

JANUARY, 1936



THE

# COMMUNIST

Review of the Month

Starting a monthly feature by ALEX BITTELMAN



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Wall Street Faces the Far East

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Company Unions

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United Front Tasks

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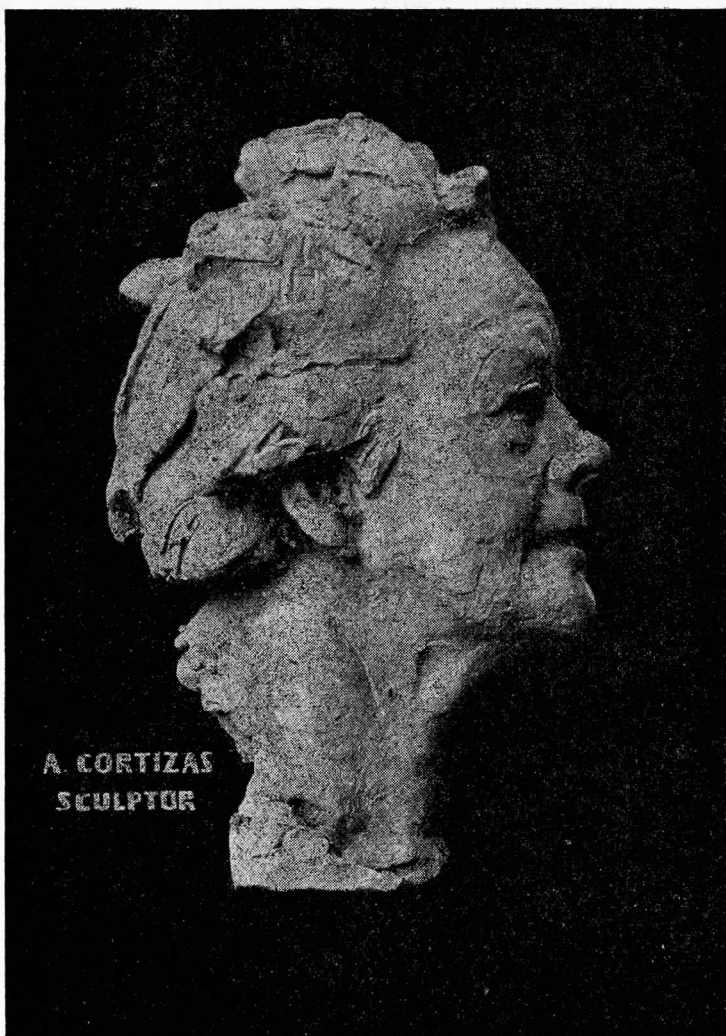
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A. CORTIZAS  
SCULPTOR

*In Tribute to*  
**COMRADE ELLA REEVE BLOOR**  
*and her 45 years of devoted and courageous work in the class struggle of the American workers and farmers.*

## Review of the Month

*The Tasks of the New Year and the Coming Communist Party Convention—Lenin Lives in the Struggle for the United and the People's Front—The Offensive of Reaction, Roosevelt's Yielding, and Independent Political Action by Labor—Townsend and Coughlin—The Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation in Wisconsin—Business Improvement, 14 Million Unemployed, Rising Profits, Declining Wages—The Berry Conference and the Struggle for Higher Wages—The Rising Cost of Living—The Hoare-Laval Treachery, the League of Nations, the Policy of the U.S.S.R., the Second International and the United Front—The Naval Conference and the War Danger in the Far East—From Moscow and Berlin.*

WE are entering the new year—1936—under the sign of clearer class alignments and sharp political battles. The coming presidential elections are of course a determining immediate factor in the situation, but at bottom lie more permanent factors. The most important is the continuing general crisis of the capitalist system and the stormy growth of the socialist system in the Soviet Union. Try as they may, the defenders of capitalism cannot get away from one fact. It is the fact that capitalism can no longer function “normally”. It has to be cured. Its pumps have to be primed. Ever so often it has to be placed under an oxygen tent. There is eternal bother to keep the thing going. And why? Because the system is vitally defective, is rotting at the root and is poisoning everything around, is standing in the way of the life and progress of society. It is this decaying and poisonous system that capitalist reaction is now trying to save and perpetuate—and at *any cost*. If nothing else will do it, they will resort to fascism, to a new imperialist world slaughter. The new year carries with it these grave dangers. And the question facing us ever more sternly is: are we going to let it happen or are we going to try to stop it? The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International has shown that it can be stopped by the united and people's fronts against fascism

and war. Let us make the year 1936 a period of advance—advance of the united front against capitalist reaction, fascism and war. In this spirit we must prepare for the National Convention of the Communist Party which is to be held in early March, 1936.

\* \* \*

January, 1936, marks the twelfth anniversary of Lenin's death. Twelve years ago there ceased to live the greatest teacher and leader of all oppressed and exploited, of all who dream of and fight for a better and happier world. He has left an undying monument to his memory. Into the making of this monument went the Soviet Union, the Communist International, Leninism—the sure guide to security, freedom and happiness—and millions of followers and disciples in all parts of the world, led by the greatest of all his disciples—Stalin. It is a living monument, full of strength, power, and hope. It is the hope of the world. It is the promise and guarantee that capitalist reaction and fascism will be checked and defeated, that the day of victory will come, and that socialism will triumph everywhere. This is how the toiling masses in all countries, how all sincere enemies of fascism and war, will this month commemorate the twelfth anniversary of Lenin's death.

During his glorious life, Lenin led the masses in many great and historic battles. In fact, every battle led by Lenin—and his Party, the Bolshevik Party—has proved to be historic and of the most far-reaching consequences. But in all of these struggles, Lenin fought for a number of relatively few but fundamental principles. He fought for *the unity of the working class*. He fought for its *political independence* from the bourgeoisie. And he fought for the *alliance between the working class and all other oppressed classes and groups*, and for the *leadership of the working class* in this alliance. Lenin's struggle for these principles took on different form depending upon the different stages through which the struggle had to pass. But at all times he was driving toward the realization of these principles. At all times he and his Party were fighting for a united working class, conscious of its class aims and historic mission and leading all the oppressed and exploited in the fulfilment of this mission. And because Lenin and the Bolsheviks were successful in realizing these principles, the toiling masses in Old Russia were successful in overthrowing tsarism and capitalism and in establishing socialism.

Though in a different historical setting, the American working class of today is faced with the need of fighting for the realization of the same principles. It is faced with the need of achieving its own unification and political independence from the capitalist class.

Never before was the need greater, nor were the possibilities more favorable. Faced by the reactionary onslaughts of the Liberty League-Hearst outfit, on the one hand, and Roosevelt's yielding to the Tory forces, on the other, the American working class is able to defend its interests only in one way. *It is the way of united and independent political action.* It is the way that leads to the emergence of a powerful Farmer-Labor Party which alone will be able to set up an effective barrier to capitalist reaction, fascism and war. It is also the only way of preventing the middle classes of city and farm from falling victims to the reactionaries, of winning the middle classes to the side of the working class, of establishing the alliance between the working class and the middle classes. It is, in other words, the way of Lenin, the way of Leninism.

Lenin fought reformism chiefly on one main ground. The essence of reformism, taught Lenin, is class collaboration, submission to the capitalist class, refusal to carry on an independent policy of class struggle against the capitalists. The result of the reformist policy of class collaboration is to split the working class by tying down part of the working class (in most instances the majority) to the capitalist class. The result of this reformist policy of class collaboration is to make part of the working class support the capitalist class in its attacks upon the other part of the working class, the class conscious workers who do not submit to capitalism. Red baiting carried on by reactionary labor leaders is a more or less ripe fruit of class collaboration. And so is the opposition of the reactionaries to independent working class political action. To fight, therefore, for the unity of the working class and its independence from the capitalist class—against company unionism and for a Farmer-Labor Party—one must fight class collaboration, which is the essence of reformism. That was what Lenin did, and thus led the masses to victory. That is what the American working class must do, and victory will be assured.

With Leninism as our guide, we will redouble our efforts in the struggle for the united front, for the political independence of the American workers and for the organization of a Farmer-Labor Party as the people's front against fascism and war. And in this way we will accelerate the maturing of the socialist revolution, the victory of the proletarian dictatorship and Soviet power.

\* \* \*

Roosevelt's opponents from the Right are continuing on the offensive and are meeting with certain successes. This is a danger



sign which cannot be ignored. When we see the relatively high degree of unanimity with which big and medium business carried through the boycott of the Berry Conference, and the violent refusal of those small capitalist groups that came to the Conference to elect representatives to the proposed Industrial Council, we must reach the conclusion that the Morgan-Dupont clique is succeeding in consolidating more the ranks of the monopolies and in rallying to them a growing section of big and medium business. It is not so much that we are concerned with the fate of Berry's conference. It is rather the fact that these successes of the Morgan-Dupont offensive mean a strengthening of the Liberty League, a strengthening of the camp of reaction. To this we are by no means indifferent.

Aldrich's attack on the New Deal made at the annual dinner of the Houston Chamber of Commerce, on December 11, contains nothing new by way of "argument". It was the old reactionary stuff that government spending and regulation stand in the way of more complete recovery. What was new is the fact that the chairman of the Chase National Bank of New York, a former collaborator of Roosevelt and a spokesman of the Rockefeller group which was attuned rather benevolently towards the Roosevelt Administration, has made an open attack on the New Deal. It would be, of course, incorrect to assume that the Rockefeller group has been taken politically in tow by the Morgan-Dupont clique, or that it has already moved over completely to the camp of the Liberty League. But the Aldrich attack certainly marks a shift of the Rockefeller group away from Roosevelt and in the direction of the Liberty League. Which is another indication that the camp of reaction is moving closer together and therefore becoming stronger. The enemies of reaction cannot remain indifferent to that either.

The comebacks of the Roosevelt Administration are anything but effective. Roosevelt himself continues on the defensive, tries hard to accommodate and conciliate his Right opponents, but is succeeding hardly at all. Ickes' recent speech in Michigan was of a different kind and so were the few public utterances of Tugwell, especially those he made in Los Angeles where he called for "a Farmer-Labor alliance". Ickes' attack on the Liberty League crowd as the chief source of fascist danger in the United States was strong and essentially correct. Tugwell's call for "a Farmer-Labor alliance" (why only in Los Angeles?) sounds good also. But what does it all mean from the point of view of the policies of the *Roosevelt Administration*? Who speaks for the administration—Roosevelt, or Ickes and Tugwell? Certainly, Roosevelt's utterances are of a somewhat different sort. His recent speech in Chicago, before the Farm Federation, following Ickes' speech only by a few days, was so much

different that the *New York Times* was pleased to find it "conciliatory and not at all disturbing". That means greatly "disturbing" to all those who are seriously alarmed by the growth of reaction and are genuinely desirous of setting up an effective barrier against it.

But much more disturbing, if not actually alarming, is the attitude of the leadership of the American Federation of Labor. What are they proposing for labor to do in the face of the growing menace of reaction? What is to be labor's political policy in the coming national elections? It is most peculiar that the official spokesmen of organized labor should be the only group in the country that is not concerning itself with devising ways and means of how best to defend the interests of its membership in the national elections. The Communist Party has already indicated the main line—Farmer-Labor Party—to solve this problem. Nearly every other class and organized group is actively preparing for these elections except the leadership of the American Federation of Labor. The bankers, the manufacturers, the farmers, the middle classes of the cities—all and everyone are formulating programs and demands, are discussing and deciding the question of party affiliation and alliances, organizing *politically* their own class forces and seeking allies among other classes, for the crucial elections of 1936. All—except the leadership of the American Federation of Labor. Isn't that alarming?

The National Association of Manufacturers, meeting in New York in the first week in December, declared through its president, Clinton L. Bardo, that "industry in self-defense has been forced to enter the political arena". Do not mind for a moment the brazen hypocrisy of the "self-defense" part of it. Ignore also for a second the untruth of the implied assertion that the manufacturers are just now for the first time entering the political arena. The important and new thing is this: that big capital finds it necessary and expedient to declare *openly* that it is entering politics *as a class*. They did so in the belief that by an open class appeal they will best succeed in arousing and mobilizing the capitalist class for the Liberty League offensive against the masses. Bardo & Co. then proceeded to formulate a *political program*, which they entitled "Platform for American Industry", incorporating into it the basic lines of attack upon the standards of the masses. Naturally, they try to identify the interests of the industrialists with the interests of the masses whom they exploit and with the interests of the nation as a whole. They try to represent themselves as the spokesmen of America and Americanism. They do this in order to befuddle the masses and drag them along as supporters of the Morgan-Dupont clique. This is the line of the monopolies, the class political line of reaction, for which big business is fighting *openly as a class*.

In the face of this open political mobilization of the class enemies of labor, the enemies of all exploited, what are the spokesmen of organized labor doing? What are they doing, or planning to do, to mobilize *politically* the forces of labor, to formulate labor's political program, and to approach the natural *allies* of labor for common action? Yes, we have heard William Green say something about "being driven to support Roosevelt". Not a very articulate reply to the challenge of the Manufacturers' Association! Why does he feel as if he were "being driven"? Is it because he is still tied up with Hearst and Dupont, his co-signers of the "New Declaration of Independence"? But aside from this, why should organized labor be *driven* to a political position? Why should it not *select* a position, deliberately and consciously, *as a class*—a position that will best serve the interests of labor and of its allies, the toiling farmers, the Negroes, the middle classes?

Organized labor has now a splendid opportunity to make a successful bid for leadership on the political arena. Labor itself, organized and unorganized, is showing many signs of political awakening. The growth of the sentiment for a Farmer-Labor Party is unmistakable; and if it does not spread as rapidly as is desirable, a good deal of responsibility for it rests upon the shoulders of the official leadership of the American Federation of Labor, which is trying to choke this sentiment among the masses. More widespread among the masses is a general heightening of political interest and activity. The realization is growing upon them that in the coming national elections great issues of vital concern to their well being will be fought out and decided. This is a splendid basis upon which to build the independent political power of the toilers, with organized labor taking the lead. But if organized labor does not take the lead, or if it delays too long, this evident growth of political mass interest and activity may be diverted into the channels of reaction. This danger should not be underestimated.

We say this especially to those labor men who seem to assume that the wide masses (workers, farmers, middle classes) will surely vote for Roosevelt. Aside from the vital consideration that it would be sheer madness to depend upon Roosevelt as an effective barrier to capitalist reaction and fascism, may we ask where is the assurance that the masses will vote for Roosevelt? Is there any assurance that the justified disillusionment with and resentment against Roosevelt among the masses will not be capitalized by the Liberty League, by the Coughlins, by the Talmadges? It is nonsense to say that Roosevelt has the vote of the masses in his pocket. He hasn't; and if he continues to carry on as he does—retreating before the offensive of Morgan-Dupont, conciliating them, and doing all this at the expense

of the masses—he will not have their votes. Coughlin is not asleep and he is building up political power for reaction; so is Talmadge; and, above all, so are the Liberty League and Hearst. Isn't it high time that the leaders of the industrial bloc in the American Federation of Labor, who especially incline to the position that the reelection of Roosevelt will solve all of labor's political problems (at least for the moment) and that reelection is assured, isn't it time that they wake up and take notice of what is actually happening? Is it not time to realize that only by taking the political lead, in an organized way, on an independent political platform, can labor hold its own ranks together against the encroachments of reactionaries and fascist demagogues, and that only in this way will the toiling farmers and the middle classes be rallied to the side of labor and against reaction?

There is also another danger to which the spokesmen of organized labor seem to be oblivious. It is that the growing movement of the masses to active politics, especially in view of the coming national elections, will become pulverized, broken up and divided. With the result that some of these movements may become diverted to reactionary ends, while others may be rendered ineffective as a force fighting in the interests of the masses themselves.

What is going to become of the Townsend movement? It has already become a factor of great political importance. Its following is middle class and partly worker. Townsend declared the other day that the movement will carry on an active political campaign to elect a Townsend Congress and President, if need be, by placing third party tickets. Both capitalist parties are alarmed, almost panicky, especially after the election of Main in Michigan; and well they may be. But what does *labor* think of it? The Communist Party greeted the Townsend movement as a sign of the process in which the independent political power of the masses will become crystallized. But that crystallization will not come by itself. If the working class stands aside, and does not itself take the lead in independent political action, many bad things may happen with the Townsend movement. It may become dissipated and broken up. Or it may become an adjunct to the Republican Party. Or it may fall into the hands of some fascist and semi-fascist demagogues. In either event, the result would be a strengthening of the forces of reaction. On the other hand, if labor adopts an independent political line, and approaches the Townsend movement with a view to securing common action in the national elections, the results may be epoch-making, the basis may be laid for a real people's front against reaction and fascism.

What is going to become of the movement which Coughlin dominates? Surely, the spokesmen of organized labor cannot close

their eyes to the fact that, under their very noses, a semi-fascist (if not fascist) adventurer, in the garb of a priest, supported by powerful reactionary interests, is building up a movement of great *political* strength. As long as Coughlin retains his influence, he remains a factor of first rate political importance, a factor for reaction. And yet, organized labor does not seem to be concerned about it. But it should be concerned about it very much. And the first thing to do is for labor *itself* to adopt an independent political line and program, and from this basis to appeal to the following of Coughlin (which also is mainly middle class and partly worker) for an understanding or alliance in the coming national elections.

It is well to remind once more the leadership of the American Federation of Labor, especially Lewis, Hillman, Howard and Dubinsky, but also all the others, of the German experiences. Why did Hitler get power? The answer is: due to reformist influence upon the majority of the German working class, the latter was unable to take leadership in effective struggle against the monopolies and capitalist reaction. This also helped Hitler to win the middle classes and part of the workers. These are indisputable facts. From which follows that failure of the American working class, due to reformist influence again, to take now the leadership in consolidating a people's front in the coming elections will help the Liberty League-Hearst-Coughlin outfits to realize their plans. Whether reaction proves strong enough to elect its own administration in the coming national elections or not, it will surely be in a position to dictate its will and realize it in life. Organized labor can prevent this from happening, but only by taking the lead at once in bringing about a people's front for the coming elections.

\* \* \*

The emergence of the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation of Wisconsin (December 1, 1935) is a fact of great importance. In its broader outlines it is a people's front, the formation of which we should greet. Its program is not all that we desire but goes in the right direction. We should like to see a similar movement reproduced in many other localities and states, and above all, on a national scale. But we should work for the correction of two serious weaknesses that are evident in the Wisconsin movement, weaknesses which should not be reproduced elsewhere, needless to say. One is the insufficiently leading role played by labor, the political predominance of the La Follette element. It is clear that, while it was absolutely necessary to join with the La Follette elements in the building up of the federation, the main strength of the movement will be derived

from the workers and the toiling farmers. This potential strength can be made actual only by a more active leading role of the labor organizations. The second weakness is the absence of the Communist Party, as a party, from this federation. Needless to say, this weakness is not of the choosing of the Communist Party. On the contrary, the latter offered its cooperation, declared its willingness to join, and was an important factor in promoting the movement which resulted in the launching of the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation. Individual Communists and sympathizers, under Party direction, are doing valuable work in the Federation as representatives of affiliated non-Party organizations. And this they will continue to do to promote the success of the people's front. At the same time we will fight for the admission of the Communist Party as a party. We will do so in the firm belief that the presence of the Communist Party is a source of strength to a real people's front; that the movement cannot be a real people's front if it does not include the Communist Party. Moreover, we shall always be mindful of the utterance of Dimitroff at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International: that the people's front cannot now be expected to be Socialist or Communist; but it will not serve the interests of the masses if it turns out anti-Socialist or anti-Communist.

Barring these two weaknesses of the Wisconsin movement, for the elimination of which we will work wholeheartedly—we repeat—we should like to see a similar movement initiated on a national scale and also on local and state scales. As against the evident coming together of the forces of reaction, there must be initiated a movement for bringing together, especially for the coming national elections, all forces of genuine opposition to reaction—labor, farmers, Negroes and middle classes. And the American Federation of Labor must take the initiative to achieve this aim.

Nothing will commemorate more fittingly the twelfth anniversary of Lenin's death than a rapid widening of our activities for the creation of the people's front for the building of the Farmer-Labor Party. The building of the united front and of the people's front is a link in the process which leads us to the revolutionary alliance under proletarian hegemony—the alliance which will fight for power and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is *the* link under the present conditions. Herein lies the deep revolutionary significance of our struggle for a Farmer-Labor Party. It is the struggle against fascism and war. It is the struggle which will create the prerequisites for the higher stages of the revolutionary process—the struggle for Soviet power and socialism.

An inseparable part of our work for the united front and people's front is the building and strengthening of the Communist Party

and its central organ, the *Daily Worker*. Hence the tremendous importance of the present recruiting drive for membership in the Communist Party and the circulation drive to increase the number of readers of the *Daily Worker*. The stronger the Communist Party and its press the more powerful will be the drive for the united and people's fronts, the more powerful will become the camp of anti-fascism and peace, the more rapidly will the American masses proceed to the struggle against capitalism and for a Soviet America.

\* \* \*

The opening paragraph of the "Platform for American Industry", adopted by the National Association of Manufacturers, is so illuminating that we reproduce it here in full.

"Almost ten million remain unemployed in America and twenty million continue on relief. This situation exists despite an enormous potential demand for certain essential goods and services. Direct relief, although necessary, is no cure for this unemployment and the public works relief program is a demonstrated failure. The only solution for unemployment is re-employment through the revival of private enterprise."

That sounds fine. But why doesn't "private enterprise" give employment to these ten million unemployed (fourteen million is closer to the truth)? Roosevelt is in the way, so say the manufacturers.

"This revival is being prevented by a persistent departure from the principles of social and economic organization on which American progress, prosperity and civilization have been built." (From the "Platform".)

That sounds fine also, although it hardly fits in with the fact that the greatest economic crisis of all times broke during the Hoover regime; and Hoover certainly cannot be accused of having violated "the principles of social and economic organization" that are so dear to the hearts of the Manufacturers' Association. Nor does it fit in with the fact that during a long stretch of years preceding the crisis the United States was governed by such staunch supporters of "private enterprise" as Harding and Coolidge. But we will let history go for a moment and concentrate on things more immediate. We would ask: assuming that another Hoover gets elected president in 1936, how soon will the ten (fourteen) million unemployed get their jobs? Is the Manufacturers' Association ready to make some specific pledges on this point and give some tangible guarantees that its pledges will be fulfilled in a specified period of time? Of course,

they will make no such pledges because they don't believe a word they say. Proof? Here it is.

