle for Negro rights.

Bob Thompson, *Political Affairs*, June, 1949

## On Our Concentration Policy

What is the essence of a concentration policy?

First of all, it requires a fundamental understanding of the role of the workers in the basic industries, in relation to the working class and the life of the country as a whole. It is precisely these workers employed in the huge plants by the tens of thousands who, as Lenin pointed out, become educated to understand the need for unity, collective action and solidarity by the very process of large-scale production itself. One cannot conceive . . . of organizing an effective fight against the draft, or in defense of civil liberties, a successful fight against war and fascism, unless this section of the working class is fully mobilized. And, of course, one cannot speak of winning the American workers for socialism without winning the majority of this section of the working class. It is necessary to permeate the entire Party with this consciousness.

Secondly, such a policy requires the selection of points of concentration where a base must be secured, if we are to set in motion the entire labor movement. . . . Concretely, while we must strengthen our base in all industrial states, we must above all shift our main emphasis to such states as Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan and to Western Pennsylvania. While we must strengthen the Party in all basic industries, we must particularly select for major concentration such industries as steel, auto, mining, maritime, electrical and railroad. Within these industries we must pursue a policy of concentration in key industrial towns and key plants and departments—with special consideration to the most underpaid sections of the workers, the unskilled and semi-skilled. . . .

Thirdly, the full mobilization of the Party is required to achieve the objective of our concentration policy. Concretely this means that all Party clubs must have a share in the responsibility for work at the concentration points. Communists in the mass organizations, trade unions, etc., should try to convince these organizations similarly to pursue a concentration policy.

Fourthly, beginning with the national and state leaderships, the entire Party must be involved in planning, guiding, and assuming systematic control and check-up of concentration objectives. All political and organizational problems must be discussed and reviewed from the standpoint of how to realize them in concentration industries. . . .

Henry Winston, *Political Affairs*, September, 1948

## On "Dangerous Thoughts"

What, then, are the really "dangerous thoughts" for which we have been indicted? What are the real issues, the only issues, in our trial?

We Communists think that World War III is not inevitable. We advocate united mass action to curb the warmongers. We work for American-Soviet friendship as the key to achieving world peace.

We think that fascism can be defeated. We advocate the building of a broad people's antifascist coalition to defeat every attempt to destroy the Bill of Rights, and to struggle for the extension of American democracy.

We think that labor, and the common people generally, can curb the men of the trusts and can end the two party system of Big Business. We advocate united labor struggle against the monopolists. We advocate building the people's anti-war and anti-monopoly coalition under labor leadership. . . .

These are all very dangerous thoughts indeed—to the Un-Americans, to the economic royalists. The suppression of these thoughts has now become an imperative necessity for those who are thinking of imposing a fascist dictatorship on America and Wall Street rule on the world.

But the Communists declare that—come hell or high water—we are *not going to stop thinking!* And we are *not going to stop doing*, either. Our thoughts on the issues of today are the thoughts of millions. Come what may, come Dewey or Truman, our Party will continue to initiate and spark-plug the mass action of those millions—and help them put their thoughts into action. . . .

Eugene Dennis, "*Dangerous Thoughts*" pp. 9-10.

## ON JOINING THE COMMUNIST PARTY

To hold your life in the human catapult—

to say with Parsons (when the trap was sprung)

*Let the voice of the people be heard.*

To open all your pores to winds and men  
to make a joy of being alive.

Each simplicity we touch  
breaks through another cellophane of days  
asks: can a sunrise or a revolution  
create a poem you don't live?

Eight o'clock comes and tells the news  
stretches from your belt to mine

a purse string of the world to ask:  
How much more before the blood rushes to the brain  
and the word explodes like Elijah on a shell  
the act that spreads over deeds  
and makes your destiny  
the voice of the people—heard.

WALTER LOWENFELS, 1937



**"Ideas, theories, programs . . ."**

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