William J. Cameron, spokesman for the Ford Motor Company, admittedly knows something about the re-employment capacities of industry, and he is also a devotee of the "principles of private enterprise". What does he say? He takes sharp issue with the idea that industry can re-employ the unemployed. He says that industry (as distinct from agriculture, transportation, and distribution) normally employs no more than nine million people, of whom seven million (he claims) are now at work. How then, he asks, can industry be expected to give employment to ten, eleven, or fourteen million more? Or, in his own words:

" . . . Any group which normally employs less than 9,000,000 persons, of whom probably 7,000,000 are now at work, cannot possibly be said to have 11,000,000 of its people out of work. It never had that many people. And second, any group whose highest peak of business was never sufficient to employ more than 9,000,000 persons cannot, even at government command, increase that number to 20,000,000."

Clear, isn't it? Private enterprise *in industry* will never give jobs to the present army of fourteen million unemployed. Cameron does not stop at that; he passes the buck to agriculture, transportation, personal services, mining, distribution, etc. But surely these branches of economy are no less depressed than industry; agriculture is certainly worse. Result? It follows from Cameron that there is no hope, or very little, that private enterprise will absorb more than a minute fraction of the unemployed, even if industry comes back to the days of 1929. What, then, becomes of the grandiloquent declaration of the Manufacturers' Association? Hot air and reactionary demagoguery; a cover for the destruction of all relief services, for open shop, wage cuts, more speed-up, and general reaction all along the line.

There is one little phrase in Cameron's analysis which we would like to challenge. It is his assertion that industry could not employ more than nine million people "even at government command". It depends upon what kind of government command, the nature of the command and how strictly the command is enforced. We venture to assure Mr. Cameron that the government could command and have its commands enforced if it were inclined to do so. Let it adopt the proposal of the Communist Party that the government open all closed enterprises whose owners refuse to operate; take over completely those enterprises whose owners obstruct government operation; confront the capitalists with the following alternatives: operate yourselves at full capacity, or let the government do it for



you, or the government will take over your enterprises altogether. By such steps, plus adequate relief and insurance financed by taxation of high incomes and fortunes, America would be taking a long stride in the direction of solving its unemployment problem.

\* \* \*

Business is improving. Recovery, in fact, is already here. So says Roosevelt. The only thing that is still missing is employment for fourteen million people, wage increases for employed to meet the mounting cost of living, decent relief to about twenty million that are still dependent on relief rolls, the solution of the agrarian crisis, the solution of the question of foreign markets (which is a vital problem for capitalist economy), removal of the war danger and a few more things which need not be mentioned now.

Roosevelt's Right opponents do not deny the improvement in business. They couldn't very well deny the improvement in *profits*—the profits of the monopolies—which is the *outstanding* feature of the improvement in business. But they violently deny that Roosevelt's New Deal had anything to do with it; and in this they are wrong. The New Deal was greatly instrumental in reducing the standard of living of the masses (with few exceptions) and thus has helped business and profits. There is no getting away from that. Hence, the Right opponents of Roosevelt are now concentrating on another point. They are trying to show that *further* improvement in business is hampered by the Roosevelt policies and that these are creating the danger of a possible recession.

Says the National City Bank of New York:

“Possibly the chief danger of new disturbance is political, in the nature of fresh experimentation or measures discouraging enterprise. As long as there is unemployment, the industries are a target for attack, and the proposal to legislate a 30-hour week is a threat. An increase of industrial costs, which a change of this importance would entail, would be a very unfavorable development at this time.” (*Bulletin*, December, 1935.)

The political conclusion from this economic analysis is: put Hoover (or someone like him) in power; run the government on the lines of the Liberty League and Hearst. That will not abolish unemployment, but it will provide bullets, gas, machine guns to “pacify” the demonstrating unemployed, the bonus marchers, the strikers for higher wages, the fighters for the 30-hour week, and all those who do not want to starve for the greater glory of “private enterprise” and for the faster accumulation of profits by the Morgan-Dupont clique.

They fear “an increase of industrial costs”. What about wages?

What about increases in wages to meet the mounting cost of living? This, of course, is no concern of the National City Bank. Why should *they* worry about that? But the leadership of the American Federation of Labor should be worrying very much about it. Yet we don't see that happening. We don't hear William Green, or anyone else of the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, say much about wage increases to meet the rising cost of living. Why should profits go up and real wages go down? Real wages *are* going down with very few exceptions. This, therefore, is the time for employed workers to fight for wage increases. Yet, peculiarly enough, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor does not place this demand as a basic point of its program and does nothing at all to organize the workers (especially in the basic industries and along industrial lines) to fight for this demand.

It was especially striking to miss this demand in the set of proposals submitted to the Berry Conference by the American Federation of Labor. There were some very good demands in these proposals, such, for instance, as the 30-hour week without reduction in wages, outlawing of child labor, etc. If the A. F. of L. leadership utilizes the Berry Conference to arouse the masses to struggle for these demands (instead of merely engaging in round table talks); if it proceeds to organize and strengthen the unions (again—especially in the basic industries and along industrial lines) in order that they fight for these demands; and if simultaneously the independent *political* power of labor is mobilized to back up this program, something worthwhile may come out of it. But why did they not include in their proposals the demand for *wage increases* to meet the rising cost of living? To omit such a demand is to ignore one of the most important demands of the workers at the present time. *This vital mistake must be corrected, and corrected at once.*

Incidentally, the Republicans are making good use of this mounting cost of living and the decline of real wages. The reports from Virginia are that many miners are falling victim to the demagoguery of the Republicans on this issue. Similar reports come from the New England textile centers, and from other parts of the country. Remember: independent economic and political action by the workers is the only answer to these dangers.

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The cause of peace, and of Ethiopia, received a treacherous blow by the Hoare-Laval proposals to reward Mussolini's war aggression with a considerable portion of Ethiopian territory. Hoare has been forced to resign, but the Baldwin government, which is as much

responsible for this treachery as Hoare individually, is still in power. And the treacherous Laval is still holding on. The storm of mass resentment was so strong that the Baldwin government, not fully unanimous on the question, felt compelled, not only to drop Hoare, but also to drop the "peace" proposals; for the moment, at least. As to Laval, he still has to face the full consequences of his treacherous policies, since the People's Front of France has begun a big campaign against them.

From Moscow comes a clear and unequivocal condemnation of these imperialist tricks and treacheries. Says *Pravda*:

"It is clear the big powers are ready to make Ethiopia the victim of their interests. If the League of Nations, instead of protecting peace, becomes a bureau for distribution of awards to aggressors, the League will die."

Simultaneously reports are coming to the effect that the Baldwin government has also planned to bring Hitler back to the League of Nations and to place the whole institution under the management of Britain, France, Germany, and Italy.

"Thus," says *Pravda*, "Ethiopia is being openly sacrificed in the interests of the big imperialist powers. This reminds us again of the value of their assurance of loyalty to peace and the safety of small and weak countries."

This reminds us also of the policy of the Second International. Its Executive, under the pressure of the representatives of only five parties (the British Labor Party and several Scandinavian parties), has repeatedly declined the invitation of the Communist International to make a united front in the struggle for peace and in defense of Ethiopia. One of the chief explanations given for declining the invitation was that the League of Nations is handling the question and that the Executive of the Second International is giving all support to the peace efforts of Geneva. To this the Communist International replied that the working class, and all sincere fighters for peace, cannot abdicate in favor of the League of Nations; that while the masses ought to exert all possible compulsion upon the League in favor of peace and in defense of Ethiopia, the chief reliance must be placed upon the independent peace struggles of the masses themselves, and for this we need the united front. Who was right in this dispute? Let every Socialist worker try to answer the question and he will reach only one conclusion: the Comintern was right and the Executive of the Second International was wrong.

But there is not much comfort in that. The Executive of the Second International is still refusing the united front, despite the

fact that a majority of its parties are in favor of it. Meanwhile Ethiopia is in daily danger of being sacrificed to the interests of the big imperialist powers. Sinister and secret maneuvers are going on to patch up some sort of a front composed of Hitler, Mussolini, Laval, and Baldwin—a front that bodes no good to the cause of peace or to the safety of small and weak nations. Japan is entrenching herself more firmly in China and is reaching out ever nearer to the Soviet Union. Can these criminal machinations of the imperialists and warmongers be checked and frustrated? Yes, they can. By the masses themselves, by their independent and united actions, by the united front nationally and internationally, in collaboration with the peace policies of the Soviet Union. The opportunity is here. It has been missed long enough. It must not be missed any longer.

The situation in the Far East generally is becoming more strained. The present Naval Conference in London shows that very clearly. The naval claims of Japan and the United States (which means claims to imperialist power in the Far East) have never been more acutely irreconcilable. Out of these contradictions a new world imperialist war is maturing. The burden of armaments is becoming heavier in the United States every day. And it may become still heavier as a result of the London conversations.

American capitalism is for the status quo. But Japan has destroyed it. And from it grows the danger of an armament race and war. Significant is the fact that the Republican press of the East (the *New York Herald Tribune*), which is intimately connected with the imperialists, is growing ever more aggressive in its tone and denunciation of Japan. This means preparation for more armaments and a closer approach to a war solution of the imperialist contradictions in the Pacific. That can be checked. That can be frustrated. But only by the masses and their independent struggles for peace—only by an international and proletarian policy of peace, a policy governed by the same principles as that of the Soviet Union's peace policy.

Again we must ask the Socialist Party: why do you delay the united front? Is it so difficult to see that the struggle for peace would gain by it tremendously? Let Norman Thomas try again to call forth the ghost of the Italian soldier killed in Ethiopia and explain to him why there is still no united front between the Socialist and Communist Parties in the struggle for peace. The united front in America, and internationally, might have saved many a life, you know, Italian and Ethiopian. The comrades of the Left in the Socialist Party, who will have the majority of the Socialist Party with them on the issue of the united front, are assuming terrible responsibilities by procrastinating. It must be said: they have not made the best of the Browder-Thomas debate in Madison Square Garden—a debate which proved

beyond doubt the will of the masses for the united front and the possibilities for it.

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From Moscow:

"This year's industrial program was completed on December 14, with a 25.9 per cent increase over last year, instead of a 19.7 per cent gain as scheduled."

From Moscow:

"The number of food packets, especially of butter and fats, sent from the U.S.S.R. by citizens of German stock to relatives and friends in Germany has greatly increased in recent weeks." (Duranty, *New York Times*, December 19, 1935.)

From Berlin:

"Once again the executioner in evening clothes swung the headsmen's axe in the dawn's dim light in Berlin today and another head rolled in the sand of the Third Reich. The head belonged to Rudolf Claus, leader in the Communist uprising in Saxony in 1920." (Wireless to *New York Times*, December 18, 1935.)

And Thaelmann is still in Hitler's dungeons.

A. B.

# The Great Initiative

By V. I. LENIN

(Translated by Israel Blankenstein)

*"There has been realized the dream of Marx and Engels of that wonderful time when ideas would foresee and predetermine the course of life, the course of the historic process."*

(PRAVDA, November 23, 1935.)

## PREFATORY REMARK

### LENIN FORESAW AND PROJECTED THE STAKHANOVITE MOVEMENT

**I**N the struggle for building the classless socialist society under the guidance of the great leader of the world proletariat, Comrade Stalin, the Soviet Union has reached a new stage in the development, not only of the higher productivity of labor, but a new humanity. This stage is expressed in the Stakhanovite movement—the stage which brings the Soviet Union closer to the Communist society.

The Stakhanovite movement is the outcome of all the preceding development of socialist competition and shock-brigade work. It is the new and higher stage of those early Communist *subbotniks*\* of the epoch of War Communism; of the shock-brigade work and the socialist competition of the First Five-Year Plan; through the Isotov movement, whose slogan was expressed by Comrade Stalin as: "The principle of socialist competition—the comradely help by the more advanced to those lagging behind, in order to reach a general rise."

On the occasion of the twelfth anniversary of Lenin's death, on the occasion of the historic emergence of the Stakhanovite movement, we are publishing here for the first time in a faithful English translation the text of Lenin's work on the pioneers of socialist labor—the labor which has been transformed from compulsory capitalist slave toil into socialist voluntary labor of joy and glory, thus realizing for all to see the scientific revolutionary predictions of Marx and Engels as regards the transformed character and role of human labor in a socialist society.

THE EDITORS.

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\* See translator's note below.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

THE article submitted here was concluded, as appears from the date at the end of the manuscript in Lenin's own handwriting, on June 28, 1919. A few words about the situation of the Soviet Union at that time may not be amiss. It was the period of perhaps the greatest concentration of the counter-revolutionary forces. Denikin was in control of the Ukraine and North Caucasus, thus cutting off the principal grain regions and the iron and steel and coal base of the country. Kolchak was threatening the revolution from the East. In the Northwest, the Yudenich army was advancing on Petrograd. The Red Army was still in its formative stage, with various groups in the country favoring guerrilla warfare and opposing a centralized armed force. Hundreds of thousands of workers, many of them skilled and experienced craftsmen, had left the factories to go to the front. Owing to the food shortage, other thousands of workers had gone to the villages. The industries and railways suffered from a shortage of fuel, of iron and steel, and other raw materials, as well as from a shortage of labor, especially of skilled workers.

It was under these conditions that the Communist unit in the repair shops of the Moscow-Kazan railway line met to consider the emergency which had arisen because the shops were behindhand with locomotive repairs and other pressing work. Unanimously the unit decided that all Communists should work on Saturday afternoons, donating their usual rest period, for the duration of the emergency. When this decision became known many non-Communist workers joined in this pledge.

The example proved contagious. It quickly spread to other industries and cities. Many thousands of workers volunteered to work overtime without remuneration, very often not at the place of their regular work but in other factories or even other industries where an emergency situation existed. Usually such work was performed during the Saturday rest period. Hence the name "subbotnik", derived from *subbota*, the Russian word for Saturday.—I. B.

## THE GREAT INITIATIVE

By V. I. LENIN

THE press reports many examples of heroism on the part of the Red Armymen. In the struggle against the Kolchak and Denikin forces and the other armies of the landlords and capitalists, the workers and peasants frequently perform miracles of courage and endurance, defending the conquests of the socialist revolution. In

the task of coping with the tendency to guerrilla warfare, of overcoming weariness and laxity, we are making progress but slowly and with difficulty; but we are moving forward in spite of everything. The heroism of the toiling masses who are consciously making sacrifices in the interests of the victory of socialism is the foundation of the new, comradely discipline in the Red Army, of its revival and its growth.

No less recognition is due to the heroism of the workers behind the front lines. In this respect, the Communist subbotniks organized by the workers on their own initiative are of truly colossal significance. Obviously, this is only a beginning, but it is a beginning of extraordinary importance. It is the beginning of a transformation, a more difficult, more fundamental, more deep-going, more decisive change than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. For this change implies victory over one's own inertia, laxity, petty-bourgeois egoism, over the habits carried over by the workers and peasants from accursed capitalism. Only when *this* victory will have been secured, will a new social discipline, socialist discipline, have been created, only then will a return to capitalism have become impossible, and Communism will have become really invincible.

[*At this point Lenin quotes at length press reports describing the work of various subbotniks. This part of the original article is here omitted.—ED.*]

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I have cited at length and in considerable detail reports on Communist subbotniks because they undoubtedly represent one of the most important aspects of Communist construction, an aspect to which our press has not paid sufficient attention, and which none of us has yet appreciated adequately.

Less political fanfare, but more attention to the most simple but vital facts of Communist construction, facts taken from life and tested by life! This slogan should be persistently reiterated by all of us, by our writers, our agitators, our propagandists, and our organizers.

It is natural and inevitable that in the early period after the proletarian revolution we are concerned above all, as with the chief and basic task, with crushing the resistance of the bourgeoisie, with victory over the exploiters, with the suppression of their conspiracies (as for instance "the conspiracy of the slave-holders" to surrender Petrograd, in which all elements took part, from the Black Hundred and Cadets to the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists). But along with this task, we are just as inevitably confronted eventually with the more essential task—which becomes ever more important—the



task of positive Communist construction, of creating new economic relationships, a new society.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, as I have already pointed out on several occasions, as, for instance, in my speech on May 12 at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet, signifies not only and not even principally the use of force against the exploiters. The economic basis of this revolutionary violence, the guarantee of its vitality and success, lies in the fact that the proletariat represents and realizes a higher type of social organization of labor as compared with capitalism. This is its essence. This is its source of strength, and the guarantee of the inevitable complete victory of Communism.

Under feudalism the organization of social labor was based on the discipline of the whip, and the toilers, robbed and oppressed by a handful of landowners, were browbeaten and kept in a condition of profound ignorance. Under capitalism the organization of social labor is based on the discipline of hunger. In spite of all the progress of bourgeois culture and bourgeois democracy, the vast mass of the toilers remains, even in the most advanced, most civilized, democratic republics, an ignorant and stultified mass of wage slaves or downtrodden peasants, exploited and oppressed by a handful of capitalists. The Communist organization of social labor, the first step towards which is socialism, is based, and the further we progress the more it will be based, on the voluntary and conscious discipline of the toilers themselves who have overthrown the yoke both of the landlords and of the capitalists.

This new discipline does not drop from the clouds, nor is it a result of good intentions. It springs from the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production, and only from these conditions. Without these conditions it is impossible. And the protagonist of these material conditions, the force that carries them forward, is a definite historical class which is created, organized, cemented, trained, educated, and hardened by large-scale capitalism. This class is the proletariat.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, if we translate this Latin, scientific, historico-philosophic expression into simple language, means the following: that only a definite class—namely, the urban, particularly the industrial, the factory workers—is capable of leading the whole mass of toilers and exploited in the struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist yoke, of leading them in the process of this overthrow, in the struggle to secure and to strengthen the victory, in the effort to create a new, socialist social system, in the whole struggle for the complete abolition of classes. (In passing we might note that the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is only this, that the former term signifies the first stage of the new society

arising from capitalism, while the latter term signifies its later and higher stage.)

The error of the yellow "Berne" International consists in the fact that its leaders acknowledge the class struggle and the leading role of the proletariat only in words. They shrink from its ultimate logical inference, they are afraid precisely of that inevitable conclusion which is particularly dangerous for the bourgeoisie, which the bourgeoisie cannot accept. They are afraid to recognize that the dictatorship of the proletariat, too, is a stage of the class struggle—which is inevitable as long as classes have not been abolished, and which changes its forms, becoming particularly sharp and assuming particularly original forms in the first period following the overthrow of capitalism. Upon conquering political power, the proletariat does not discard the class struggle but continues it—up to the point of the elimination of classes—but naturally in a changed environment, in changed forms, with changed methods.

Just what does the term "abolition of classes" signify? All those who call themselves Socialists recognize this as the ultimate aim of socialism, but by no means all Socialists appreciate its significance. The term "classes" denotes large groups of persons distinguished from one another by their position in a definite historical system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and defined by law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labor and, hence, by the size of their share of the social wealth and the manner in which they obtain it. Classes are such groupings of persons one of which is in a position to appropriate the labor of the other, owing to the difference in the positions they occupy in a definite system of social economy.

It is clear that for the complete abolition of classes it is not enough only to overthrow the exploiters, the landlords and capitalists, it is not enough only to abolish *their* property rights. It is also necessary to abolish *every kind* of private ownership of the means of production, it is necessary to do away both with the difference between the city and the countryside and the difference between those who are engaged in physical labor and those who are engaged in mental labor. This is a task which requires considerable time. Its consummation requires an immense advance in the development of the productive forces; it requires the overcoming of the resistance of the numerous vestiges of small-scale production—a resistance which is often passive and therefore particularly obstinate and difficult to cope with; it is necessary to overcome the tremendous force of habit and inertia connected with these vestiges of small-scale production.

It would be empty phrasemongering—or an illusion of an ante-diluvian, pre-Marxian, Socialism—to assume that all "toilers" are

equally capable of carrying out this task. For this capability does not spring out of nowhere; it is a historical product. It arises *only* out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production. This capability is possessed, at the beginning of the road from capitalism to socialism, *only* by the proletariat. The proletariat is capable of achieving this gigantic task, first, because it is the strongest and most advanced class of civilized society; second, because it constitutes the majority of the population in the most advanced countries; third, because in backward capitalist countries, as for instance in Russia, the majority of the population is composed of semi-proletarians, that is, of people who always live part of the year as proletarians, who always earn their living in part as wage workers in capitalist enterprises.

He who attempts to solve the problems of the transition from capitalism to socialism on the basis of general phrases about freedom, equality, democracy in the abstract, etc. (as is being done by Kautsky, Martov, and the other heroes of the yellow "Berne" International), only exposes himself thereby as a petty-bourgeois, as a philistine, who is ideologically trailing after the bourgeoisie. The correct solution of this problem can be arrived at only on the basis of a concrete study of the specific relations between the specific class—namely, the proletariat—which has conquered political power and the whole non-proletarian as well as semi-proletarian mass of the toiling population. And it must be borne in mind that these relations develop, not in a fantastically harmonious, in an "ideal" environment, but in the actual environment of the desperate and many-sided resistance by the bourgeoisie.

The vast majority of the population—especially of the toiling population—in any capitalist country, including Russia, has experienced in a thousand different ways capitalist oppression, capitalist exploitation and outrages of various kinds. The imperialist war—that is, the slaughter of scores of millions for the sake of settling the question as to whether British or German capital should have the hegemony in plundering the whole world—has greatly sharpened, broadened, and deepened these experiences, and has led to a conscious appreciation of these experiences. Its inevitable result was that the vast majority of the population, especially of the toiling masses, is sympathizing with the proletariat, because the proletariat has fought with heroic courage, with revolutionary ruthlessness, to overthrow the capitalist yoke, to overthrow the exploiters, to crush their resistance; because it is clearing the road for the creation of a new society in which there will be no room for exploiters.

In spite of the inevitable and great petty-bourgeois vacillations and waverings of the non-proletarian and semi-proletarian masses

of the toiling population towards bourgeois "order", towards the bourgeoisie, they, nevertheless, cannot but recognize the moral and political authority of the proletariat which has not only overthrown the exploiters and is crushing their resistance but which is also building a new, higher, social bond, a higher social discipline—the discipline of conscious and united workers who carry no yoke over them, who know no other power save the power of their own unification, of their own, more conscious, courageous, cemented, revolutionary, consistent vanguard.

In order to be victorious, in order to create and to secure socialism, the proletariat must solve a two-fold task. First, it must inspire, by the great heroism of its revolutionary struggle against capital, the whole mass of the toilers and exploited, it must inspire them, organize them, guide them towards the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the complete suppression of all resistance on its part. Second, it must lead the whole mass of the toiling and exploited elements, as well as of all the petty-bourgeois strata, onto the road of new economic construction, onto the road of creating a new social bond, a new labor discipline, a new organization of labor combining the last word of science and of capitalist technique with the mass unity of the conscious workers who are creating large-scale socialist production.

This second task is more difficult than the first, because it certainly cannot be solved by sporadic outbursts of heroism, because it requires the most difficult heroism, the prolonged, persistent, persevering heroism manifested in mass and *routine, everyday* labor. This task, however, is also more essential than the first, since, in the final analysis, the most profound source of strength for the victories over the bourgeoisie and the sole guarantee that these victories will be lasting and irrevocable can be only a new, higher mode of social production, the replacement of capitalist and petty-bourgeois production with large-scale socialist production.

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The Communist subbotniks are of vast historic significance precisely for the reason that they are a manifestation of the conscious and voluntary initiative of the workers in developing the productivity of labor, in passing over to a new labor discipline, in the creation of socialist conditions of economy and life.

J. Jacobi—one of the few, indeed, one of the exceptionally rare bourgeois democrats of Germany who after the lessons of 1870-71 turned, not to chauvinism of national-liberalism, but to socialism—said that the formation of one labor union is of greater historical significance than the battle of Sadowa. This is correct. The battle of Sadowa determined which one of the two bourgeois monarchies—Austria or Prussia—should have the leading role in

carrying out the task of developing the German national capitalist state. The formation of a single labor union was a small step towards the world victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. Similarly, we may say that the first Communist subbotnik, organized on May 10, 1919, by the railway workers of the Moscow-Kazan railway line in Moscow, is of greater historical significance than any of the victories of Hindenburg or of Foch and the British in the imperialist war of 1914-18. The victories of the imperialists spelt the slaughter of millions of workers in the interests of profits for the Anglo-American and French multi-millionaires; they are a manifestation of the bestiality of the dying, over-ripe, decaying capitalism. The Communist subbotnik of the Moscow-Kazan railway workers is one of the germs of the new socialist society which will liberate all the peoples of the world from capitalist oppression and from war.

The gentlemen of the bourgeoisie and their flunkies, including the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists who are accustomed to consider themselves as representatives of "public opinion", of course belittle the hopes of the Communists. They point to the small number of participants in the subbotniks as compared with the numerous cases of pilfering, of loafing, of the decline in productivity, of the spoilage of raw materials and finished goods, etc. To these gentlemen we reply: if the bourgeois intellectuals contributed their knowledge to aid the toilers, instead of placing it at the service of the Russian and foreign capitalists for the restoration of their power, the transformation would proceed more rapidly and more peaceably. But this assumption is utopian. For the issue is determined by the class struggle, and the majority of the intellectuals are drawn towards the bourgeoisie. Not with the aid of the intellectuals, but in spite of their resistance—in spite, at any rate, of the resistance of the majority of the intellectuals—the proletariat will be victorious, sweeping aside the incorrigible bourgeois intellectuals, transforming, re-educating and impressing the wavering intellectuals, and gradually winning over an ever-larger part of them. Their jubilation over the difficulties and failures of the revolution, the sowing of panic, the propaganda in favor of turning backward, all of these are weapons and methods of class struggle of the bourgeois intellectuals. They will not deceive the proletariat.

But let us consider the question on its merits. Has there ever been a case in history when a new mode of production has succeeded at one stroke, without a long series of failures, errors, and retreats? Half a century after the abolition of serfdom in the Russian villages quite a few vestiges of serfdom still remained in existence. Half a century after the Negro slaves had been freed in the United States the Negroes quite generally remained in a condition of semi-slavery.

The bourgeois intellectuals, including the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists, remain true to type when in the interests of capitalism they persist in resorting to absolutely false reasoning. Before the proletarian revolution they charged us with being utopians; since the revolution they demand that we should get rid of the remnants of the past at a fantastic speed.

But we are not utopians, and we know the true value of bourgeois "reasoning". We know also that for a certain period after the revolution the remnants of the past will inevitably prevail in the habits of the people as against the shoots of the new. When the new has just been born the old always remains in existence, and for a certain period of time is stronger than the new. This has always been the case in nature as well as in social life. The sneers at the weakness of the new shoots, the cheap skepticism of the intellectuals, etc.—all of these are, essentially, methods of class struggle of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, the defense of capitalism against socialism. We must carefully study the shoots of the new, we must pay the utmost attention to them, aiding in every possible way their growth and "nurturing" these weak shoots. Some of them will inevitably perish. We cannot guarantee that precisely the Communist subbotniks will play a particularly important role. This is not the important thing. The important thing is that we must support each and every shoot of the new, out of which life itself will select those that are fit to survive. If a Japanese\* scientist, in order to find a remedy against syphilis, could patiently experiment with 605 serums before he discovered the 606th satisfactory serum, then we who are intent upon solving the much more difficult task, namely to conquer capitalism, must have the persistence to test hundreds and thousands of new methods and ways, of new means of struggle, in order to develop the most suitable methods.

The Communist subbotniks are important for the reason that they were initiated by workers who are by no means placed in exceptionally favorable conditions, but rather by workers of diverse crafts, including also unskilled workers, laborers, who are situated in *ordinary*, that is, *most difficult* conditions. All of us are well aware of the basic reason for the decline in productivity, which is occurring not only in Russia but throughout the world, namely, the impoverishment and exhaustion caused by the imperialist war—disease and malnutrition. The latter is the most important. The reason is—starvation. And in order to do away with starvation, it is necessary to raise the productivity of labor in agriculture, in transport and in industry

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\* Lenin refers here to Dr. Hata, associate of Professor Ehrlich, and co-discoverer with him of the anti-syphilis preparation 606.—Ed.

This would seem to be a vicious circle: in order to raise the productivity of labor it is necessary to do away with starvation, and in order to do away with starvation it is necessary to raise the productivity of labor.

But it is well known that such contradictions are, in practice, solved by breaking the vicious circle, by a change in the moods of the masses, by the heroic initiative of individual groups which, coinciding with such a change, not infrequently plays a decisive role. The Moscow laborers and railway workers (we refer, of course, to the majority, and not to the handful of speculators and similar whiteguard trash) are toilers who live under extremely difficult conditions. They have suffered from constant malnutrition, and now, on the eve of the new harvest and in view of the general aggravation of the food situation, they suffer outright starvation. And it is precisely these starving workers—surrounded by the vicious counter-revolutionary agitation of the bourgeoisie, of the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists—who are organizing the Communist subbotniks, who work overtime *without remuneration*, and who attain a *great increase in productivity*, in spite of the fact that they are tired, worn out, and exhausted as a result of malnutrition. Is not this heroism of the highest order? Does not this signify the beginning of a change of world historical importance?

The productivity of labor is, in the final analysis, the most important, the chief factor assuring the victory of the new social system. Capitalism has developed a productivity of labor that was not witnessed under feudalism. Capitalism can be, and will be, definitely defeated because socialism will develop a new, a much higher productivity of labor. It is a very difficult task, a task which will take much time. But a beginning has been made—this is the important thing. If in famished Moscow, in the summer of 1919, starving workers who had gone through four difficult years of the imperialist war, then through a year and a half of the even more difficult civil war, were capable of commencing this great task, what can be expected of the later development when we will have conquered in the civil war and will have won peace?

Communism signifies a higher productivity of labor as against capitalism—the productivity obtained by the voluntary effort of conscious and united workers utilizing the advanced technique. The Communist subbotniks are of extraordinary value as the *factual* commencement of *Communism*, the more so since we are at the stage when, as our Party program correctly states, “Only the *first steps* are being taken towards the transition from capitalism to Communism”.

Communism begins at the point when *ordinary workers*, through

self-sacrificing, exhausting toil, begin to strive for greater productivity, for safeguarding every pound of grain, of coal, of iron, and other goods, in the interests, not of these workers themselves or of their kin, but of "unrelated" people, namely, of society as a whole, of scores and hundreds of millions of people who are united at first in one socialist state and later in a union of Soviet Republics.

Karl Marx in *Capital* ridicules the pompous verbosity of the bourgeois-democratic Magna Carta about liberties and the rights of man, he mocks at the hollow phrases about liberty, equality, and fraternity *in the abstract* which have dazzled the philistines of all countries, including the present vile heroes of the foul Berne International. Marx contrasts this grandiloquent declaration of rights with the simple, modest, businesslike, matter-of-fact approach of the proletariat. The demand for the legal shortening of the working day is one of the typical examples of this approach to the question of rights and liberties. How profound and true this remark of Marx was becomes clearer and more evident the more the proletarian revolution develops and reveals its content. The "formulae" of actual Communism are distinguished from the pompous, cunning, grandiloquent phrasemongering of the Kautskys, the Mensheviks, and Social-Revolutionists and their darling "brothers" of Berne, precisely by the fact that they reduce everything to *conditions of labor*. Less chatter about "industrial democracy", of "liberty, equality and fraternity", of "government by the people", etc. The class-conscious worker and peasant of our day recognize in these bombastic phrases the fakery of the bourgeois intellectuals just as easily as any experienced person meeting a well-dressed and nicely trimmed "gentleman" of a certain type, without hesitation decides: "Probably a swindler!"

Fewer bombastic phrases and more of the simple everyday work, more care for every pound of grain and every pound of coal. More care to secure grain and coal, to secure the essential products for the undernourished workers and the impoverished peasants, not through speculation and not in a capitalist way, but through the conscious, voluntary, devoted, and heroic work of simple toilers, such toilers as the laborers and craftsmen of the Moscow-Kazan railway line.

All of us must recognize that traces of a bourgeois-intellectual, of a bombastic, approach to the questions of the revolution appear at every step and everywhere, including our own ranks. Our press, for instance, does not combat sufficiently these putrid vestiges of the decayed bourgeois-democratic past, that it gives little support to the simple, modest, ordinary, but living shoots of real communism.

Take the condition of women. No democratic party in the world, not in the most advanced bourgeois republics, has accomplished in



the course of decades a hundredth part of what we have achieved in this sphere in the very first year of power. We have cleaned out literally every brick of the pile of vicious laws which denied equality to women, which hampered divorce, which surrounded it with vicious red tape, which outlawed children born out of wedlock, which denied them any claim on their fathers, etc.—laws of which numerous remnants are still in force in all civilized countries to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism. We have a thousand-fold right to be proud of what we have achieved in this field. But the more we have *cleaned* our soil of the rubbish of the old, bourgeois laws and institutions, the clearer it has become to us that we have but cleared the site for new construction, but that the new construction itself is yet to come.

Woman still remains a *household slave*, in spite of all the legislation which aimed at her emancipation, because she is oppressed, stultified, and degraded by the *petty household* economy which chains her to the kitchen and the nursery, which squanders her energy in barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-wracking, stupefying and stultifying toil. The real *emancipation of woman*, real communism, will commence only when a mass struggle will be launched—guided by the proletariat in possession of state power—against this petty household economy, or rather, with its *general transformation* into large-scale socialist economy.

Do we, in practice, pay sufficient attention to this question, which is theoretically recognized by every Communist? Of course not. Do we tend with sufficient care the *shoots* of communism which already now exist in this field? Again, not at all. Public dining rooms, creches, kindergartens—these are examples of the new shoots, these are the simple, ordinary means which require no bombastic, verbose, grandiloquent declarations, but which are really capable of *emancipating the women*, really capable of diminishing and abolishing their inequality with men as regards their role in social production and in public life. These means are not new, they have been developed—as are in general all material prerequisites of socialism—by large-scale capitalism. But under capitalism such institutions, first, were few in number; second—and this is especially important—they were operated either as pecuniary enterprises enmeshed in the worst aspects of speculation, greed, deceit, and fraud, or as a “stunt” of bourgeois charity which the better type of workers rightly hated and despised.

There can be no doubt that we already have a much larger number of such institutions and that they are *beginning* to change their character. There can be no doubt that among the working class and peasant women there is a much larger store of *organizing talents* than we are aware of—people who have the knack of organizing a

practical undertaking, of drawing in a large number of people as active workers and an even larger number as consumers, without indulging in phrasemongering, in rushing about, in fussing and chattering about plans, systems, etc., which is characteristic of the always unduly conceited intelligentsia, or of half-baked "Communists". But we do not properly *nurture* these shoots of the new kind.

Look at the bourgeoisie! See how skillful they are at advertising anything which is of advantage *to them*. How their "model" enterprises are boosted in millions of copies of *their* newspapers; how the "model" bourgeois institutions are boosted into objects of national pride! But our press does not take the trouble, or takes scarcely any trouble, to popularize the best public dining rooms or creches, to strive with daily suggestions to develop some of them into model institutions, to advertise them, to describe in detail the effect of *model Communist work* in saving human labor, in gaining conveniences for the consumers, in saving goods, in freeing women from household drudgery, in improving sanitary conditions; and how this can be achieved, how this can be extended to benefit society as a whole, to benefit all the toilers.

Model production, model Communist subbotniks, model care in the production and distribution of every pound of grain, model dining rooms, exemplary cleanliness of a particular house inhabited by workers, of a particular block—all of these should have tenfold greater attention and care of our press as well as of *every* workers' and peasants' organization. All of these are shoots of communism, and it is our common and foremost duty to tend these shoots. Despite our difficult food and industrial situation, we have undoubtedly moved forward in the course of the year and a half of Bolshevik power *along the whole front*. The grain procurements have risen from thirty million poods (between August 1917 and August 1918) to one hundred million poods (from August 1918 to May 1919). Vegetable crops have increased. The shortage in grain sowing has diminished. Railway transport has begun to improve in spite of the great difficulties with fuel. And so on. Under these conditions, and with the support of the proletarian state power, the shoots of communism will not perish, they will flourish and will develop into complete communism.

\* \* \*

We must give serious thought to the significance of the Communist subbotniks, in order to realize all the practical lessons of vast importance which flow from this great initiative.

The first and foremost lesson is—every possible support to this initiative. We have become accustomed to use too lightly the word "commune". Every enterprise undertaken by Communists or with

their participation is quite often immediately dubbed "commune". Not infrequently it is forgotten that *such an honorable name must be won* by prolonged and persistent labor, by proved *practical* success in really Communist construction.

I am therefore of the opinion that the decision, which has matured with the majority of the Central Executive Committee, to annul the decree of the Council of People's Commissars as regards the name "consumers' communes", is correct. Let them use a less pretentious title. Incidentally, the shortcomings and defects of the *first* stages of the new organizational task will not be placed at the door of the "communes", but will be charged—as is but right—to *poor* Communists. It would be very useful to banish the word "commune" from *common* usage, to prohibit its use by anyone who has a mind to, or to grant this name only to real communes which have actually shown in practice—as verified by the whole-hearted approval of the population of the whole district—the ability and skill to conduct their undertaking in Communist fashion. First prove your ability to work without remuneration in the interests of society, in the interests of all the toilers, the ability "to work in a revolutionary fashion", the ability to raise the productivity of labor, to organize the enterprise in exemplary fashion—and only then put in your claim for the honorable name of "commune"!

In this respect the Communist subbotniks are the most valuable exception. Since in this case, the laborers and craftsmen of the Moscow-Kazan railway line *first proved in deed* that they were capable of working as *Communists*, and then they took for their initiative the name "Communist subbotniks". We must strive and make sure that this should also be the case in the future, that any and every one who would call his enterprise or institution a commune, unless he *prove* his right to it by hard labor and practical *success of prolonged effort*, by exemplary and really Communist organization of the enterprise, will be mercilessly ridiculed and disgraced as a faker and a fraud.

The great initiative of the Communist subbotniks must also be utilized in another direction, namely, for the purging of the Party. In the first period after the revolution, when the mass of the "honest" and smug people were particularly fearful, when the bourgeois intellectuals, including of course the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists, generally engaged in sabotage in the interests of the bourgeoisie, it was quite inevitable that adventurers and other harmful elements attached themselves to the ruling party. No revolution has been or can be free of such a phenomenon. The important thing is that the ruling party, relying on the healthy and strong advanced class, shall be able to purge its ranks.

We made a start in this direction quite a while ago. But we must continue resolutely and persistently. The mobilization of Communists for the war has helped us: the cowards and scoundrels ran away from the Party. Good riddance! *This kind* of decline in the membership of the Party means a *tremendous increase* in its strength and effectiveness. We must continue the purging, by utilizing the Communist subbotniks. Admission to the Party might, let us say, be conditioned on a half-year test of "work in revolutionary fashion". A similar test should be required of *all* members of the Party who have joined since the October revolution and who have not proved their absolute reliability, loyalty, and ability as Communists by special work or performance of some kind.

The purging of the Party, combined with the steady raising of its standards as regards real Communist work, will improve the apparatus of the state power and will greatly hasten the *final transition* of the peasants to the side of the revolutionary proletariat.

The Communist subbotniks have, incidentally, thrown an unusually sharp light on the class character of the apparatus of the state power under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Central Committee of the Party issues a letter on "work in revolutionary fashion". This idea is put forward by the Central Committee of a Party, 100,000 to 200,000 strong. (I assume that this number will remain after a serious purging; at present the number is much larger.)

The idea is taken up by the workers organized in trade unions whose number, in Russia and the Ukraine, reaches four million. Their overwhelming majority favors the proletarian state power, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Two hundred thousand to four million, such is the ratio of the "transmission wheels", as it were. Behind them are the scores of millions of peasants, divided into three principal groups: the semi-proletarian or poor peasants, the largest group and the one closest to the proletariat; then the middle peasantry; and, finally, the relatively very small group—the kulaks or village bourgeoisie.

As long as the possibility remains of trading with grain and of speculating on hunger, the peasant remains half toiler and half speculator (this is inevitable for a certain period under the dictatorship of the proletariat). As a speculator, the peasant is hostile to us, is hostile to the proletarian state, inclining towards an agreement with the bourgeoisie and its faithful henchmen, including the Menshevik Sher or the Social-Revolutionist B. Chernenkov, who favor free trade in grain. But as a *toiler*, the peasant is a friend of the proletarian state, a loyal ally of the worker in the struggle against the landlord and the capitalist. As a toiler, the peasant, in the vast

many-millioned mass, supports the state "machine" which is headed by a hundred or two hundred thousand of the Communist proletarian vanguard and consists of millions of organized proletarians.

A more democratic state, in the true sense of the word, a state more closely connected with the toiling and exploited masses, *the world never before had.*

Precisely such proletarian work as is implied in the Communist subbotniks and is being put into life by them, will definitely secure to the proletarian state the respect and love of the peasantry. Such work and only such work will definitely convince the peasant of the justice of our cause, of the justice of communism, will definitely transform the peasant into our loyal supporter. This means that it leads to the complete elimination of the food difficulties, to the complete victory of communism over capitalism in the field of production and distribution of grain, that it leads to the unqualified entrenchment of communism.

# Wall Street Faces the Far East

By HARRY GANNES

## I.

WAR in Ethiopia has had its greatest effect on the foreign policy of the United States in the Far East. In fact, it has brought about important changes in imperialist relations that will concern not only the United States, Britain, Japan, China, and the Philippines, but will have a grave bearing on all war plans against the Soviet Union. In short, three-quarters of the world's population are immediately and intimately involved.

Wall Street's navy has been facing China since the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Now, with Mussolini posing anew the question of redivision of the world, American imperialist diplomacy looks to the Far East and finds a drastically changed situation. Even more than in the West, that is, more than in Europe, every shifting of imperialist relations in the Far East instantaneously influences the prospects for war or peace with the Soviet Union. For it is on the borders of Manchuria, and now around the Mongolian People's Republic, that the enemy armies are in action within sight of the Soviet border.

What changes in imperialist alliances have been made? How far have they gone? To what extent can we expect further developments?

It is no secret in Tokyo, London, or Washington that American and British imperialism have been acting more cooperatively in the Far East against Japan. Indeed, the amity of these two chief world imperialist antagonists has never been so definite as now. Factors have been at work that have brought the two dominant financial powers, the two largest navies, the two leading capitalist enemies together, to confront a common challenger for domination of Asia, the cockpit of the world.

Neither open diplomatic exchanges, nor formal alliances, nor Congressional and parliamentary interpellations have delineated the extent of whatever understanding may have been achieved. But agreement there is. It will have powerful repercussions on such factors as American war preparations, the Chinese anti-imperialist agrarian revolution, Japanese imperialism's drive for domination of China, the future of Philippine independence, and the question as to

whether the United States will enter into any understanding with the U.S.S.R. for the peace of the Pacific, or will follow the pro-Nazi and anti-Soviet precedent of the unlamented ex-British foreign minister, Sir Samuel Hoare.

Naturally, these questions cannot be answered solely by the situation in the Pacific spheres, nor exclusively by the imperialist diplomatic needs of the two great powers, the United States and Britain. Such important features as the growing anti-fascist, anti-war sentiment in Britain, which made the Hoare-Laval pact gang alee, are involved. The outcome of the American presidential elections, also, will be of determining importance, not so much as to whether the Anglo-American agreement will be further strengthened, but, most particularly, in regard to its attitude to the Soviet Union.

All talk of "neutrality" or "isolation" in the United States will revolve largely around the maneuvers the Washington administration is carrying on with Britain. For there could be no exclusive understanding concerning the Far East alone, as we shall see.

Before tracing the history of the turn in imperialist relations in the Far East, let us try to designate the extent of the Anglo-American understanding thus far.

The first sign was the concentration of the American fleet near Hong Kong, a British base. This clearly cooperative naval action took place when the British fleet in nearly all waters had received orders to steam towards Suez, momentarily to expect the outbreak of war in Ethiopia and trouble with Mussolini in the Mediterranean. It was then that Japan, to test British response, made a bold thrust towards Amoy, South China. The American navy thereupon assumed a position threatening any Japanese advance in what was primarily a British sphere of influence. Certainly, though this must have been with the connivance of the London admiralty, Wall Street would not be content merely with protecting its competitor's preserves without any further mutual consideration.

Second, Japan's drive into North China produced a crisis in Anglo-Japanese relations, resulting in the virtual breach of the traditional friendship, and producing severe recriminations. This was a climax of Japan's penetration into British markets. Japan's refusal to give special consideration to British interests in North China forced the two foremost world competing monopoly powers to unite against it for their mutual advantage.

Third, fearing that Mussolini's war in Ethiopia would encourage Japan to force its invasion further into China, complicating the critical Eastern situation for American interests, the New Deal government, under the so-called "neutrality act", partially assisted British policy in the League of Nations in order to hasten a speedy

termination of the Ethiopian war. Acting independently in attempting to enforce a measure of sanctions, the Roosevelt government, we have little doubt, had a secret accord with Britain on that score, emanating from their joint interests in China. They strove to bring about African peace in order to avert what would be for them an unfavorable war in China.

Fourth, in view of the rapid approach of the date of termination of the Washington and London naval treaties (December, 1936) at a time when Japanese imperialism was pressing for hegemony in China under conditions most favorable to itself, both London and Washington agreed on a united front against Japan's naval demands of parity.

Thus far, the extent of the accord seems to include joint action to hinder Japanese penetration in North China; to bolster up the Nanking regime against the dual threat of revolution and intervention; to defeat Japan's demands for naval equality or other maritime advantages; to keep alive against Japan the essence of the Nine-Power naval pact, denying Japanese hegemony in China; and in general to perpetuate the Washington and London naval treaties against Japan's efforts to destroy them.

Support of Nanking is not a unanimous point in the bargain and contains its own serious elements of contradiction, mainly because of Britain's financial policy in China and America's silver program.

For Japan, even the semblance of such an Anglo-American liaison is no small specter. It will sharpen the top crisis of the Tokyo ruling clique and speed the determination of serious war issues, especially the question as to whether to attack the Soviet Union first and to bargain for support from its united enemies.

It may well be asked: how was it possible for the two chief capitalist antagonists to come to terms? The six-year crisis of capitalism has produced such a fragmentation of contradictions, such conflicts within conflicts, that even the major antagonisms are peculiarly conditioned. We can point, for instance, to one of the salient facts of this period: French imperialism, once the spearhead of anti-Soviet war provocation, at present finds its interests temporarily coinciding with those of the U.S.S.R. so far as Hitler's war aims are concerned, and enters into the Franco-Soviet mutual assistance pact.

Just as the growing strength of the land of socialism brings about a Franco-Soviet pact, on the basis of the common threat of Hitler, so the growing crisis of the United States and Britain forces them into an agreement in the face of the threat of Japan. The analogy, however, terminates at aims and purposes.



## II.

Should the present temporary, partial, unstable, but definite agreement between America and Britain develop to a more permanent level, the outcome will be of the greatest importance for the future of all capitalist world relations.

Even the first signs of mutual action are having deep-going results.

Whatever has been gained in the direction of mutual action has not been achieved without severe inner hindrance from important strata of the ruling class of both countries. This is especially true of England. A certain section of the British bourgeoisie, whose interests conflict most sharply with those of the United States, directly resist and impede these developments. In the United States those capitalists who disagree content themselves with sniping at the harmonious tendencies, without seriously striving to scuttle them. They attack them, like the Hearsts, from the point of view that it may bring the United States into the League of Nations by Britain's privy back entrance. They offer obstacles, really in the form of conditions, such as the payment of war debts, more substantial assistance to Mussolini and Hitler, and an anti-Soviet emphasis from the beginning.

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International pointed out that Japanese imperialism, as well as Italian and German fascism, were dominantly pressing for war for a redivision of the world. In the Far East this has worked out through Japan's further penetration of North China.

But both British and American imperialism, more concerned for the time being with maintaining Japan's status quo, were not so ready to confront a Far Eastern war: Britain—for the reason that its navy was completely occupied around the Mediterranean; the United States—since it had not yet finished its war construction program and was demagogically pursuing its relatively peaceful penetration program characterized by Roosevelt's "good neighbor" policy.

The most definite expression of the functioning of the Anglo-American agreement was the simultaneous and almost similar statements of Cordell Hull, United States Secretary of State, and Sir Samuel Hoare, British Foreign Minister, on December 6, 1935, the eve of the opening of the London Naval Conference.

Both of these utterances were amazingly sharp. They exhibited unmistakable evidence of collaboration. Hoare, in his parliamentary address, took a slap at Japan's refusal to consider Anglo-Japanese unity, casting on Japan the odium for the distasteful consummation of an Anglo-American understanding. Said the Foreign Minister:

“ . . . There is still, however, a serious cloud on the Chinese horizon, and that is the so-called autonomy movement in North China.”

Diplomatically he warned Japan that a continuation of this movement “could only hamper the development which we all desire, of the friendliest mutual relations between Japan and her neighbors and friends”.

Secretary Hull minced no words. Paralleling the line of the British declaration, he said:

“There is going on in and with regard to North China a political struggle which is unusual in character and which may have far-reaching effects. The persons mentioned in reports of it are many; the action is rapid and covers a large area; opinions with regard to it vary; what may come of it no one could safely undertake to say; but, whatever the origin, whoever the agents, be what they may the methods, the fact stands out that an effort is being made—and is being resisted—to bring about a substantial change in the political status and condition of several of China's northern provinces.”

Publication of this agitated statement simultaneously with the speech of Sir Samuel Hoare left no mistake about a joint understanding on this question.

### III.

Long before the opening of the naval conference, the Japanese political leaders knew that they were facing grave developments towards an Anglo-American agreement, aimed at Japan's China and naval policies.

In the United States, the press, too, began to sense the change. “Despite official denials,” editorialized the *New Republic* (December 18, 1935), “it is obvious that the United States and Great Britain are acting in concert in the Far East, for ends that are not stated and along lines whose general nature can only be surmised.”

Some ten days after China was catapulted off the silver standard, the Japanese press was already polemizing against an Anglo-American understanding. This was their chief worry. They sought to argue Wall Street out of any agreement with “perfidious Albion”. Citing their own bitter experiences of having been double-crossed, they showed that he who lies down with lions must get up lacking part of his anatomy.

For example, we find such arguments in the Japanese press as that advanced by Shun Sakura in the *Osaka Mainichi and Tokyo Nichi Nichi* [English edition], November 14-15, 1935. Mr. Sakura addresses himself exclusively to the American rulers. He sets out to

prove how treacherous and unreliable is any understanding with Britain.

"Today," begins Mr. Sakura, "much talk is going on about the desirability of Anglo-American amity." Against such an undesirable consummation, this Japanese writer warns the American bourgeoisie. "Broadly speaking," he tells them, "it simply means British diplomacy will result in the loss of American prestige principally as a preserver of world peace."

He adds that victory for American "altruism", on the other hand, would insure world peace. Never was Japanese imperialism so convinced and solicitous about Wall Street's altruism and desire for world peace. American imperialism becomes a blameless lamb about to be ensnared by the big bad wolf of world imperialism.

#### IV.

The lusty but ill-formed Anglo-American infant was not born without the bitterest triangular travail and bears the mortal mark of its parentage.

Britain hated to end the game of balance of power in the Pacific, its friendly relations with Japan; and on an anti-Soviet base, still seeks to revive them. Three times before the final break, British imperialism offered Japan an Anglo-Japanese understanding of joint exploitation of Manchukuo and a consideration of each other's special interests in China. Japan's decision was finally made in the negative by Mussolini's cannon booming in Ethiopia. The Japanese militarists counted on a prolonged war in Africa, plus the operation of Anglo-American antagonisms to prevent any united action from that score.

The very failure of the Hoare-Laval plunder pact, however, must now speed further the Anglo-American agreement for precisely the reason that the war is lasting longer than Britain wishes.

We shall here deal only with the last act of the tragedy of the rupture of Anglo-Japanese diplomatic amour. The scene opened with Sir Frederick Leith-Ross's appearance in the Orient. It closed with China's going off the silver standard. His Majesty's chief economic adviser arrived in Tokyo when Mussolini was making it clear that war was inevitable in Africa. Sir Frederick was vested with extraordinary powers, either to arrive at an Anglo-Japanese understanding, or to proceed on an entirely new policy, leading to a serious break. "The pourparlers were a warning to Great Britain," comments L'Observateur, one of the acutest writers on imperialist relations in the Far East, "immersed in the Abyssinian squabble, that Japan was the piper in the Orient and called its own tune." (*China Weekly Review*, November 9, 1935.)

Therefore, Britain decided to dance to American jazz, but to use Chinese silver on American markets to pay for it. The joy was not unconfined, the sequence reveals.

On November 2, 1935, the world learned that China had gone off the silver standard and would rely on a managed currency. This was Britain's first notice to Japan that the turn had come. British finances were being used to reorganize China's monetary system in order to regulate it against Japanese imports.

While this measure marked the end of Anglo-Japanese attempts at further harmony and opened the way for the Anglo-American agreement, the British financial move in China was unsteadily based on Roosevelt's promise to boost silver prices. The Chinese government, with British loan backing, planned to collect and centralize all the silver in the country and offer it for sale, as need required, in the American market where the Roosevelt regime was aiming at the price of \$1.29 an ounce. The price at the time of China's demonetization of silver was around 62 cents an ounce.

But Wall Street balked. At the very time the American naval delegation in London was solidly resisting Japan's parity demands, seconded by the British admiralty, the Roosevelt government at home attacked Britain's China financial policy. For some time after December 10, the world silver market went into a crisis because the United States treasury withdrew its support to silver prices.

"Why should we help Great Britain solve the Chinese problem to the advantage of Britain and to our own disadvantage?" inquired the chief Congressional advocate of the silver mine owners and speculators in America, Senator Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma.

A Shanghai cable to the *New York Times* (December 13) gives the Nanking regime's views, quoting an "anonymous government spokesman", as follows:

"Of course, America's low bidding on silver is harmful to China. No sooner have we revised our monetary system to avoid being the victim of silver prices increased at United States instigation than America reverses her policy and starts driving silver downward."

The correspondent of the *New York Times* continues:

"No immediate counter measure is contemplated, he said, adding that in his opinion the new policy of the United States is an anti-British gesture of which China is the goat."

However, this misunderstanding will not change the main trend of events. Many more such disturbing incidents will arise. But so long as Japanese imperialism continues its drive in North China,

riding roughshod over the domain of its two main competitors, some means will be found to relegate such minor conflicts to the major goal.

## v.

We can expect now in the United States that every political speech, every editorial, every treaty, secret or otherwise, dealing with the Far East, will not fail to mention the Philippines. The Pacific island empire of Wall Street is now entering a new, critical phase of its history at the conjuncture of events so ominously unfolding in the Orient.

An American congressional committee has just returned from the islands, graced by Vice-President John Nance Garner. After attending the inauguration of the Philippines' first President, Manuel Quezon, the junketeers have already returned the harbingers of a new line of imperialist propaganda. Not since General Enoch Crowder in 1930 revealed America's secret military strategy in the Philippines have the islands played so pivotal a role in war talk in the Pacific.

The Philippines are still, despite the Tydings-McDuffie Act appearances, the largest single Wall Street colony. Since they carry the American flag on land closest to the Orient, and unquestionably will be one of the chief centers of Pacific war operations, their status is extremely important in all Anglo-American considerations. The newly established Clipper air line to Manila, furthermore, is of first-rate military importance.

In brief, the recent developments in the Far East, the growing mutuality between American and British imperialism, the inauguration of a Filipino president, and institution of a Filipino constitution, have raised anew the whole future of the Philippines.

Originally, the Philippines were a weak link in American war strategy in the Far East. This was attested to by the British naval expert, Hector C. Bywater, in his book, *Sea Power in the Pacific*, by the aforementioned General Crowder's congressional testimony, as well as by other military specialists. Instead of counting on the Philippines as one of the links in a powerful chain of naval bases stretching from San Diego to Hawaii, Guam, the Philippines, for bringing American cannon to the Chinese coast for the prospective war with Japan, American naval strategists changed their plans to what is known as a northern perspective. That means, the major line of naval strategy for a Pacific war would count on a series of air bases connecting the west coast of the United States, then north-west along the Aleutian Islands. This would create a threat to the north of Japan, via Alaska and the string of American islands that

reach over to Japan like an American scimitar. Though this did not eliminate a southern variant, it necessitated granting the Filipino bourgeoisie the honor of defending Wall Street's position in the islands, with a minimum of naval support. That is the axis of the Tydings-McDuffie Act.

The new developments in the Philippines coincided with the turn in American Pacific relations. The impact of the two forces created a sizable tempest in the teapot of the liberal press.

For example, Roy W. Howard, chairman of the board of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, made a special trip to the Philippines at the time when the events we have discussed in this article were maturing. He drew the conclusion that the Filipino feudal-compradore bourgeoisie did not really want independence. Since the granting of the partial freedom by the Tydings-McDuffie Act, he contended, they were becoming still more alarmed that events would impel the people towards real independence. The inauguration of a Filipino president, the institution of a constitution, and a ten-year trial period of preparation for independence under the Tydings-McDuffie Act, he asserted, would eventually carry out a foolish altruistic pledge under the organic Jones Law.

He further saw it as the deed of a "sick social order" in the United States, which, under the impact of the crisis, did not realize fully what it was doing. America was throwing its prize colonial baby out with the bath water of a temporary economic crisis.

Mr. Howard's position is not an isolated opinion, but will become more of a crusading policy of American imperialism, which regards the Philippines as the strategic front of the American colonial future, especially as it is situated so decisively in a prospective Far Eastern theater of war.

Ironically enough, Wall Street has been able to win "liberal" advocates for retrenchment on the Philippine policy. These people argue that, to avoid a dangerous game of experimental independence by means of which the Philippines may be lost, the United States must retrace its steps.

The gist of the long answer is "No!" The threat of Japanese imperialism would be too much. "If then," continues the author, "the Philippine structure should collapse and disorder arise, what is to prevent Japan from using this pretext to intervene as she has in Manchuria?"

The Scripps-Howard press has begun a lively campaign for retention of the Philippines, chauvinistically exploiting the growing distrust of Japanese imperialist intentions in the Far East. Thus, some liberal argument for freedom for the Philippines in this period turns into its opposite. On the basis of struggling for peace and pre-

-serving "peace and order in the Far East", it becomes the chief propagandist for imperialist retention of the Philippines on the ground of the lesser colonial evil: better a Wall Street pawn than a victim of Japanese imperialism.

Since the Philippines are close to South China, where British China interests are more important, American imperialist and military policy would play a decisive part in any extended Anglo-American Far Eastern alliance. British imperialists have said that London would give up all its interests in the rest of China under threat, if it could thereby be assured of the strengthening of its hold on Victoria Kowloon.

#### VI.

What are the perspectives in the Far East with regard to the new Anglo-American relations?

While the immediate future should see a strengthening of whatever agreement has been entered into, British imperialism will not abandon the idea of forcing Japan, on this very basis, to reconsider its rejection of an Anglo-Japanese understanding. The more successful the immediate objective of the Anglo-American maneuvers the more certain is its ultimate and early rupture, either with Japan retreating on the score of British interests, or with an inevitable clash between Britain and the United States.

British imperialism has already entered into a naval treaty with Hitler and is now discussing the more serious air pact. It knows, however, that its new move in the Far East temporarily hinders its anti-Soviet plans.

The central issue of all Far Eastern alliances is maneuvers, war preparations, struggles, and the attitude toward the Soviet Union. Certainly, the more vehement anti-Soviet elements in the British cabinet and among the British ruling class are fully conscious of the fact that an Anglo-American understanding, which is favorable to the Soviet Union because it impedes the Japanese imperialist war plans in Asia, can with proper tempering be forged into an instrument of anti-Soviet units in the Far East against the U.S.S.R., and against the Chinese revolution. A Liberty League victory in the next elections would more than meet the British anti-Soviet forces halfway in the Far East.

In the face of the development of these facts, talk of American "isolation" or neutrality in whatever war may arise is the most hypocritical maneuver or the most dangerous nonsense. Every move for realignment of forces in the Far East must affect imperialist relations in the West, that is, in Europe, and in the rest of the world. War in Ethiopia immediately involves American imperialism with the

prospect of a still more dangerous war in the Far East. Therefore the U.S.A. was forced to act on a European-African issue to strengthen its position in China. The indivisibility of peace, stressed by Litvinov at Geneva, proved beyond all doubt by the events in Ethiopia, clearly tears away the American mask of neutrality and isolation. What the bourgeoisie wants to do is to isolate the masses while it pursues its imperialist policy on all fronts.

No isolationist or neutrality cry was raised by the capitalist press against the growing Anglo-American understanding, though it was fully apprised of the facts, even though they were not publicized.

British imperialism was forced to connive with Wall Street in the Far East, not only to confront Japan with a more formidable force, but also to work against any Soviet mutual assistance pact.

Despite the wishes of the perpetrators, the first fruits of the Anglo-American amity will be favorable for the Soviet Union and its peace policy, because of its disconcerting effects on Japan. Both Britain and the United States in 1931 gave Japan leeway in its drive in Manchuria with the hope of pressing Japan to continue northward, toward the Soviet border.

In fact, it was Japan's adventure in Asia which set the example for Italy in Africa. At that time, the Soviet Union, in a most complex and dangerous situation, used every possibility to maintain peace. It offered Japan a non-aggression pact, which the military clique in power refused. It sold the Chinese Eastern Railway to Japan to preserve peace. At the same time, it strengthened the bulwark of defense. Japan then thought it the better part of valor and aggrandizement to continue southward in China, where it stirred up the hornet's nest of Anglo-American resistance to Japan's further invasion.

Now, however, should the Anglo-American understanding in the East become solidified and more inclusive, it would then act as an impetus to drive desperate Japanese imperialism again northward; that is, against the Soviet border. The recent Japanese attack on the border of the Mongolian People's Republic, in fact, is a Japanese demonstration to the Anglo-American spokesmen that the mobility of the Japanese army is such that it can quickly swerve from menacing their joint colonial spheres to attacking the main enemy of world imperialism, the Soviet Union.

All factors in the Far East (the growing anti-imperialist upsurge in China, the Japanese invasion of North China, the growing severe financial crisis of Japanese imperialism, the Anglo-American maneuvers, the struggle around the Philippines, and the anti-Soviet maneuvers) point to a shifting of the greatest danger of war to this section of the world, regardless of the outcome of the Ethiopian war,



In the midst of this turbulence, the Soviet Union strives by every means for peace, for collective action with those capitalist nations who even temporarily desire peace. In the League of Nations, the Soviet peace policy has played a powerful role in preventing the slicing up of Ethiopia, and in driving a wedge into any plans for a united anti-Soviet front of the imperialist powers. In the Far East, the Soviet peace policy has helped to stave off war, and to make it more difficult for Japan to continue its campaign of aggression.

Those British empire dreamers who envision a world of "peace" guarded by an Anglo-American policeman do not include, however, the Soviet Union as a beneficiary.

Japan, thwarted in North China, its plans for all-China conquest seriously hindered, will more and more test its strength against the Soviet Union. Hitler, too, anxiously awaits the news of the invasion of the Soviet land in the Far East. American imperialist policy will play a decisive role in this sector of the world war danger against the U.S.S.R. *For the Defense of the Soviet Union* is the resonant watchword of the hour!

# Our Tasks in Developing Activity Within the Company Unions

By B. K. GEBERT

THE struggle that took place at the Fifty-fifth Convention of the American Federation of Labor between the Tories and the "Progressive Bloc" on the question of the craft and industrial unions is basically, as Comrade Stachel so clearly placed it in the November issue of *The Communist*, a struggle for the organization of the unorganized.

The Minority Report of the Resolutions Committee on Organization Policies\* placed the question of industrial unionism and the organization of the unorganized in the following manner:

"... We refuse to accept existing conditions as evidence that the organization policies of the American Federation of Labor have been successful. The fact that after fifty-five years of activity and effort we have enrolled under the banner of the American Federation of Labor approximately three and one-half millions of members of the thirty-nine millions of organizable workers is a condition that speaks for itself.

"We declare the time has arrived when common sense demands the organization policies of the American Federation of Labor must be molded to meet present-day needs. In the great mass production industries and those in which the workers are composite mechanics, specialized and engaged upon classes of work which do not fully qualify them for craft union membership, industrial organization is the only solution. Continuous employment, economic security and the ability to protect the individual worker depend upon organization upon industrial lines. . . .

"To successfully organize the workers in industrial establishments where conditions outlined herein obtain there must be a clear declaration by the American Federation of Labor. It must recognize the right of these workers to organize into industrial unions and be granted unrestricted charters which guarantee the right to accept into membership all workers employed in the industry or establishment without fear of being compelled to destroy unity of action through recognition of jurisdictional claims made by national or international unions."

The Minority Report therefore proposed:

"The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor is expressly directed and instructed to issue unrestricted charters to organizations formed in accordance with the policy herein enunciated. The Executive Council is also instructed to enter upon an aggressive organization campaign in those industries in which the

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\* Report signed by Charles P. Howard, David Dubinsky, Frank B. Powers, John L. Lewis, A. A. Myrup, J. C. Lewis.

great mass of the workers are not now organized, issue unrestricted charters to workers organized into independent unions, company-dominated unions and those organizations now affiliated with associations not recognized by the American Federation of Labor as bona-fide labor organizations."

Never before was the question of organizing the unorganized placed in such a forceful manner before the American Federation of Labor, and surely never before did it receive such strong support at the Convention itself (11,000 voted for the Minority Report and 18,000 against it). Nor can it be stated that this vote fully expressed the wishes of the membership of the A. F. of L. In the building trades, for example, where there is a strong movement for industrial unionism, its official delegation voted for a craft union form of organization. We can say without fear of contradiction that the overwhelming majority of the A. F. of L. membership is in favor of the industrial form of organization and for an aggressive militant campaign to organize the unorganized in the mass production industries. What we are primarily interested in here, however, is the attitude of the A. F. of L. towards winning over the workers in the company unions. The Minority Report proposes that A. F. of L. charters be issued, not only to the workers organized in independent unions, "but company-dominated unions as well". This means that the militant trade unionists understand that there can be no successful organizational drive without winning over the workers who at the present time are in the company unions. Against this proposal the Tories of the A. F. of L. officialdom launched the sharpest attack. Matthew Woll, a Vice-President of the A. F. of L., speaking against the whole Minority Report, declared:

"What is the implication? What is the meaning? What is the interpretation to be placed upon these directions and instructions where no volition, no discretion, is given to your Executive Council? Is it that the American Federation of Labor, where there is a company union and their organization so decides, shall issue a charter to it? Or here is an independent or dual organization—shall we issue a charter to it? The instructions are clear. The language would imply that. And yet we are asked to adopt declarations of that kind and type and character."

The point of view of Woll as expressed here is the point of view of those in the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. who are refusing to launch a mass organizational drive in the basic industries. One of the results of this policy is to leave the workers in the company unions at the mercy of the most powerful trustified corporations.

## COMPANY UNIONISM DOMINANT IN HEAVY INDUSTRY

If we examine the development of the company unions, we find that their real growth dates with the introduction of the N.I.R.A., and that they have developed primarily in the heavy mass production industries, where the bulk of the workers were unorganized. Section 7a of the N.I.R.A. declares:

“. . . That no employee, and no one seeking employment shall be required as a condition of employment to join any company union or to refrain from joining, organizing or assisting a labor organization of his own choosing.”

Yet even the survey of company unions made by the United States Department of Labor admits that 48 per cent of the workers in the 593 plants investigated automatically became members of company unions. Other workers are forced to become members of the company union by means of pressure, intimidation, and fear of losing their jobs.

The report further declares:

“Almost 15 per cent of the company unions covered in the study were established during the war period, and 64 per cent were established during the period of the N.R.A. . . .”\*

“By far the largest number of company unions are relatively young. Most of them were organized during the N.R.A. period of 1933 to 1935. During these years 377 company unions, or 63.5 per cent of the total number studied, were established. These included 306,134 or 57.7 per cent of the total workers employed in the establishments covered that had company unions.

“Only three of the 593 company unions were reported to have been established prior to 1900. The period from 1900 to 1914 showed but a slight increase in the formation of company unions. During this period eight unions or 1.3 per cent of the total, in establishments employing 6,033 or 1.1 per cent of the workers, were started. The succeeding period, 1915-19, during which the World War occurred, accounted for the formation of 87 or 14.7 per cent of the company unions covered, in establishments employing 129,866 or 24.5 per cent of the workers.

“The next three periods . . . witnessed a material decline in the formation of company unions. Between 1920 and 1922, 31 company unions or 5.2 per cent of the total number, with 5.6 per cent of the workers, were formed; during the 1923 to 1929 period 35 or 5.9 per cent were formed, with 33,484 or 6.3 per cent of the workers; during the first depression years, 1930 to 1932, only 29 or 4.9 per cent of the total were formed, with 10,453 or 2 per cent of the workers employed in the plants surveyed.”\*\*

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\* From the *Monthly Labor Review* (October, 1935), Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, p. 865.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 867.

The greatest proportion of workers organized in company unions are in steel. According to the figures of the American Iron and Steel Institute, "90 per cent of the workers voted in the company union elections", an increase of 4 per cent over 1934. The Institute Table on the voting in 1934 in the company unions follows:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Number Eligible</i>	<i>Ballots</i>	<i>Per cent Ballots</i>
United States Steel Corp. ....	132,605	115,506	87.1
Republic Steel Corp. ....	24,431	23,282	95.3
Jones & Laughlin Steep Corp...	15,273	14,978	98.0
Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co.	14,847	14,350	96.6
Inland Steel Co. ....	5,815	5,694	97.9
Pittsburgh Steel Co. ....	3,793	3,475	91.0
Spang, Chalfant Co., Inc. ...	3,041	2,421	80.2
McKeesport Tin Plate Co....	2,996	2,743	91.5
John A. Roebling Sons .....	2,476	2,262	92.0
Sharon Steel Hoop Co.....	1,991	1,976	99.2
Interlake Iron Corp. ....	1,048	953	90.9
Carpenter Steel Co. ....	957	912	95.3
Babcock & Wilcox Tube Co...	826	711	86.0
Follansbee Bros. Co. ....	707	677	96.0
Harrisburg Steel Corp. ....	706	622	88.1
Page Steel & Wire Division...	697	638	91.5
Worth Steel Co. ....	550	500	90.9
Central Tube Co. ....	451	403	89.0
Valley Mold & Iron Corp....	409	409	100.0
Fretz-Moon Tube Co. ....	187	187	100.0
<b>1935 Totals .....</b>	<b>213,806</b>	<b>192,699</b>	<b>90.13</b>

#### TWO AND A HALF MILLION WORKERS IN COMPANY UNIONS

To date, two and a half million workers are chained in the company unions. When we consider that more workers in the basic industries (with the exception of mining) are in the company unions than in the genuine trade unions, and when we note further that the entire trade union movement embraces only approximately four million workers, it becomes clear that the company unions constitute a great danger to the American labor movement. The tremendous increase of company unions is no more an accident than the wave of union-smashing launched by the open-shop monopoly capital class after the World War. The steel trust, one of the sponsors of the bi-partisan, fascist "American Liberty League", is consciously fostering the building of company unions as an instrument, first, of canalizing the rising mood of struggle of the workers in the basic industries into "safe channels", and, secondly, as a means of preventing them from entering the genuine trade unions.

Company unions are not only promoted by the manufacturers, but are being financed by them. John Larkin, general chairman of

the employees representative of the Weirton Steel Company, when he was asked at the hearing in Washington on the Wagner Labor Disputes Act, before the United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor, "How is your organization [company union] financed?" answer: "It is financed by \$25 paid by the company per month for every representative that is elected." He further explained that all other expenses of the company union have been paid directly by the corporation. To the question, "Why is it that the company pays all the expenses?" Mr. Larkin answered:

"Well, to explain that there are a lot of men that work in the various mills on laboring jobs, and such as that, and it would be a crime to take money off a man making 40c or 42½c an hour working 40 hours a week to pay to any institution, would it not? Would not it be better to get somebody to finance a thing like that? If they had to pay into that institution it would be just robbing them." \*

In addition to the steel industry, company unions have made inroads in such industries as rubber, packing houses, auto, railroad, and captive mines. The management of the company unions is in the hands of the same agents of the bosses who devise new methods of speed-up, blacklisting, and spying on the workers. The United States Steel Corporation, for example, pays \$75,000 a year salary to a vice-president, Arthur H. Young, whose special job is the so-called handling of labor relations. A major part of his work is the managing of the trust's industrial spy system, which extends to every section of the mill with the closest personal check-up on the activities of the members of the unions, and of all those who register their opposition to conditions in the mills—who are striving towards real unionization.

As one of the ways of keeping the workers in the company unions "happy" in their bondage, the company unions develop so-called social and sports activities. Many company unions have organized athletic teams, such as baseball, basketball, etc. They arrange social affairs. Many of the company unions also publish shop papers, in which class collaborationist arguments are cunningly advanced by agents of the bosses and sometimes by the bosses themselves. All these activities have one central objective, namely, that of building up a sentiment of loyalty for the corporation. This was expressed in a speech by Frank Purnell, president of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company, at the last annual meeting of the American Iron and Steel Institute in New York, when he said:

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\* In this connection, the Survey of the Department of Labor points out: "Of the total of 593 company unions studied, 411—covering 411,053 workers—reported that they had no provision for dues or any other means of raising funds from the membership."

"It cannot be emphasized too strongly that any successful plan of dealing with employees must be founded upon the basic principle that there can be harmony and mutual consideration between employees and employer, upon honesty of purpose, freedom of speech and due regard for the rights and aspirations of both. They must work out their problems together, in a peaceful manner, instead of in an unnatural spirit of hostility."\*

Despite this love song of Mr. Purnell, the interests of the workers of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company and of the company itself are worlds apart and cannot be reconciled. For once workers are placed together, no matter for what purpose and under what conditions, they will instinctively seek to remove the cause of their grievances and will tend to act collectively and in the interests of their class. Thus, even the company unions, which were deliberately designed to quell all struggles, are beginning to reflect the discontent of their membership.

#### DISSATISFACTION WITH COMPANY UNIONISM GROWING

In recent months the company unions have been in ferment. The growing discontent, stimulated by the militant voices in the recent 55th Convention of the American Federation of Labor, is expressing itself in the steel, rubber, and auto industries. At the conference of the company union representatives from the twelve mills of the American Sheet and Tin Plate Co., a subsidiary of the U. S. Steel Corp. employing over 23,000 workers, the following problems were discussed:

1. Vacation with pay.
2. Revision of the constitution.
3. Pensions and insurance.
4. Increase in pay.
5. Seniority rule.
6. Uniform rule.

The Conference met without representatives of the company being present, although among the delegates there were typical company stool-pigeons. The Conference went on record for a 15 per cent increase in wages to meet the higher cost of living, for vacations with pay, for democratization of the constitution of the company union, etc. It took up the problems confronting the different categories of the workers. In discussing the problem of the shearmen, for example, it characterized the position of these workers in the following way: "The conditions are such that the shearmen burn up in hot weather and freeze in the winter."

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\* This quotation is taken from *The Bulletin*, the shop paper published by the company union in the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co.

It demanded an increase of wages for this category of workers from 25 per cent to 50 per cent. This first national meeting of its kind ever held by a company union received much attention in the capitalist press. Writing in the *Youngstown Telegram*, Vin Sweeney declares:

"The long discussed question of whether or not company unions might eventually clash with the industries which helped create them may soon find an answer here."

He further states, ". . . Nothing so far reaching has even been attempted by company unions".

The decisions of the conference were a severe blow against the whole class collaboration program developed by the steel corporations. The demands for an increase in wages were denied. The Associated Press reported as follows:

"Movements for increased wages overshadowing other recent developments in the steel industry brought the comment today from Ernest T. Weir that pay boosts just now could not help business. The industry as a whole is in no position at this time to absorb an increase in wages, Weir said; a raise would have to be passed on in higher prices, and such a step certainly couldn't help business. In fact it would be more likely to react the other way."

This, in face of the constant rise in profits as revealed in the report of the American Iron and Steel Institute covering 156 steel companies:

	—First Half Year—		Per cent Increase
	1935	1934	
Net Profit . . . . .	\$30,923,927	\$25,305,232	22
Cash Dividend Paid . . . . .	13,367,001	9,807,023	36
Wages and Salaries . . . . .	346,161,525	319,989,331	8

In the rubber industry, the company union in the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Akron turned down the proposal of the company to increase working hours from six to eight. The Automotive Industrial Workers Association, which grew out of the (company union) Works Council set up by the Auto Labor Board for collective bargaining and in which Father Coughlin attempted to play a leading role, is merging with two other independent unions into one independent union of the auto workers. All these developments show the rising dissatisfaction of the workers in the company unions.

#### GROWTH OF COMPANY UNIONISM AIDED BY CRAFT UNION STRUCTURE OF THE A. F. OF L.

One of the reasons that the employers have been enabled to develop company unions in the mass production industries is the refusal of the reactionary bloc in the top officialdom of the A. F.



of L. to adapt the structure of the Federation to the needs of the workers in these industries, *i.e.*, to build industrial unions, and in the failure to institute a mass organizational drive at the same time.

At the A. F. of L. Convention, in a discussion on the industrial form of organization, Delegate Murray of the U.M.W.A. thus spoke of the experience of the steel workers in their attempt to organize:

"Mr. President, I was invited to a meeting in the town of Aliquippa eighteen months ago, at the great plant of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Company, where some 8,000 men are employed. The workers employed in that plant, of their own volition, of their own motion, without an organizer attending the meeting in its initial stages, called meetings. Many of them were unemployed. Many of them were working for 25 cents an hour, 19 cents an hour, twelve and fourteen hours a day, and they were suffering the pangs of hunger and distress and poverty and want. They were clamoring for protection, howling for protection, pleading to the God above them to guide them so that their women and children would be given the protection of workers that might enjoy a better standard. And those workers operating under their own motion, without any assistance from any international union, without any assistance from the American Federation of Labor, at that time organized 6,500 of the 8,000 workers at the Aliquippa plant into an independent union. They petitioned, pleaded, begged that they be given an industrial charter.

"In the meantime some of the agents of the craft organizations stepped into the cities of Ambridge and Aliquippa, held meetings and claimed jurisdiction over certain of the men who had joined the industrial union. They created confusion and disorganized the movement and broke it up, and the men went back, back, back, and they are still back. They have no organization, they have no charter, they have no independent union, they have no craft union, they have nothing. They are today where they were before they started their campaign of organization eighteen months ago.

". . . Is there anything wrong with a report that asks that these company unions be taken over by the trade union movement of the United States of America, or these independent unions, and that they be given a legitimate charter operating under the rules and regulations governing the American Federation of Labor, the same kind of rules and the same kind of regulations that govern every organization affiliated with this great trade union movement?"

The responsibility for the conditions described by Murray must be placed squarely on the shoulders of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. and the reactionary leadership of Tighe and Leonard of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers. Such a situation can be remedied only by the industrial form of organization.

The growth of the company unions represents a growing menace to the trade unions and to the working class as a whole; their con-

tinued existence provides an opportunity for the bosses to utilize them as a potential nucleus of a fascist organization among the workers.

Our attitude toward the company unions is clear; it is one of uncompromising struggle for the destruction of company unionism. This does not mean, however, that we shall adopt a policy of smashing company unions. Such a policy would lead only to the isolation of the advanced section of the workers from the large majority of the workers in the basic industries who comprise the company unions. Therefore, the policy must be that of working within the company unions, with the general perspective of transforming the company unions into genuine trade union organizations. It therefore calls for a patient, systematic plan of work within the company unions. Such work is to be developed around concrete grievances of the workers in a given department or mill, and in the industry as a whole.

As a matter of fact, such work has already been begun in some departments and mills. A young steel worker in the Pittsburgh steel region writes:

"About six weeks ago a petition was drawn up and circulated throughout the department by the workers. This petition asks for equalization of rights within the department and a general increase of 15 per cent in wages for the workers in the department. In a short space of three weeks this petition was signed by almost 200 men. This represented about 84 per cent of the total number of workers in the department, and it is a good record, considering the difficult conditions encountered."

Our concrete tasks in developing work within the company unions are:

1. Meetings of the company union to be organized outside of the company property, and without the presence of the representatives of the management; that is, exclusion from the meetings of the company union, foremen, superintendents, etc.

2. Election of committees for the departments to present their demands and grievances to the management; that is, taking initial steps in forming department and shop committees elected by the workers.

3. Active participation in the company union elections. In June, 1936, the elections will take place in practically all the company unions in the steel industry. We must work toward the nomination in each department of the most advanced militant workers as the candidates; toward the formulation of the demands to eliminate company representatives, company "suckers", stoolpigeons, and other elements that the bosses plant among the workers; toward the initiation of campaigns of mass exposure and ridicule of stool-pigeons and other agents of the bosses in the community.

4. We must be sure that such activities are not to be confined to a small group of workers, but are to involve masses of workers in a given department and shop.

5. The work within the company unions provides an excellent opportunity to establish a united front of the workers in a given department. There are workers who are in the company unions and at the same time in either A. F. of L. unions or independent unions. There may also be Socialists and Communists in the department. It is precisely here where the united front can bring about the best results, because these advanced workers can be the spearhead in the struggle against company unionism and guide and develop the work within the company unions.

6. Intensify agitation and propaganda for genuine trade unionism, and the recruiting of the workers in the company unions into the genuine trade unions.

7. Expose the whole policy of class collaboration expressed in company unionism; this is to be done through meetings of workers in the departments, through issuing of leaflets and shop papers.

8. Bring the campaign for a Farmer-Labor Party into the company union and into the various departments.

#### MASS ORGANIZATIONAL DRIVE BY A. F. OF L. NECESSARY

However, the work in the company unions will be expedited and the speedy transformation of the company unions into the trade unions can be made possible only under the conditions when simultaneously a mass organizational drive on the part of the unions of the A. F. of L. is carried through. Building the unions in steel, packing, rubber, auto, and railroad industries should now be undertaken with the greatest possible speed in view of the growing discontent and ferment within the company unions. Thus, it is the elementary trade union duty of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L., of the respective State Federations of Labor, and Central Labor bodies of the A. F. of L. unions in their respective industries, to organize the unorganized and to beat back the growing menace of company unionism.

In undertaking the organizational drive within the basic mass production industries, the trade union movement should involve all those who stand against the development of fascism in America, who oppose the company-dominated industrial towns where the civil liberties and rights of the people have been almost completely denied, where whole communities are under the control of the mill owners, where private police and gunmen, assisted by city and state police, terrorize the toiling population. It is especially in these spy-invested

mill towns that the building of anti-fascist, anti-capitalist local Farmer-Labor parties, which will embrace all those who stand in opposition to the industrial feudal political system introduced by the mill owners, will receive the support of the toiling masses. Such Farmer-Labor parties, by basing themselves upon the existing trade unions, can be a tremendous instrument in helping further to build the trade unions.

In undertaking all these tasks we must make the movement to organize the unorganized, and against company unionism, a mass movement of the toilers. It means that in addition to the workers employed in these industries, special activities should be developed among the working class women in such industries. Women's auxiliaries should be built around each A. F. of L. local union. The young workers are to be drawn into the unions, and special activities are to be developed among them, particularly athletics, combined with social and educational work.

The most oppressed section of the workers in the basic industries is, unquestionably, the Negro workers, who are jim-crowed and segregated in the company-controlled towns and forced to accept the worst jobs at the lowest pay. They are the first to be fired and the last to be hired. The trade union movement must undertake the task not only of organizing Negro and white workers into the same local unions, but must develop the struggle for the equal rights of the Negro people. This, of course, must be combined with the struggle of the unemployed. The trade union organizations must assist the unemployed workers in their struggle for adequate relief, for social and unemployment insurance, etc., outlining these tasks as confronting the whole American labor movement, and winning over the workers in the company unions in the struggle for these demands.

The task confronting the Communists is to give concrete daily guidance and leadership in such a movement. Here is where the role of the shop nuclei of the Communist Party in the steel, rubber, auto, packing house, and railroad industries can play a decisive role. The Communists in the plants can and must act in grouping around themselves all the advanced workers, with the objective of developing systematic struggle within the company unions, as outlined above. The Communist fractions within the trade unions, together with other progressive elements, can bring these questions into the trade union movement, and therefore within the factories, unions, and working class neighborhoods, can develop a campaign that will really bring about the disintegration of company unionism, and build a mass genuine trade union movement which will support and be supported by a Farmer-Labor Party.

# Unity for Victory\*

By JACQUES DUCLOS

[After warmly greeting the assemblage at the Palais de la Mutualité in Paris, Jacques Duclos declared:]

OUR Comrade Zyromski was right in just reminding us that the unity of the working class is not something to be lightly treated. The unity of the working class is a decisive task to which we must devote ourselves with all our forces. We have the deep conviction that it is necessary to build unity on a solid basis, unity capable of resisting all blows, unity capable of leading the workers of France to emancipation. Unity can be established only on the principles of the class struggle, and in order to show this better, permit me to comment on some recent history.

It will soon be fifteen years that the working class of this country was split. In fact, it was at the end of December, 1920, that the Congress of Tours took place at which the split was completed. I shall not dwell on the debates at that Congress. It is sufficient to recall that the Socialist minority, by refusing to submit to the decisions of the Communist majority, caused the split.

The problems posed at Tours dealt with an experiment which was in the process of unfolding itself in the Soviet Union, and a balance sheet of the policy maintained during the war of 1914-18, and which may be designated under the term *war socialism*, was also involved.

In its essence, it was a question of knowing whether a policy capable of leading the proletariat to victory was to be applied, whether a policy which could only lead to defeat was to be smashed.

Today, when the problems of unity rise before us, we do not have to make this balance sheet of methods which stood in opposition to each other at the Congress of Tours and which, since then, have shown their true merits.

## TWO METHODS

Fifteen years ago, the methods of the Russian revolution were the subject of harsh criticism; the principle of the dictatorship of

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\* Speech delivered on December 2, 1935, at the joint meeting of the Communist and Socialist Parties. Jean Zyromski, Secretary of the Seine Federation of the Socialist Party, preceded Duclos.

the proletariat as a means of wiping out counter-revolution and of developing real democracy was condemned, and the collapse of the colossal social experiment which was being worked out on one-sixth of the world was prophesied.

Today, facts show that the experiment has succeeded. It is not for us Communists to be vain about it even though we could do so with some justice, but it is a matter of drawing up a balance sheet of the victories gained in the U.S.S.R. so that the working class can see what method is capable of leading it to victory over the bourgeoisie.

The Soviet experiment has delivered the goods, from this time on it must be judged in this light, and even bourgeois persons can not hide their astonishment before the grandeur of the accomplishments achieved there in every sphere of activity.

The method of the Bolshevik Party, of the Communists, has resulted in the taking of power by the working class, in the disappearance of capitalist profit, and in the final disappearance of the fascist menace.

Even more, the Soviet Union, as Comrade Zyromski has just emphasized, is a decisive factor in the defense of peace. It is the bulwark of peace throughout the world. (*Applause.*)

One can go a step further. It can today be said, in the light of what has happened in the U.S.S.R., that socialism has emerged from the domain of theory and has entered the domain of reality. It can be said that the socialist mode of production and socialist culture are showing their superiority over the capitalist mode of production and capitalist culture. In truth, we Marxists, who know that the socialist mode of production will result in the fashioning of a better humanity, see this great country in which is being molded under our very eyes a type of new men who does not toil merely to bring dividends but in order to make life more joyful and more beautiful. (*Applause.*)

A new civilization has been born of tremendous historical significance, a civilization which can be the pride of the proletariat of the entire world. And if I say that the Communists can be proud of such a balance sheet, I will make sure not to lessen the pride which every worker has the right to feel, as he sees that his class has shown the road of the future. (*Applause.*)

But, alas, against this record which fills us full of pride and hope there is another path that I wish to describe, for thus all of us can see what the working class must avoid if it is not to be defeated. We refer to what occurred in Germany since 1918, a time during which workers' councils prevailed in that country.

The problem of the proletarian revolution in Germany has been

raised. Need I say that if a proletarian government, such as that of the Bolsheviks, had been established at that time in Berlin, the history of the world would have been entirely different?

But German Social-Democracy had its own special ideas about "the transformation of the capitalist regime into a socialist regime". Its real concern was to save Germany from Bolshevism at any price. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg fell, the victims of this policy, and it can be seen that faced with the choice between the dictatorship of capital and the dictatorship of the proletariat Social-Democracy chose the dictatorship of capital.

On the contrary, when we defend bourgeois democracy against fascism, we say very clearly that the day when the choice must be made between the dictatorship of capital, carried out under the democratic form, and the dictatorship of the proletariat, our choice will be swift, for we stand for the dictatorship of the proletariat which signifies a tremendous increase of democracy for the people. (*Applause.*)

In making its choice, German Social-Democracy assured the maintenance of capitalist privileges, the maintenance of the structure of the regime, and it led to the conclusion that when methods of class collaboration succeed in triumphing among the working class, defeat as well as division is inevitable. To sum up very briefly, class collaboration splits the working class, while revolutionary struggle unites it. (*Applause.*)

By abandoning the objective of establishing a proletarian government, German Social-Democracy prepared a tragic future for the working class which it split by ranging the workers under the influence of the policy of class collaboration against the revolutionary workers.

We know where that leads us. This sad and unfortunate experiment divided the working class and permitted Hitler to come to power. That is why we must consider a similar situation, and when we go forward toward unity, we must not practise the policy of the ostrich which sticks its head in the sand when it feels the approach of danger.

When each of us asks what tomorrow will bring, it is indispensable that the working class of our country should know the results of these two methods, the path of the U.S.S.R. and that of Germany and Austria. The first, the policy of class struggle, led to victory. The other, that of class collaboration, led to fascism, to defeat. As for us, we want victory, not defeat. (*Applause.*)

#### UNITY OF ACTION LEADS TO UNITY

It is fortunate that we can often say: "There is no evil without

some good." The tragic, sad experience of a country such as Germany, fallen under the grip of Hitlerism, has made the working class of France and of all countries feel the necessity for unity in a direct way. It is this which in a large measure has helped the workers to understand the necessity for unity of action. Our Communist Party, which for thirteen years has struggled with all its might to achieve unity of action, was happy to see the working class of France come together to fling back the fascist attempt of February 6, 1934. We have been happy to see unity of action achieved in France which permits Socialist and Communist workers to find themselves united, as brothers in the common struggle against the common enemy.

It is to the credit of us, the Communists, that we used every means to unite the workers on the same battle front, and it is because we have achieved unity of action, because we have learned to know each other in action, because we have fought against the enemy shoulder to shoulder, that it is today possible for us to speak of complete unity. (*Applause.*)

The idea of unity is penetrating the consciousness of the workers. It is taking possession of the masses to the extent that the fallacy of reformist methods and class collaboration has become clear. Many workers who sincerely believed that the transition from the capitalist world to the socialist world would take place without class battles now see this clearly; it is in proportion to the disappearance of these illusions, in proportion as the idea that the bourgeoisie will not commit suicide penetrates the consciousness of the workers, that unity marches forward. Unity cannot for one moment be conceived as based on a program of class collaboration but only on a revolutionary program! (*Applause.*)

#### OUR DRAFT CHARTER

We have shown that the united party of the proletariat must adopt the socialization of the means of production and exchange as its goal. We have made clear that this can be realized only by the conquest of power through relentless struggle against the bourgeoisie; we have made clear the necessity for the destruction of the state, which we know is the instrument of domination by one class over another class. That is why the proletariat must destroy the state when it takes power and build its own state. (*Applause.*)

This struggle for the ultimate aims of the proletariat cannot be separated from the defense of our immediate demands, and when we make this clear in our Charter proposal, we do so in the best tradition of Marx who, in his *Value, Price, and Profit* clearly stated:



“If the working class would retreat in its daily conflict with capital, it would deprive itself of the possibility of undertaking any movement of greater scope.”

In our Charter, we take up not only the defense of the interests of the proletariat, but also the demands of the peasantry, the intellectuals, the petty bourgeoisie—of all those social groups which we wish to win as allies in the struggle against capitalism.

Finally, we have posed the problem of international affiliation, to which I will return, and we have also pointed to the fact that the United Party must work for the achievement of trade union unity.

Our Charter was written in May, and since then appreciable progress has been made in this direction, inasmuch as the Congress of Trade Union Unity is soon to be held, from which will emerge a United General Confederation of Labor.

On this point, I wish to say with all respect to the independence and autonomy of the trade unions, that we cannot fail to look forward to an indispensable contact between the Party of the working class and the trade union organizations.

At this time, for example, our Party asks the two trade union federations and the Socialist Party to issue jointly a proclamation stating very clearly that if the fascists attempt to seize power, the workers will answer with a general strike. Unfortunately these proposals, which, it seems to us, are an absolute necessity, have not yet received results. But I am sure that the Socialist comrades who see the Labor and Socialist Internationals periodically meet together with the International Federation of Trade Unions [Amsterdam International] are the first to understand the correctness of our position on such a question.

Finally, we have shown in our Draft Charter that the United Party must break with the policy of class collaboration, and we have made clear that none of its members may participate in a capitalist government. (*Applause.*)

The text of the Socialist Party's proposal, published in *le Populaire* on November 21, says “that the United Party could not seek participation in the government in the bourgeois society”.

We think that such a position is not sufficiently precise and is therefore unacceptable. We must reject all participation in a bourgeois government. (*Applause.*)

No participation in a capitalist government, because its acts, in truth, carry out the interests of the bourgeoisie. That is clear. That is plain.

As I know that in certain circles there is incorrect comment on the work of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, I should like in a few words to make our position clear.

With all our might we are against such a policy which has cost and is costing the working class so many sorrows. (*Applause.*)

And when the Communists speak of a government of the People's Front, which incidentally is not an inevitable step, they mean a government constituted under the conditions of a political crisis, when there is a revolutionary upsurge among the masses which the bourgeoisie cannot hold back. We do not mean, believe me, a government of participation of a parliamentary character, but a government which will fight energetically against fascism and reaction, which will not yet be a government of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but which could be a sort of preface to that. (*Tremendous applause.*)

We categorically reject any participation in a parliamentary government, even if it is given the name of government of the People's Front.

There is another problem on which our Draft Charter is categorical. That is the problem of the defense of the bourgeois state in case of imperialist war, a problem on which we pronounce ourselves against the "sacred union" which chains the working class to the chariot of the bourgeoisie and divides it. (*Tempestuous applause.*)

And you very well know that we Communists have always declared that when the working class cannot stop an imperialist war, when it cannot succeed in holding back the criminal hand of capitalism, then all its efforts must be thrown into transforming the imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war. (*Tempestuous applause.*)

In our Draft Charter we have also shown that we support the emancipation of the colonial peoples and the oppressed national minorities.

Finally, we have made clear that our conception of the Party is based on democratic centralism, so that it will be able to carry out its historic mission. The Party must be neither a club nor an academy filled with gossips who are incapable of acting. The Party must be, in short, the organized vanguard of the proletariat. (*Tempestuous applause.*)

The Party, in our opinion, must be conceived in such a manner that all members have the same beliefs on fundamental problems, so that there exist an indispensable ideological unity.

We have followed up our proposed Charter with the program which the United Party proposes to accomplish in power. Here is involved a program which, the day following the taking of power, the United Party could begin to carry out. And it is evident that if we speak of this program, it is because we clearly see the problems of the taking of power.

For every Communist, the idea of power is in no way lost in par-

liamentary considerations, from which not all who nevertheless use the formula, "All Power to Socialism!" have extricated themselves. (*Applause.*)

Therefore, we believe that we must be precise and clear about the United Party, so that each person will not be able to interpret the formula of workers' power in his own way and so that it is known what we want and where we are going.

*[At this point Jacques Duclos gives information on the state of the discussion of the committee of unification which has existed since the announcement of the Draft Charter, on May 29 last, and he brings up one of the most important problems in the question of unity.]*

#### THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

When we examine this problem, the experiences of the revolutions in the U.S.S.R. and in Central Europe cannot be considered as a negligible quantity by the working class of France. If the working class of these countries, exercising its own creative genius, has found forms for the carrying out of its dictatorship, it necessarily follows that it has as its principal duty the elimination of the bourgeoisie from all the organs of power, and that they have thus naturally been led to a break with bourgeois parliamentarism.

The Socialist Party stresses the differences between the workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils of the Russian revolution and those in Central Europe and the revolutionary committees in the Asturias. I must say that I do not perceive the fundamental difference between the Workers' Soviets of Petrograd in 1917, fighting with arms to take power, and the revolutionary committees of Soviets of the miners of Asturias also fighting with arms against Spanish reaction. (*Applause.*)

The workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils, by rallying the various social strata, which made certain the victory of the proletarian revolution, constitute the base without which it is impossible seriously to conceive the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We cannot even try to connect this conception with that of bourgeois parliamentarism.

That is why we think that general formulae are not enough. We have the duty of concretely posing this all-important problem for the future of the working class, and therefore it is necessary to say that the dictatorship of the proletariat can be conceived only under a form which assures the dominating position of the working masses, which in the U.S.S.R. is achieved by Soviet power. On this point, permit me to examine a problem which in our opinion is

important. It concerns the defense of the Soviet Union, which we think must be included in the charter of the United Party.

#### THE DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

I say to you very clearly, with all the frankness which we can use among ourselves, that we cannot fail to write into the charter of the United Party of the proletariat the defense of the first Socialist fatherland. (*Applause.*)

I am happy to see that in this hall there is a truly moving unanimity for the building of a proletarian wall of defense around the Soviet Union. (*Applause.*)

Our friend Zyromski has just paid enthusiastic homage to the Soviet regime; he declared that the abolition of the capitalist regime had been achieved there, and he used the term "proletarian state" to characterize the Soviet state.

This statement makes me very happy, but I would like to note that in the Socialist Party everyone does not speak like Zyromski, who has just saluted the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R.

Citizen Lebas, who writes, "We deny that it [the Bolshevik state] is building socialism", declares very clearly that "the Bolshevik state is not a state of workers and peasants".

Thus, we are far from having a united opinion on the balance sheet of the Soviet Union, as I drew it some time ago, and you will understand how surprised I was when I read under the same signature: "It is a question of knowing whether, while we too have the desire of achieving socialism, we are not taking the risk of suffering a similar setback—in other words, to fail—in imitation of Bolshevism in Russia."

This, unfortunately, is not the sentiment of only a single voice. From the pen of a Socialist Party member we read that "the U.S.S.R. is in the process of establishing, in the classical style of Bonapartism, the new privileged class of 'specialists' and of 'qualified cadres'." In the same organ, *Combat Marxiste*, we read that the first proletarian state is "a state which is the enemy, ravisher and torturer of the workers, oppressor of the laboring masses in its own territory and a foreign body in the workers' movement on the international scale".

And while Zyromski, a few minutes ago, speaking in the name of the Socialist Party, recalled with emotion the declaration of Jules Guesde demanding that we set a guard around the Russian revolution, I remembered that a member of his party could write: "What the Communist Party calls 'the defense of the U.S.S.R.' and what we ourselves call the defense of the Bolshevik oligarchy, is in contradiction to the safeguarding of peace." (*Combat Marxiste.*)

Comrades, I will not pause to read other citations, but you will understand why we ourselves demand that such contradictions on essential problems must cease to exist.

Moreover, we believe that the United Party must be informed by its press as to what is going on in the Soviet Union, whose defense is understood so much the better since this party sets as its goal the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, the need for which is now recognized by the Socialist Party. And, whether one wants it or not, when one speaks of the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is before him the majestic example of the Soviets, which absolutely nothing can take from the thoughts of those who, desiring the freedom of the proletariat, also desire the necessary means for the victory. (*Prolonged applause, ovation.*)

That is why I am sure that I am reflecting the sentiment of all comrades in demanding that such things should not be possible in a United Party. (*Applause.*)

#### INTERNATIONAL ENTENTE AND ACTION

Now I wish to examine the second problem: the International.

It is, naturally, necessary that the United Party should adhere to an International that carries out policies identical to its own. And the fundamental principle of the United Party must be the struggle against all opponents of unity, wherever they may be.

Moreover, I wish to congratulate the S.F.I.O.\* of the Socialist Party on this point, because it has long since informed the Executive of the Labor and Socialist International that it favors international unity of action.

Also, on this point I must also declare that by a sort of topsyturvy democracy, it is the minority that makes the law in the Labor and Socialist International, and it is, in fact, the five Socialist Parties of Great Britain, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, and Czechoslovakia which, opposed to international unity of action, prohibit the Labor and Socialist International from accomplishing what you want, what we all want, international unity of action. (*Applause.*)

What can be done with the [British] Labor Party? we are asked.

I myself know that the Labor Party is one of those which has opposed and is now opposing international unity of action. I have had the opportunity recently to hear the Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party, Pietro Nenni, reproach, in terms that were courteous but firm, certain English comrades for the anti-unitary attitude of British Laborism.

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\* French Section of the Labor and Socialist International.

Can we say that on the international scale we are serving unity of action by maintaining an approving silence about the Labor Party, or, on the contrary, do we not believe that we serve unity of action by combatting all those, whoever and wherever they are, who do not want unity of action? For we ourselves know that we can never create the complete unity we desire without unity of action.

Let us not forget, comrades, that if we can speak of unity today, it is because we achieved unity of action more than a year ago. What is true here in France is true, too, on the international scene. (*Applause.*)

Definitely, to combat the enemies of unity of action on the international scale means to combat those who want to perpetuate the split by maintaining barriers between Socialist and Communist workers; it means to oppose those whose splitting policy is the direct result of their refusal to practise a policy of class collaboration.

We who say clearly that decisions on an international scale must be applied according to the actual situation in each country declare clearly that without international discipline, the working class cannot hope to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. (*Applause.*)

And, comrades, it must be said that from this point of view the text of our Socialist friends published on November 21, was, so to speak, silent on international questions. The supplementary text published on November 27 was a little more detailed; but I have the feeling that on this question there is much to be discussed, just as there is much to be discussed on the problem of the defense of the Soviet Union and the attitude that must be taken toward the first proletarian state.

We are so much the more ready to discuss, on our part, for we are proud to belong to an International whose unceasing efforts for unity we salute, and we believe that the United Party cannot fail to adopt a position which will condemn all those who wish to perpetuate the split in the working class.

For, fundamentally, those who wish neither unity of action nor organic unity as a consequence are those who wish to prevent the working class from getting together on a revolutionary platform; they want to keep a reformist point of view predominant among the masses. Here I should like to quote from an article by Max Dormoy, which reads:

“Let us speak clearly: it is impossible to conceive of our separation from the English Labor movement with which we have so many ties.”

No one demands a separation from the Labor Party. What is

necessary is to refuse to follow the leaders of that party who are against unity of action.

And Comrade Dormoy added: "The Labor Party is on the eve of taking power and constituting a workers' government."

That is not our conception of taking power. That is not how we understand a workers' government. (*Applause.*)

Unity can be achieved only on a revolutionary platform, and when Dormoy does not wish to see the fight against the anti-unitary policies of the Labor Party, it is because he does not really want to place himself against the policy of class collaboration followed in England.

The same problem presents itself in relation to the Scandinavian nations, and, in brief, it can be said that the Socialist Parties which favor participation in bourgeois governments are opposed to unity of action without fearing the consequences which might follow from the splits, the responsibility for which is their own.

It is by taking account of all this that the question of affiliation to an international organization in which the United Party would carry out decisions without neglecting the concrete peculiarities in France must be conceived.

Here are our Party's terms on this question:

The United Party works in strict harmony with the international organization and profits by the experience of the labor movement in other countries. The international organization, while avoiding direct interference in the internal affairs of the United Party, must give helpful aid to it in the theoretical struggle against political opponents and for the application of decisions taken by the leading congresses and organs of the International.

#### DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

I want at this time to discuss the last question concerning the organization of the Party. The political line is fixed by the mass of supporters and not by a few parliamentarians in the Party. (*Applause.*) Each member of the Party must conform to a discipline freely agreed upon, to be determined by the democratic principle which is the law of the majority. That is why discipline must be the same for the deputy, for the elected as well as for the rank-and-file militant. (*Prolonged applause.*) The parliamentary fraction must not direct the Party. The Party must be directed by its central organization, the direct representatives of the Party. (*Lively applause.*)

The United Party of the proletariat is not an electoral party in which everything is done with an eye to elections. No doubt, it must participate in elections, but it is the Party of struggle of the laboring masses, a Party imposing on all its members, not an external discipline,

but demanding of all, with penalties for violation, the carrying out of a fixed policy, because the worst of all would be a separation between words and deeds. (*Applause.*)

It would not be enough to repeat a few revolutionary formulae from time to time, if we do not have a Party which requires its members to conduct themselves as revolutionary fighters at the head of the masses, how can we dream of defeating the bourgeoisie? (*Applause.*)

That is why we must have a very clear conception of the United Party of the proletariat; we do not want many parties within one party. We want one single party, based on principles accepted by all; a party in which final decisions would be carried out by all. (*Applause.*)

This, to our mind, is how the organizational problem of the United Party presents itself. Without ideological unity, the party of the proletariat is reduced to impotence, to struggles which tend to paralyze action, and in such a situation, it is impossible to have a party capable of accomplishing its historic task: the overthrow of the capitalist regime. (*Applause.*)

This is how our Communist Party treats this question in the plan submitted to our Socialist friends—or rather, Socialist brothers. (*Applause.*)

The United Party defends the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels, enriched by the theoretical developments of Lenin and Stalin. In order to be able to overthrow capitalism, and to establish Communism, the United Party creates a centralized structure. All decisions are taken after a perfectly free discussion. The decisions are obligatory for all under pain of penalties.

To be a member of the Party, it is not enough to announce oneself in accord with the aims and the methods of the Party; we must work to apply all decisions of the Party and to pay dues regularly.

The leading organs in the various groups will be elected by general assemblies, conferences, and congresses and they will be expected to give periodic accounts of their activity to their electors.

The decisions of the leading organs of the Party will be obligatory upon the subordinate groups.

The central organ of the Party will direct the entire Party, including the parliamentary group and the press, and will have as its task to see that everybody carries out the decisions. Ideological unity, a necessary condition for the ability to struggle, is indispensable for the Party. Journalists, speakers, and writers of the Party must carry out the same policy: the policy of the Party.

The working class, in order to unite, must free itself from the



influences of the capitalist enemy. That is why only those can belong to the United Party who have decided to take part in the class struggle, to fight in the vanguard of the toiling masses of the country, under the flag of the proletarian revolution, under the flag of proletarian internationalism, under the flag of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We want a single party, able to lead the working class. Unity is not a pre-electoral combination, nor is it a question of agreement between headquarters. It is a question which, in fact, involves the future of the working class. (*Prolonged applause.*)

It is because we believe that the Socialist and Communist workers must discuss every problem which is of interest to them, which is of interest to all of us, that we are taking part in this public discussion on unity.

A meeting such as this evening's is very useful; it is going to permit worthwhile discussions in the Socialist Party as well as in the Communist Party.

#### FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION

That is why I could not do better than to hope that similar meetings should be held elsewhere, so that the problems of unity can be examined in all their clarity before the comrades of the two parties in an atmosphere of friendliness such as surrounds us tonight.

As for the Communist Party, we are ready to discuss in all our fractions and units the text of the plan of our Socialist friends together with our own Draft Charter of Unity; and we are also ready, if the Socialist Party wishes it, to furnish it with our proposals on unity so that it may be discussed in the Socialist branches. While the hearts of the workers in the Socialist Party and Communist Party beat in unison with the same united will, it would be well that there be organized among them discussions on unity in the working class.

I am sure that these proposals coincide with the beliefs of all the comrades here, just as everybody, I am no less certain, is in accord with us when we propose that the Committee of Unification publish the stenographic report of its debates, which would be an extremely important element of information for the discussion. Our fraternal discussion this evening shows what can be done everywhere, and that is why, comrades, we can say that everything which encourages the workers to discuss with an understanding of the issues involved will advance the great cause of unity.

In continuing to discuss, we must tighten more than ever the unity of action between our two parties against the enemy that menaces us, against the fascist leagues, against the decree-laws, for the defense of peace.

Just as we are able to speak today of total unity, because we have achieved unity of action, so each new step which we take on the road of unity of action will hasten the march towards unity; that is why, in concluding, I hope to see, leaving this magnificent assembly, militants more courageous than ever in the fight under the banner of united action, militants more courageous than ever in achieving unity of struggle against the French Hitlerites, militants ready to do everything to hasten the awaited hour of the reconstruction of unity.

We are in the process of laying the solid foundations on which will be built the unity of the working class of France, unity for struggle, unity for victory. We have shown, for our part, a certain number of problems which must be discussed without flinching; for the worst thing of all would be to create a caricature of unity which would then lead us to new splits, to defeat. But we desire unity to conquer our enemies, we desire it not only to defeat fascism but also to make socialism triumph in the land we love and which we want to deliver from the vile dictatorship of the financial powers. (*Applause.*)

That is why, knowing full well that I reflect the sentiments on both sides, certain of the triumph of the great cause of unity under the flag of class struggle, I cry with all my might:

Long live the unity of the working class of France!

Long live the future and great United Party of the working class of France!

(*Tremendous applause.*)

# Toward the People's Anti-Imperialist Front in Mexico

(Speech\* Delivered to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, August 10, 1935)

By HERNAN LABORDE\*\*

IN the draft resolution for this point of the agenda and in the report of Comrade Dimitroff it is said that "the most important task of the Communists in the colonial countries is the creation of the people's anti-imperialist front". It is clear that this is not meant for colonial countries exclusively, but also for the semi-colonial countries.

I propose to raise here some problems of the people's anti-imperialist front in Mexico, particularly a problem which for the present is faced in no other country in the Caribbean or in South America—the problem of our position towards national-reformism in power, towards the National Revolutionary Party and the Cardenas government, which has the support of part of the toiling masses and petty bourgeoisie. . . .

The task of the oppressed masses of Mexico, under the leadership of the proletariat and its Communist vanguard, is to put once more into motion the bourgeois-democratic revolution, which was begun in 1910 and betrayed by its principal bourgeois leaders, and to carry it to its close, to the realization of its tasks, which are primarily anti-imperialist tasks, for national liberation even though linked directly to the solution of the agrarian problem.

Twenty-five years after the revolution began, Mexico continues to be a semi-colony. The nearly three billion dollars invested in the country, in mining, in oil, in the railroads, in the electrical industry, in agriculture, and in the small and weak light industries, give foreign capitalists control over the fundamental positions in economy.

Although the agrarian reform of 1917, a result of the revolution, has given the peasants five million acres of cultivable land and twenty million acres of uncultivable lands, and although more than

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\* Abridged text.—Ed.

\*\* Delegate from the Communist Party of Mexico to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.—Ed.

two-thirds of the peasant population is still without lands, the foreign exploiters have monopolized through concessions, evictions, etc., around seventy-five million acres of rich lands.

Due to the fact that the Yankee market absorbs the greater part of Mexican exports, and due to its closeness and its possibilities for placing pressure on the government by fomenting and financing revolts, Yankee imperialism has succeeded in gaining the upper hand, particularly after the capitulation of Calles in 1927-28, and in weakening nearly to elimination the influence of English imperialism.

. . . Imperialism, under the conditions of the depression of a special type, was able to increase greatly the exploitation of the masses; by increasing the production and the exports of the extraction industries, and by new methods, the lowering of the costs of production and of real wages, the raising of the cost of living obtained through the depreciation of the peso, which the government maintains at the rate of \$3.60 per United States dollar.

This explains why just at the end of 1934 and the beginning of 1935 the strike movement expanded until it reached the number of 1,200 strikes in six months, affecting the most important enterprises — mining, oil, electrical, urban transport, plantations, and feudal estates, and which often acquired the character of a counter-offensive for better salaries, for collective agreements, etc. This movement, which has already begun to assume the form of regional and industrial general strikes, has an unmistakable anti-imperialist character.

This holds true not only for the proletariat. The anti-imperialist struggle of the other sections of the population burst out frequently in the form of movements of consumers of electric light and power for the lowering of rates, of struggles against the high price of gasoline, against the monopoly enterprises of agricultural products, etc.

#### THE EVENTS OF JUNE 12

One fact characterizes the state of mind of the masses. On June 12 of this year, General Calles, representing the landowners, capitalists, and big merchants most closely linked with foreign capital, and until then head of the National Revolutionary Party, made his statement urging the government to suppress by violence the strike movement and to restrict the trade unions. This attack on the working class had all the characteristics of a cynical defense of foreign capital, the capital most affected by the strikes.

That same evening, the most important workers' organizations, representing two-thirds of the organized working class, including

its decisive sections—mining, oil, railroad, electrical, etc.—achieved unity of action in deed, and declared themselves prepared to oppose, even with a general strike, any attempt to establish a dictatorship or to restrict the rights of the proletariat. In a few days, the National Committee for Proletarian Defense was established, which is to convoke a Unity Congress to form a unified trade union center. Naturally, we are not speaking of a miracle here. The united front was possible because our Party had prepared the ground by fighting consistently, although with weaknesses, for unity of action ever since the appeal of the Communist International in March, 1933. It was possible also because of the influence of the international movement of the proletariat towards the united front. But the rapidity and energy with which the workers' organizations (including some who a month before had sabotaged the united front) answered the attack of Calles by achieving unity of action and preparing themselves for defense, indicate the degree of maturity of the mass sentiment and willingness for struggle against the oppressors of the country and people.

Immediately after the Committee for Proletarian Defense was established, student groups and others sent in their endorsements, and the peasant organizations initiated conversations to form a peasant united front. This indicates that the situation was ripe, not only for the united front of the proletariat, but also for the people's front against imperialism.

But our Party then did not understand the problem of the people's front. It did not understand that the semi-colonial conditions of the country and the double oppression of imperialism, that the character of the revolution with its task of national liberation, and that the class forces which must participate in it in its first stage, the anti-imperialist stage, impose as the basic principle of our political line the tactic of the people's front. The Party had a wrong line.

This wrong line prevented us from seeing the favorable conditions which the political situation in the country, from the taking of power by President Cardenas to the end of 1934, offered us to develop a vast people's movement against imperialism. And, in June, when the clash between Calles and Cardenas took place, when Cardenas rejected the statements of Calles by announcing himself opposed to his reactionary proposals and for the right to strike, we saw nothing more than a factional struggle springing from a rivalry of economic interests between two bourgeois-landlord cliques, and disagreements on the most adequate methods to liquidate the struggles of the masses and to quiet down the country for the benefit of foreign capital and its national allies. We placed Cardenas on the same plane as Calles and limited ourselves to saying to the masses:

"Neither with Calles nor with Cardenas", and to asserting that the two were against the proletariat.

This position was wrong.

#### OUR ERRORS IN ESTIMATING THE STRUGGLE OF CARDENAS AGAINST CALLES

The fight between the Calles and Cardenas factions, which culminated in the June clash, has its source in the policy of the Cardenas government which has taken a series of national-reformist measures to restrict, although timidly, the exploitation of the country by the imperialists. It has cancelled some illegal concessions, revised the electric light and power scales, encouraged cooperatives in mining and electricity, nationalized insurance, raised the tax on silver, etc. At the same time, Cardenas has broadened the policy of distribution of lands and credits to the peasants on the basis of the reforms of 1917, and has displayed a certain tolerance towards the strike movement and towards the workers' movement in general, including the Communist Party, which now enjoys some opportunity for legal action after five years of illegality. . . .

The struggle of Cardenas against Calles is basically the vacillating, inconsistent resistance of the national-reformist bourgeois sector against the increasing pressure of imperialism supporting itself on the landowners and the Callista millionaires, and which is absorbing also the branches of the light industries before reserved for the national bourgeoisie.

This is what we did not understand. Neither did we see that the "new methods" and the "Left maneuvers" of Cardenas are, in large part, concessions which bourgeois national reformism, lacking sufficient strength in itself, due to the smallness and weakness of industry in Mexico, is obliged to make to the toiling masses and the petty bourgeoisie in order to assure itself of their support. We did not see, finally, that the mass base of Cardenismo, strengthened and broadened recently, undoubtedly includes national-revolutionary sections who have followed Cardenas because, noticing his position in relation to the reactionary Right, they hoped to find in him a leader of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The source of these errors is partly the Plenum of July, 1929. In that Plenum, our Central Committee broke resolutely with the opportunist past of the Party, which had been at the tail end of Obregon and Calles for a long period; but it placed us at the other extreme in considering that the national bourgeoisie taken as a whole and its petty-bourgeois allies had capitulated *conclusively* to imperialism. In order to avoid this error it would have been sufficient not to forget the Colonial Thesis of the Sixth Congress which states

that the capitulation of the bourgeoisie of the colonies and semi-colonies to imperialism "is not conclusive as long as the danger of the class revolution of the masses does not appear as a direct and threatening factor".

The estimations of the Plenum of July, 1929, led us to a sectarian and purely negative position towards the reforms of 1917 still in force (as the distribution of lands and credits to the peasants, certain guarantees to the proletariat, right of organization and strike, etc.). . . .

All this explains why the masses could not understand us when we shouted against the National Revolutionary Party and against its governments, calling them "counter-revolutionaries", "lackeys of imperialism", etc.; and why the National Revolutionary Party has succeeded in retaining a large mass base, notwithstanding its undoubted collaboration with imperialism, while we with our loud slogans on the agrarian anti-imperialist revolution, the workers' and peasants' government, the power of the Soviets, have been able to win over only the most advanced sections of the working class and the peasantry.

This sectarian line, which prevented us from understanding for many years the true character of the party in power, has prevented us from a timely appraisal of the new national-reformist currents inside the party, and from correctly characterizing the Cardenas government, which is *emphasizing* the national-reformist aspects of its program. Therefore, we have not only not concentrated our fire against the reactionary Calles faction, but further, by considering Cardenismo as the demagogic "Left" of the National Revolutionary Party, which it was necessary to combat in order to separate the masses from the party, we even reached a point where we characterized the Cardenas government as "the principal source of the fascist danger".

We have spoken much about the fascist danger in Mexico, primarily in the form of a "process of fascization" derived from the policy of the government and its Six-Year Plan, and, in the second place, from the semi-fascist groups which have sprung up from the government. . . .

It is clear that our Party must not abandon its struggle against the semi-fascist groups. But it is necessary to recognize that the "fascist danger" to a certain extent had caused us to relegate to a secondary plane the principal enemy, which is—under Mexican conditions—imperialism, particularly Yankee imperialism. In the future we must assign the fascist groups their true value as secondary auxiliaries—as yet very weak—of imperialist oppression, and without ceasing to fight them, place the struggle against imperialism in the

center of the attention of the masses. As Comrade Wang Ming has stated correctly, the struggle against imperialism and for the national interests of the people is the best way to fight and expose the semi-fascist groups in our countries.

These have been our principal errors. The political and practical consequence of these errors has been a false tactic, which blinded us to the perspective of a people's anti-imperialist movement and has prevented us from taking advantage of the exceptionally favorable situation to deepen the contradictions between a part of the national bourgeoisie and imperialism, to gather the great masses of the people for the anti-imperialist struggle, to strengthen the workers' organizations, to secure the alliance of the peasantry with the proletariat and to facilitate the struggle for the hegemony of the proletariat in the movement, to transform the Communist Party into a strong Party linked with the masses and capable of organizing and leading the revolution, and to utilize the temporary national-reformist allies in the best possible way.

We must quickly change the line of the Party and adopt a correct tactic.

#### THE DANGER OF THE REAPPEARANCE OF CALLES

The declarations of Calles in June were designed to apply brutal methods of repression and to liquidate the mass movement against imperialist oppression. These statements undoubtedly correspond to the interests and desires of imperialism. To achieve this desire, the man favored most continues to be Calles, who not only is not crushed, but even retains undeniable support in the National Revolutionary Party itself, in the Congress, the Senate, and in the Army. He is preparing to regain by any means his preponderant role in the politics of the country. Everything seems to indicate that the reappearance of Calles will take the form of a military coup d'etat to establish his dictatorship and to apply the program sketched in his June declarations. The latest news from Mexico shows, not only the development of the mass movement, but also the sharpening of the crisis in the National Revolutionary Party and of the struggle between reactionary Callismo and Cardenismo.

Under these conditions our Party must concentrate its fire against Calles, explaining his reactionary role, awakening and preparing the masses against his military coup d'etat. At the same time we must develop the mass movement on the basis of a struggle for the economic, political and anti-imperialist demands. We must develop the economic struggles, first of all, against the foreign companies, for increased wages, for better collective contracts, and the political strikes against any attempt to restrict the right to strike and



the rights of the proletariat in general. We must link these struggles to the movement of the peasants, students, and the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and thus create the conditions for the general strike and for great mass actions in the city and the countryside against a Calles coup d'etat.

The Party must look for and crystallize the Left wing within the National Revolutionary Party represented by groups and organizations of peasants, workers, students, and the impoverished petty-bourgeoisie, led by the Cardenistas. We must base ourselves on this Left wing by means of the united front tactic in order to accelerate the differentiation of classes and groups in the party, in order to develop in it a national-revolutionary wing, steadily more defined and consistent.

In practice we have already cooperated with the lower organs of the National Revolutionary Party such as municipal peasant governments of N.R.P. origin which were fighting against the reactionary elements of the party. Since the Third Latin American Communist Conference we accepted the possibility of proposing a united front in some cases to the Sub-Committees of the National Revolutionary Party. *But now we must go much further. . . .*

It is evident for us that in Mexico the people's anti-imperialist front is possible only by taking into consideration the toiling masses and the petty bourgeoisie of the National Revolutionary Party. And it is necessary to draw our conclusions from this fact.

#### AS TO A UNITED FRONT WITH THE NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

I am not proposing the united front with the National Revolutionary Party as a whole, including the Callista Right, deeply hated by the people, but rather with the national-reformist Cardenista movement, which has on its side the basic masses of the National Revolutionary Party. But we could even come to a united front with the National Revolutionary Party as a whole, with one condition: that the *Callista politicians and generals be expelled*. The united front with the Cardenista movement, or with the National Revolutionary Party as a whole, supposes cooperation in the actions of struggle and in the organs of the people's anti-imperialist front, not only with the organs of economic struggles, as trade unions, peasant leagues, etc., which are led by the followers of Cardenas, but also with the internal organs themselves of the National Revolutionary Party where these organs directly control the masses. *This, of course, will demand the entrance and the work of the Communists in the organs of the National Revolutionary Party.*

Naturally, we must also take into consideration the other political

organizations, such as the Mexican Labor Party, the Socialist Party of the Lefts, of the old Leftist Tejada, etc.

What must be our position towards the government of Cardenas, towards his program, the Six-Year Plan, and towards his concrete policy? The explanations of Comrade Dimitroff in referring to the de Man plan in Belgium helps us to find the correct position. We must reject everything in the program of the National Revolutionary Party which is injurious to the masses and favorable to imperialism and its national tools; but we must support and demand that the parts be fulfilled which can benefit somewhat, even though it be only a trifle, the toiling masses, and to limit somewhat, although it may be very little, the oppression of the country and the people by imperialism. We must apply this test to the concrete policy of Cardenas and present new demands which would drive the struggle of the masses beyond the limits of the national-reformist concession of the government.

Our Party must call on the popular masses and to all of its organizations, groups, and representative persons, to build the national movement of struggle against imperialism, with a platform of immediate demands, and direct this struggle towards the national liberating revolution which must restore complete economic and political independence to Mexico. The Party must declare itself prepared to cooperate with whatever organizations, groups, or individuals that accept this platform, and even to cooperate with them in actions of struggle for isolated anti-imperialist demands. The Party must also declare that it will support any government, including the present government of Cardenas, whenever and insofar as it carries out a policy in accord with the platform of the people's anti-imperialist front.

At the same time, the Party must raise before the government these political demands: complete legality and freedom of action for the Communist Party and for all revolutionary organizations, broad democratic liberties, the elimination of the reactionary Callistas from all organs of the administration and the army, the return to the peasants of the arms which were taken away from them by previous governments, a general arming of all peasants for their defense against the reactionary Callista coup d'etat which will be directed largely against them, the disarming of the whiteguards of the landowners, and an effective preparation against the coup d'etat of Calles.

In this way we will sharpen the crisis in the National Revolutionary Party, the struggle between the Callista Right and Cardenismo; we will encourage the national-revolutionary currents in the party; we will link ourselves with the Cardenista masses and isolate the conciliatory elements who intercede in order to hold back

the struggle against imperialism and against its national allies. We must criticize the vacillating position of Cardenas, denounce his concessions to imperialism, and reject the tendency visible in the trade unions and even inside our Party to consider Cardenas as a national-revolutionary leader. But it must be made clear to the masses that we are not dealing here with maneuvers to expose Cardenas, but that we sincerely want to broaden and develop to the utmost the people's front of struggle against imperialism and against the Callista reaction which serves it, by embracing all those who are willing, even though only partially and temporarily, to participate in this struggle.

#### HOW SHALL WE BUILD THE PEOPLE'S ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT?

Our Party must boldly raise the question of the people's anti-imperialist front, basing itself above all on the unified workers' movement as the driving force of the people's front. Therefore, the most urgent task is the consolidation and extension of the trade union united front already achieved, drawing in organizations not yet adhering to it, and in insuring by the work of the Party, above all in the reformist organizations, the achievement of the Unity Congress and of unity itself. The second task is the formation of the peasant united front, as the best ally of the working class to assure its leadership in the people's front. The peasants and the unorganized agricultural workers, who form an enormous mass, must be gathered and incorporated into the people's front in Committees of United Front Struggle.

The forces of the people's front must include every stratum of the toiling population and the petty-bourgeoisie. The people's front must be the people itself organized and mobilized for the struggle against imperialist oppression and for the national liberation of the country. Together with the workers, peasants, employees, etc. the toiling youth and the students play a large role as vanguard, as a shock troop, in the people's movement, and the Young Communist League here must be the best helper of the Party for the mobilization and organization of the masses of youth. We must give special attention to the women, who will be the most sensitive to certain aspects of the struggle against imperialism. The broad Catholic mass must be attracted to the anti-imperialist front, and must be differentiated from the bishops and reactionary clerical leaders. In the countryside, a factor of greater importance for the people's movement will be the Indian tribes. We must not forget the soldiers, who can participate in the movement even though now it be only in small groups.

## DRAFT PLATFORM FOR THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

Our delegation has sketched a rough draft platform for this people's front. We propose as demands for the proletariat: enforcement of the minimum wage law, increased wages in the imperialist enterprises, strict fulfillment of the Labor Law in those points that benefit the workers and which the imperialist enterprises are now violating partially or wholly, and an attachment of the property of those enterprises to oblige them to fulfill the law. For the peasants, Indians and middle landowners, the return of the lands which have been robbed from them by the foreign companies. For the peasants and Indians, free distribution of the lands belonging to foreign exploiters and their national allies, and the struggle for the direct occupation of these lands. We propose the struggle against the conditions of semi-feudal oppression of the toilers of the countryside, particularly the peons, and for the liberation of the Indian tribes, although we have to discuss the form of presenting this question from the point of view of the people's front. For the urban petty-bourgeoisie, for the women and for the poor and middle population in general, the demand for the reduction of electric light and power rates, the struggle against the shutting off of electric services for lack of payment, the struggle against the monopolies of food products and for the reduction of prices.

These are the demands which most vitally touch the masses and will place them in motion. But the platform must also contain general anti-imperialist demands, as, for example, the cancellation of the foreign debts. Of course, there must be included the struggle for disarming and dissolving the semi-fascist groups ("gold shirts," etc.).

I have considered here only the immediate demands of the people's front, because in Mexico the struggle for power is not a problem of the immediate future as it is in Brazil. But there exist the necessary factors for a relatively rapid development of the people's movement and even of the revolutionary crisis, before the conditions ripen for Soviet Power. Therefore, it seems to me that very soon the people's revolutionary government and its program, which we have not yet discussed, and which must be discussed without delay, will be raised as a very concrete immediate question. Of course, already from now on, we must popularize the fundamental slogans of the National Revolution: confiscation of the properties of the imperialist enterprises, etc.

Even when the slogan of the defense of the U.S.S.R. must not necessarily form part of the platform of the people's front, our Party must raise the interest, the sympathy, and the active endorsement by the masses of the peace policy of the U.S.S.R., popularize

the Soviet solution of the national problem and the successes of Socialist construction, and show to the masses that the path of the October Revolution is the only one which leads to the complete destruction of imperialism, to the liberation and fraternization of all peoples. The Party must take advantage of the favorable situation for a great campaign for renewal of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. by the Mexican government.

There still remains one question which demands a complete change in the position of the Party. I refer to our position towards the patriotic traditions and towards the revolution of 1910—a sectarian position which has consisted in ignoring or underestimating them, and which has prevented us from taking advantage of these patriotic sentiments of the people, of the revolutionary traditions of the War of Independence, as the first emancipation movement of the Mexican nation, of the reform as an important stage in the struggle against the landlord-clerical reaction, and of the revolution of 1910 with its anti-imperialist and anti-feudal aspects. We must regain possession of the heritage and the revolutionary traditions of the people and make of September 16 the anniversary of the Independence, and of November 20 the anniversary of the 1910 revolution—two days for the national liberation movement.

The struggle for the liberation of the Mexican people is an inseparable part of the national liberation movement of all the peoples of the Caribbean and of South America. It will be necessary to link the internal tasks of the people's front in Mexico to the mass movement in support of the Cuban revolution and of the national liberation movement of Brazil, and to support the creation of the people's front throughout Central America.

#### THE TASKS OF THE C.P.U.S.A.

And it is not possible to discuss these problems without recalling the role of the Communist Party of the United States, which will have from now on far greater tasks and responsibilities in organizing the active support of the North American working class to our national liberation movements. But this question must not be raised as a simple question of help from the stronger brother to the weaker brothers. We understand what the establishment of a fascist dictatorship in the United States would mean for our countries with its repercussions of barbarous and feudal terror in the semi-colonies of Yankee finance capital. For this reason, the popular masses of our countries are interested in the victorious struggle of the North American working class against the advance of fascism, and our national movements must and surely will support this struggle. The Communist Party of the United States and the North American working

class, in general, must in their turn lend their support to the movements of liberation of the Caribbean and South America, because in them they have their best allies for the victorious struggle against the North American bourgeoisie, for the defeat and destruction of Yankee imperialism.

The reorientation of the Communist Party of Mexico on the line of the people's front places before us with greater force than ever before the question of the Party itself. We need a strong Party, which has not only the correct line, but also cadres capable of carrying it out. It will be necessary to discuss in detail after the Congress the problems of the reconstruction of the work of the Party. But it is evident that the transformation of the Party will be possible only in the course of our mass work inside the people's front, organizing it, directing it, in fighting on two fronts, against the sectarian resistance which will present itself towards our line, and above all, against the most serious danger, the Right deviation of comrades who will surely confuse the tactics of the people's front with the relinquishing of the independent policy of the Party, so painfully won and guaranteed during the last five years. Every attempt to distort the tactic of the people's front and to return to the times of tailist collaboration with the bourgeoisie must be energetically rejected. The people's front will be successful and the victory of the revolution will be possible only if we know how to link ourselves to the broad masses who today follow national-reformism, to organize them and to lead them through partial struggles towards the revolution, at the same time retaining the organic and political independence of our Party, as the revolutionary Party of the proletariat, and always keeping in view our objectives of struggle for the complete triumph of the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution, which opens the breach towards Soviet Power and towards socialism.

# The Socialist Administration in Reading and Our United Front Tasks

By JOHN DEAN

**I**N the recent elections in Reading, Pennsylvania, the main task facing the working class and all progressive elements was: the defeat of the reactionary capitalist parties, both of which (and especially the Republican Party) were showing marked fascist tendencies, and the election of workers' candidates.

On one side were the bankers, the hosiery manufacturers, the military-jingoists, the open-shoppers (E. J. Poole, Chamber of Commerce President, head of Carpenter Steel), and open fascists (Thun, Jannsen, Oberlander—subsidizers of the local "Friends of New Germany", and the pro-Hitler Oberlander Trust and Carl Shurz Foundation—owners of the largest textile machine works in the East) supporting the Democratic and Republican Parties.

On the other side were the large masses of workers and middle-class elements, supporting the Socialist Party.

"We Communists are a revolutionary Party, but we are ready to undertake joint action with other parties fighting against fascism."

"We are ready to fight jointly for any immediate task which, when realized, will weaken the position of fascism and strengthen the position of the proletariat."

These words of Comrade Dimitroff at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International applied with special emphasis to the election struggle in Reading.

In spite of the fact that there was no formal agreement with the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, after some hesitation in overcoming its sectarian fears, withdrew its candidates and supported the Socialist candidates for the major city offices. At the same time, in order to be in a position to develop the independent, revolutionary role of our Party, Communist candidates ran for minor offices in several wards.

The results of the election proved that our line was correct. The Socialist Party swept into office with the largest vote in its history, electing an entire city administration (Mayor, three City Councilmen, City Treasurer, City Controller, and three School

Directors). For the first time, the Socialist Party was able to extend its influence to the surrounding country, polling a record vote there also, and electing one County Commissioner and two Prison Inspectors. In the city a total of 20,733 Socialist votes were cast against 20,793 for both old parties. In the combined city-county, Darlington Hoopes, at present a state legislator and a member of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, polled the remarkably high vote of 31,000. This was more than either of the old parties polled, but less than both combined. The successful Fusion candidate for judge who ran against Hoopes, received 41,000 votes.

Communism became the big issue in the election campaign. In the last few days of the battle, the line and policy of our Party were the subject of constant and heated discussion in every camp.

The reactionary camp (built upon a hypocritical "defense of the Constitution and the principles our fathers fought for") developed a terrific "Red scare". This proved ineffective. It did one useful thing, however, by proving that the "Old Guard" Socialist leaders are absolutely incorrect when they say: "If we form a united front with the Communists, the petty-bourgeoisie will take fright and desert to the fascists".

No one was frightened but the reactionaries, the open-shoppers and the fascists themselves, who see in the developing unity of the workers a turn away from the position of class collaboration to the position of class struggle.

The "Old-Guard" Socialist leaders reflected this fear. Under pressure of the attack from the Right, they tried desperately to dissociate themselves from the Communist Party. Aroused from a position of indifference, they launched into a vicious attack on the Communist Party, which they at first considered too small to "pay attention to". They attempted, in every way possible, not even stopping before physical assaults, to provoke a fight and disrupt the election unity.

But among the rank and file of the Socialist Party, among the workers and broad masses, we found a sympathetic and encouraging response. Our sincerity in the struggle for unity was plainly visible to all, not only in words, but in deeds. The confidence of the masses in our ability to struggle for unity increased tremendously. The sentiment for unity grew among the Socialist Party members by leaps and bounds. The attacks of the "Old-Guard", which we resolutely parried by issuing clearer and sharper calls for election unity, served only to intensify the growing Left-wing sentiment.

Throughout the campaign, there was noticeable an opportu-



nist tendency to blur over the independent role of the Communist Party, a tendency to reduce our Party to the position of an auxiliary force to the Socialist Party. This tendency expressed itself in our agitation and in our activities. In our election bulletins *United Front* we constantly bombarded the Right and emphasized mainly the necessity of voting for the Socialist candidates. Although the basic issues facing the masses were indicated, and although there were constant evidences of our attempts to develop the independent role of the Party, this was insufficiently done. At the same time, the Party failed to conduct any independent mass actions in the neighborhoods. During one unemployed demonstration, we did issue a special number of our election bulletin dealing with the needs of the unemployed, which was good. But during a big W.P.A. strike in which our Party played a prominent role, we failed to bring forward our election position.

These opportunist tendencies could have been eliminated and the tendencies to develop the independent role of our Party could have been strengthened if we had developed our position earlier in the campaign, and if better connections had been maintained with the District leadership.

As a result of these weaknesses, the Communist Party polled a small vote. In the four wards where we had candidates we received a total of 46 votes. However, compared with the 56 votes in the entire city in 1934, our present vote was a slight increase.

On January 6, the new Socialist officials go into office. What is the political situation in Reading on the eve of their inauguration?

The two old parties, having been decisively defeated, are looking for new alignments. An indication of this is seen in the fact that an unsuccessful Republican candidate for re-election to City Council has accepted a position on the Advisory Board of the newly-formed Townsend Club. He hopes that the Townsend Plan will solve "all our problems, and especially do away with the menace of Socialism and Communism in America".

There is no doubt that attempts will be made to reorganize the two old parties. Hints are already appearing in the newspapers to that effect. And this reorganization, along what lines can it take place? Along no other lines than increased demagoguery, radical slogans, chauvinist incitement; in short, along fascist lines.

The Socialist Party enjoys well-nigh undisputed sway over the broad masses. The Socialist officials pride themselves that they are going into office, "without promising anything to anybody". In reality, they are continuing their policy of refusing to clarify the basic issues facing the masses. They are encouraging the vague

sentiments that "things will be better with the Socialists in". They are blurring over the necessity of a sharp class struggle to improve conditions even if the Socialist Party is in power. In these ways, the Socialist Party officials, even if unconsciously, are paving the way for mass disillusionment upon which the seeds of fascism will find fertile growth.

The present Socialist officials have no intention of using their administrative position really to shift the burden of the crisis on to the backs of the Reading sections of the ruling class. They have not indicated any intention of leading the masses in a militant, united battle against war and fascism.

They intend only to provide an honest, efficient, orderly administration. They intend to provide an administration which will prove to the watching capitalist class that it has nothing to fear from a Socialist administration; that, on the contrary, for keeping in order the masses who are becoming fast radicalized, nothing could be better than a Socialist administration with its present composition.

But do the intentions of the Socialist leaders coincide with the needs of the masses? It is obvious that they do not. The masses need adequate relief, unemployment and social insurance, union wages and conditions on the projects. They need higher wages to keep pace with the increasing cost of living, shorter hours and better working conditions. The trade unionists need the destruction of the company unions, especially in the hosiery industry. The Negro masses need an end to the discrimination and segregation. The masses need a struggle against sales taxes. Fascist organizations must be crushed and outlawed. Militarism must be combated.

In this situation, what is the task of the Communist Party? Is it to hope for and speculate on the time when large masses will become disillusioned with the Socialist Party because of the slowness and unwillingness of their Party leaders to act in the interests of the masses? In our opinion this would be a great mistake. With the present relationship of forces, with our Party so weak as it is, with few bridges yet created over which these disillusioned masses could pass over to Communism, a mass disillusionment with the Socialist Party would lead to the strengthening of the forces of fascism.

The main political task facing the people of Reading and the Communist Party and the progressive elements within the Socialist Party is: on one hand to exert every effort to prevent the formation of any coalition of the demagogic, reactionary, fascist forces; and on the other hand to prevent the masses from becoming disillusioned with the Socialist Party. How can this be done? By basing our-

selves on the vital needs of the masses and through the development of the broadest united front movement, to compel the Socialist Party to adopt and carry through a program in the interests of the toiling population, for the immediate needs and against fascism and war.

The tactical and organizational problems in connection with carrying through this task are very great.

First of all, our Party must adopt on every occasion those tactics, policies, and methods of approach which will help the newly-developing Left-wing forces inside the Socialist Party to grow and gain influence, tactics, policies and methods which will make it easier for the rank and file of the Socialist Party to defend the united front.

There is also the task of drawing the broad masses into this struggle for the solution of the main political objectives. There must be created in Reading, a non-partisan delegated class body (of which Dimitroff spoke), which will develop and carry through a united front program in the interests of the masses.

Above all, however, is the task of strengthening the Communist Party of Reading, which, small as it is, has already proved itself to be an increasing stimulus in much of the militant activity of the Reading working class.

But a situation where only a handful of Party members are actively connected with the masses must be changed. The enormous amount of time and energy, which have heretofore been expended in general agitation, must be speedily directed into persistent, daily, continuous work with the masses in their organizations. Our comrades must be helped to find connections with the masses. The inner life of our Party must be radically improved, simplified. Fewer meetings, more educational work, careful check-up and guidance of the work of the fractions and individuals must replace the present complicated, wearisome, sectarian structure.

We can be confident that a short period of intensive, properly-directed work will place the Communist Party of Reading in a position where it will be able to exercise decisive influence in the development of the united front.

# Data on the High Cost of Living

*[Beginning with this issue, THE COMMUNIST will publish monthly for our agitators material dealing with various issues connected with the mass campaigns of our Party. Comrades are requested to submit to the editors questions dealing with this material, especially questions requiring additional clarification, which are raised by workers at various meetings.—THE EDITORS.]*

THE reactionary forces in the United States—the Liberty League, the American Bankers Association, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers—are raising the issue of the high cost of living as a weapon against Roosevelt in the 1936 elections. Who was responsible for the rising living costs? What caused the rise in prices? What groups were the main beneficiaries?

It was the policy of monopoly capital, the big banks and trusts—at the beginning of the New Deal—to raise prices as a means of restoring their profits. That is why they supported Roosevelt's initial inflationary steps, the restriction program of the A.A.A.; that is why they supported and wrote the N.R.A. codes designed to strengthen the trusts and restrict production in order to raise and maintain monopoly prices. At the time the monopolists had no quarrel with the New Deal because it was in line with their own wishes.

It was the monopoly capitalists, today grouped around the Liberty League, who urged higher prices, and who carried through the program that raised prices. As we shall see below, it was they who in the main reaped the largest gains. Now having achieved their aims they try to place the responsibility for high prices which are unpopular with the masses upon the Roosevelt regime. In this way they are trying to steer the fight for higher wages into their own channels, of having the workers put the entire blame upon the administration, and not fight the monopolists through trade union organization and thus against the high cost of living. Their demagoguery against the high cost of living is only a smokescreen designed to cover up their open shop drive, and to conceal the huge profits that they obtained from the New Deal.

We should make known to the workers in detail the great profits made by the big corporations. We should show them that the way to fight against the high cost of living is through trade

union organization which will win higher wages and shorter hours, which will meet the greater living costs. The fight against the company union drive is therefore part of the struggle against the high cost of living.

The apologists for the New Deal and the Right opponents of the Roosevelt regime are offering so-called explanations. The New Dealers claim that the farmers have gained from higher prices; while the Old Dealers attack the A.A.A. as being responsible. They say that if the Roosevelt farm program were scrapped, and all restrictions on farm products were eliminated, then prices would fall, the farmer would sell more and the city consumer would be able to purchase more.

The real truth about the situation exposes both the Roosevelt government and its Liberty League opponents. What forces were responsible for the rise in the cost of living? They were the inflationary policies of the New Deal, which when they were adopted enjoyed the support of the decisive sections of American capitalism, including the all-powerful House of Morgan; the N.R.A. codes which raised industrial prices; the crop reduction program of the A.A.A., and droughts of 1933 and 1934 which were but the logical conclusion of the Wallace-Roosevelt scheme of killing livestock and ploughing up crops.

Inflation and the N.R.A. codes gave the greatest impetus to the rise in prices. The latter have gone up steadily during the three years of the New Deal. Wholesale prices have gone up over 25 per cent in this period; retail food prices—the largest item in the working class family's budget—have gone up 38 per cent; meat prices have gone up 50 per cent; clothing and house furnishings have advanced by 20 per cent; rents have increased 15 per cent in the last 18 months.

These increases are disguised by the cost of living indexes. The monthly figures issued by the reactionary National Industrial Conference Board—the research agency of the big employers—show the living costs have advanced by 18 per cent from April, 1933, to December, 1934. There are obvious discrepancies between this figure and the figures we have cited before which go into the making of the index of the cost of living. By not giving the proper proportion to various items like food and rent in the average family's budget, this index gives a picture of the situation that underestimates the real rise in the cost of living as experienced by the housewife when she goes to market or pays her landlord.

But even these inadequate figures show that real wages of the employed workers are just about what they were at the bottom of the crisis. The purchasing power of their pay envelopes has hardly

increased at all, as their money wages failed to keep pace with increased prices. According to the *Nation*, a liberal weekly, the real wages of employed workers which stood at 100 in 1932 were 101.8 in September, 1935. This, of course, applies only to the workers who have jobs; the 14,000,000 unemployed have to subsist on miserly relief or what they can beg from friends.

Thus the workers have suffered severely from the rise in living costs; it is one of the basic problems confronting them every day. But have the workers had to pay because the farmers gained at their expense? Not at all! Farm prices increased by nearly 65 per cent in the past three years; but the net income of all farmers only increased 25 per cent during the same period. The real increase was smaller, since the things the farmers have to buy went up very much, thus cutting the purchasing power of the dollars they received for their products.

The lion's share of the increased prices was taken by the commodity speculators, by the food trusts, etc. This was admitted by Wallace, who said that the big bakers were raising the price of bread by one or two cents this winter, but that the farmer's share amounted to a bare fraction of the entire cost of the loaf. The speculators, the millers and the big bread companies were responsible for the increase in bread prices. The rise in the cost of milk and meat did not benefit the poor farmers, but the meat packers and the dairy trust. The average dairy farmer gets about three cents for a quart of milk that sells for twelve to fifteen cents in the cities.

These high prices have forced the workers and the city middle classes to cut down on their consumption of basic foods: during the first nine months of 1935, the use of dairy products including milk, cheese and butter dropped 5 per cent below the previous year's volume. The consumption of pork and lard fell 30 per cent during the same period, and total meat consumption fell by 13 per cent.

The farmers have not gained; the workers have suffered. When the Liberty League places the blame on high farm prices it is trying to drive a wedge between farmers and workers. It tells the workers that the farmers are responsible for the high cost of living; it tells the farmers that the New Deal has reduced their markets in the cities.

But it was the capitalist class as a whole that gained from the inflationary rise in prices. Their profits have made tremendous gains, especially the big capitalists who have skimmed the cream, leaving thin skimmed milk for the little enterpriser. The Federal Reserve Board reported that 166 big corporations made the following profits in the first *nine months* of the following years:

*First Nine Months of—*

1933 .....	\$364,700,000
1934 .....	\$569,500,000
1935 .....	\$741,300,000

The Labor Research Association compiled the following list of 64 industrial firms who reported *net profits* of \$1,000,000 or more for the first nine months of 1935. They show an increase of nearly 44 per cent in their aggregate profits:

	<i>Profit First Nine Months</i>	
	1935	1934
Acme Steel Co. ....	\$1,319,817	\$ 867,532
Air Reduction Co. ....	3,895,787	3,077,199
Allis-Chalmers Mfg. Co. ....	1,374,919	907,177
American Bank Note Co. ....	1,024,886	319,721
American Cyanamid Co. ....	2,533,969	1,573,988
American Rolling Mill Co. ....	3,011,140	1,453,919
Anaconda Copper Mining Co. ....	7,856,153	1,926,706
Beech-Nut Packing Co. ....	1,384,193	1,199,486
Bendix Aviation Corp. ....	1,959,110	1,742,439
Bethlehem Steel Corp. ....	1,895,227	139,472
Borg-Warner Corp. ....	4,213,008	2,518,481
Briggs Mfg. Co. ....	7,384,246	4,825,576
Bristol-Myers Co. ....	1,828,977	1,566,088
Caterpillar Tractor ....	4,311,644	2,932,892
Chrysler Corp. ....	23,184,458	9,422,826
Cleveland Graphite Bronze Co. ....	1,038,470	502,210
Coca-Cola Co. ....	12,447,336	10,870,143
Columbian Carbon Co. ....	2,127,786	1,661,651
Continental Oil Co. ....	5,568,802	4,432,594
Crown Cork & Seal Co. ....	1,711,572	1,326,557
Douglas Aircraft Co. ....	1,082,746	275,204
E. I. duPont de Nemours & Co. ....	40,154,667	38,727,818
Eaton Mfg. Co. ....	1,265,877	866,969
Electric Auto-Lite Co. ....	1,778,752	1,267,477
Flinkote Co. ....	1,094,488	298,588
General Electric Co. ....	17,205,332	13,645,551
General Motors Corp. ....	114,482,926	92,445,341
Gillette Safety Razor Co. ....	3,293,893	3,158,790
Greyhound Corp. (and affiliates) ..	6,326,767	4,729,286
M. A. Hanna Co. ....	1,351,214	1,131,050
Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. ....	2,164,547	1,689,524
Hershey Chocolate Corp. ....	3,895,769	3,857,165
Houdaille-Hershey Corp. ....	1,942,765	853,824
Inland Steel Co. ....	6,668,510	3,180,259
International Business Machines ..	5,304,844	5,053,514
Johns-Manville Corp. ....	1,573,040	586,554
Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Co. ....	5,595,478	2,819,068
Maytag Co. ....	1,928,000	1,470,459
Minneapolis-Honeywell Reg. Co. ..	1,057,826	551,959
Monsanto Chemical Co. ....	2,808,687	1,945,230
Murray Corp. of America ....	1,129,200	56,661

National Steel Corp. ....	8,603,759	4,582,896
New Jersey Zinc Co. ....	3,342,216	2,833,149
Otis Steel .....	1,360,488	570,290
Phillips Petroleum Co. ....	9,850,428	4,208,707
Radio Corp. of America .....	2,801,123	2,177,000
Republic Steel Corp. ....	3,264,295	2,193,157
Royal Typewriter Co. ....	1,032,722	549,790
Seaboard Oil Co. ....	1,222,652	1,071,498
Shell Union Oil Corp. ....	4,411,649	550,021
Skelly Oil Co. ....	1,575,054	593,430
Standard Oil Co. of California ...	15,759,001	13,246,442
Sterling Products, Inc. ....	6,628,301	6,530,521
Stewart-Warner Corp. ....	1,329,422	565,782
Texas Gulf Sulphur Co. ....	5,265,209	5,250,380
Tide Water Associated Oil Co. ...	5,829,237	4,582,669
Timken Roller Bearing Co. ....	5,820,136	2,999,506
Twentieth Century-Fox Film ....	1,996,325	1,506,213
Underwood-Elliott-Fisher .....	1,995,919	1,850,137
Union Carbide & Carbon Corp. ...	16,780,882	13,469,600
U. S. Gypsum Co. ....	2,888,935	1,777,574
Westinghouse Electric & Mfg. Co.	8,822,640	363,787
Wheeling Steel Corp. ....	2,251,468	145,390
L. A. Young Spring & Wire.....	1,202,836	718,556
Total .....	\$426,211,525	\$296,095,351

These figures can be used in various communities in local fights against the high cost of living. They can be given to workers who should be asked to contrast the well-being of the employers with their own low living standards. The workers and their wives have shown in a series of food strikes, rent strikes, etc., that they can be mobilized in actions against the high cost of living. Proper slogans linked to this vital need of the working masses will dramatize the issue and bring it to the forefront in the daily struggles for immediate demands. The fight against the high cost of living must become an integral part of the fight for a Farmer-Labor Party, and against the trusts and their program of reaction and fascism. Unless broad sections of the population are won for a determined struggle against the trusts and their monopoly prices, the Liberty League will be able to absolve the capitalists by placing the blame on the farmers and the A.A.A., and the Roosevelt regime will continue to blame the drought and other acts of God.



# There Is a Method to Their Madness

*THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1865, by Louis M. Hacker and Benjamin B. Kendrick. Revised edition. F. S. Crofts and Co., New York, 835 pp. \$5.*

*Reviewed by A. BIMBA*

IT is a very large book—over eight hundred pages—and very handsome in appearance. Its language is very fluent. Its authors are prominent—Mr. Kendrick is a professor, and Mr. Hacker is a journalist and an economist. Both, of course, are historians. Their *The United States Since 1865* is edited by Dixon Ryan Fox. Mr. Fox tells us in the foreword that “the authors of this book have conscientiously attempted to set forth facts in all fairness”, and that “their pronouncements on the facts are not intended to be memorized as a dogma but rather to provoke reflective thinking”. Hence, what follows is the result of our “reflective thinking”.

The authors start their book with their reflection upon the Civil War and its causes. They forgot, however, to mention the role of the Negroes in turning the scales of war in favor of the North by joining the Northern armies in tens of thousands after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued in 1862. In fact, Negroes mean very little to these two gentlemen. For instance, at the conclusion of the war the ruling class of the South organized a bloody terror against Negroes, killing them by the hundreds in order to strike fear into their hearts and hold them in political and economic subjection. Some of the Northerners raised their voice of protest against this blood-letting of the men with the black skin.

Who do you think share the lofty sympathies of our authors—the terrorized Negroes and Northerners, or the Southern ruling class? The professor and the journalist rise above the clouds of smoke from the still hot, murdered Negro bodies and proclaim that the fault was with the Northerners because “few in the North appreciated that such assaults as took place on the Negroes were almost entirely for personal reasons, rarely for political ones”. You see, the Northerners taught the Negroes to “assert their rights to equality, and claim all the prerogatives of the free men”. This the authors consider a crime. It is true, they say, that “only a relatively small number of Negroes acted upon this advice”, but “there were enough of them whose deportment filled the whites with resentment”. And who do you think were these whites? Not the ruling class, of course, but particularly “the white mass of the South, who had never belonged to the slave-holding aristocracy” (p. 22). In other words, the “white trash” was responsible for this terror against Negroes.

After you get through with the Civil War, you will read about two hundred pages of an endless procession of heroes: presidents, ministers, industrial magnates, railroad kings. Only on page 222 are you awakened to the existence of “the Organized Workers”. The workers get about twenty-five pages, then once more great heroes are paraded through hundreds of pages. Only towards the end do you again obtain a glance of men in overalls. Moreover, the facts about them are twisted, the conclusions are distorted, and the

attacks upon them are probably only a little less malicious and frank than those of dirty Willie.

As to the facts, the authors, for instance, write the following:

"The May Day strikes of 1886, called to force the general adoption of the eight-hour day, were pressed with energy by the Order" (of the Knights of Labor) (p. 227). Our professor and journalist here made history walk on its head. The fact is that it was the American Federation of Labor (still calling itself the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada) which decided at its convention in 1884 to call a general strike on May 1, 1886, to enforce an eight-hour day. It was the Federation which conducted the strike. On the other hand, the Order of the Knights of Labor, as such, refused to support the strike, and its president or Grand Master, Powderly, sent out secret instructions to the members not to join the strike. The rank-and-file members who participated in the strike went over the heads of their national leaders. The historical general strike of 1886 was a Federation strike. It is the finest tradition of the Federation.

The authors of *The United States Since 1865*, however, proceed from their distortion of the facts to the following conclusion: "The unsuccessful termination of many of the May Day strikes, and particularly the unfortunate Haymarket Square affair, led to the crumbling of the power of the Knights of Labor" (p. 228). As a matter of fact, the power of the Knights of Labor began to crumble as a result of its refusal to join the May Day strike. The workers lost their confidence in the Order. They began to leave the organization en masse. On the other hand, as a result of the leadership in the strike the prestige of the Federation began to rise among the workers, who rallied to its banner by the thousands.

The purpose of the authors in this vile distortion of history is clear: they want to discredit the idea of the general strike. They surely cannot plead ignorance of the facts in the case.

The death of the Knights of Labor was caused, they say, also by its "too much preoccupation with the furtherance of the Order's political program" and by the fact that "the skilled crafts quickly tired of pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for the unskilled" (p. 229). The conclusion to be drawn from this is clear: the workers should not enter politics (for instance, today they should not build a Farmer-Labor Party); and as for the skilled and unskilled workers—the twain shall never meet.

The heroic leaders of the labor movement of Chicago of 1886 who died on the gallows as martyrs of the great cause were pure-and-simple "anarchists" to these eminent historians, deserving what was due them, and the strikers of the reaper works who were slaughtered by the Chicago police on May 3 were "rioters", and the bloody police attack upon the peaceful protest meeting next day was made "for some unknown reason" (p. 228).

On page 427 they discovered "Socialism in the United States". Only three and a half pages are given to the history of socialism. As far as the authors of *The United States Since 1865* are concerned, the rise of socialism in America had no political and economic foundation. Its fate would have been "of other dissident minorities" had it not been for "the publication of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* in 1887 and the appearance of Daniel De Leon on the scene". As to the Socialist Party, the authors have no trouble in disposing of it. The entry of the United States split its ranks wide open and the Russian Revolution completed the work of destruction" (p. 722).

Neither have our authors forgotten the Communists. They have found, for instance, that although the Communists fared badly with their work in the trade union movement, they "were able to wreck a number of important locals,

notably in the garment, textile, and mining industries, and to involve many others in Right-Left struggles" (p. 725). The authors are greatly worried about the menace of Communism. After due consideration, however, they came to the conclusion that the methods proposed by Mr. Hamilton Fish and his colleagues cannot save us from the calamity. "Such a program", they say, "if ever carried out, would again succeed in driving the party underground. But destruction of Communism in America was unlikely, no matter how severe official action or how visionary the Communist plans, as long as Russia itself endured as a Communist republic. Russia, really, was the danger and the challenge to American capitalism, and not a fairly small band of turbulent American workers who wrangled among themselves, promulgated elaborate theses, which needed constant revision, and who did not fear broken heads and jail sentences so long as their demonstrations gained them the notice of press and public" (p. 726). Hence, as Hearst himself would say, in order to save America from Communism you must wage a war against the Soviet Union. Such also is a cry of Adolf Hitler.

The authors of *The United States Since 1865* have but praise for the imperialists of the United States for bestowing their great benevolence upon the peoples of Cuba and the Caribbean countries. For instance, "General Leonard Wood, invested with dictatorial powers, ruled the island and laid the groundwork for a stable government. Church and state were separated, heroic sanitation programs (under Major Gorgas) were started, a school system was inaugurated, Havana was converted into a modern city, and the public finances were put on a sound basis" (p. 373). As to the raping of the Caribbean countries by our imperialists, the professor and the journalist think that "it is to be doubted whether American public policy was governed to an exclusive, or even major, extent by the fact that financial investments of American citizens had grown so greatly in the decade and a half following the outbreak of the war". On the contrary, we raped these countries in order "to protect American lives, property, and investments against local disorders and the depredations of armed bands"; "we landed troops upon the express invitation of the native governments"; and, finally, "we have intervened to preserve internal peace, to instruct the Caribbean peoples in the methods of orderly government, and to help them cope with their problems in a civilized fashion" (pp. 591-93). Of course, we had to shoot down some women and children, too, but it was the only way to civilize these "barbarians". Today, our friend Benito Mussolini is mowing down the Ethiopian women and children, blowing their bodies to bits, in the name of the same old holy cause: "to help them cope with their problems in a civilized fashion."

"President Wilson," they say, "pursued a wholly honorable course in the case of Mexico" (p. 480) when in the year 1916 he sent an armed expedition to "civilize" the Mexicans. Furthermore, Mr. Wilson acted also "wholly honorably" when he pushed us into the World War. Nay, he "had raised men's hopes high and had persuaded millions to believe that a new day was dawning" (p. 542). However, our authors "wholly honorably" forgot to tell us about Page's cable from London instructing Wilson to plunge us into the war in order to save Morgan's loans to the Allies as well as commercial interests in general involved in the conflict.

No, you have no right to accuse Messrs. Hacker and Kendrick of lack of sincerity. In writing this book they had a sinister mission to perform: to help to pave the way for American fascism. In their particular field they have done their job rather well.

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