



THE STEEL WORKERS AND
The FIGHT
for
LABOR'S
RIGHTS

by

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, outstanding leader of the great steel strike of 1919, is a veteran of many of the most bitterly fought class battles in U.S. labor history. He is regarded in the labor movement as a master strategist and tactician of the strike struggle. Presently chairman of the Communist Party, he is not only revered as a mass leader of mass struggles, but as a brilliant Marxist theoretician. His books, pamphlets, magazine articles, speeches and reports, have guided the advanced section of the trade union movement for more than four decades.

While eleven of his associates on the National Committee of the Communist Party have been sentenced to jail for the "crime" of "conspiring to advocate and teach Marxism-Leninism," Mr. Foster, whose case was severed because of illness, continues to pamphleteer in the best American tradition. He is the author of *Outline Political History of the Americas*, published last year, and the *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, a June publication of International Publishers.

He is also the author of *Pages From a Worker's Life*, *American Trade Unionism*, *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, and literally scores of shorter pamphlets.

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But there was altogether too much reliance upon the Truman administration, and too much acceptance of the notion of a "national emergency," which in reality does not exist. These wrong policies have crippled the effect of the steel workers' struggle.

False Friends

The steel workers, after 40 years of bitter experience during the barbarous regime of the anti-union shop period in their industry, should have learned that such capitalist politicians as control the two big parties and all branches of the Government, are not their friends. These people are now proclaiming from the housetops their love for the steel workers and their willingness to take full charge of their affairs, but they never stirred a finger in previous years to help the steel workers to build their unions, to abolish the 12-hour day, and to wipe out the feudal-like terror in the steel towns.

Nor are these elements, who are the political agents of the employers, helping the steel workers in the present situation. The total result of the moving in upon the steel struggle by the Democratic and Republican politicians in the Administration, the Congress, and the Courts, has been to make the fight of the steel workers all the more difficult.

Bitter facts show that the steel workers, like other workers, can rely only upon the economic and political strength of their own union and upon the organizations of their democratic allies. If they have been able so far to raise their wages question to the status of a big national issue and to bring the Wage Stabilization Board to make a favorable decision, this is fundamentally because of the great potential power of their union, and not through the friendship of capitalist politicians in Washington. And it is only the power of their union, actively used, that will carry the workers through to victory in this historical battle against the steel trust.

A Key Moment

Philip Murray was right when he called the steel workers out on strike immediately following Federal Judge David G. Pine's reactionary decision returning the steel mills to the employers a few days after President Truman had seized them on April 28, at the very moment when the strike was scheduled to take effect. But Murray was wrong when he ordered the men back to work without their demands being granted, simply upon the request of President Truman. Murray's contention that it would have been a strike against the government was unsound; the strike would have been against the corporations. That was a key moment to have come to a decision with the arrogant steel barons, and the workers, who are in a militant fighting mood after being pushed around so long, would have solidly supported a resolute policy by the union.

The strike should not have been called off until the workers' demands had been met. It would have been much wiser to follow the line suggested at the time by the Communist Party, namely, to "continue the national steel strike until the steel corporations are compelled to sign the award of the Wage Stabilization Board" (*Daily Worker*, May 1).

On June 4 the Supreme Court declared that President Truman's seizure of the steel mills was unconstitutional and Murray again called out the steel workers. This time the workers should stand pat and refuse to go back to work until the steel companies have granted their demands. This would be a realistic position and fully in line with the militant strike spirit of the recent convention of the United Steel Workers Union.

A grave handicap for the steel workers in this fight has been the passive attitude of the leaders of other labor organizations, except the machinists and progressive independent

workers' right to strike. Thus, the general effect of the actions of the employers, the Administration and the courts in the steel situation has been to make more difficult the strike of the 660,000 workers, despite the fact that the latter have subscribed to all the requirements of the Taft-Hartley law.

The ever more urgent question confronting organized labor, therefore, is whether it will submit to having the workers' demands arbitrarily taken over by reactionary government officials, courts and wage boards, or whether it will insist upon the workers' full right to strike when they deem this course necessary.

The right to strike is the most precious right the workers have in this country. For 150 years they have battled to establish it. Times without number the workers have faced starvation, company gunmen, court injunctions, imprisonment, police and troops in their resolute determination to wage and win strikes. The right to strike has been, and still remains, the very backbone of such democracy as we have in the United States.

Traditionally, the government—local, state and national—save on rare occasions, has supported the employers in their efforts to deny the workers the right to strike and to beat them if they should walk out. Among the more notorious of the innumerable examples of government strikebreaking were the country-wide railroad strike of 1887, the American Railway Union strike of 1894, the great steel strike and national strike of 1919, the national railroad shopmen's strike of 1922, the national engineers-trainmen's strike of 1946, and now the national strike of the steel workers. In all these crucial struggles the government directly helped the employers to defeat the workers out on strike. And no doubt the big oil workers' strike would also have been broken by the government "taking over" the industry, had it not been for Truman's bad court experience in steel.

Workers Smashed Open-Shop Fortress

During the 1930's, the workers, profoundly aroused by the terrible economic conditions of the period, smashed the open-shop fortresses in the basic industries and established powerful industrial unions. They also compelled the writing of federal legislation—Norris-LaGuardia Act, Wagner Act, etc.—finally conceding them legally the right to organize and strike.

The employers, gravely alarmed at this whole vast democratic advance of the workers, have been keen to seize upon every opportunity to hamstring the new power and militancy of the labor movement. On the eve of World War II, in 1941, they managed to drive through Congress the notorious Smith-Connally Act, which infringed upon the workers' strike right.

But it was not until the advent of the reactionary Truman Administration, after the death of President Roosevelt in 1945, that the employers' attack upon the right to strike scored real successes. Thus, under Truman, the progressive Norris-LaGuardia Act has been gutted and the Wagner Act has been wiped from the books and replaced by the infamous Taft-Hartley slave labor law of 1947.

The Taft-Hartley Act, by establishing long "cooling off" periods, allowing the employers and the government to interfere in internal union affairs, illegalizing strikes in government services, abolishing the closed shop, forcing union officials to sign the non-Communist oath, etc., constitutes a far-reaching infringement upon the workers' strike right. It is the worst anti-labor legislation in any leading industrial country, and it has been condemned by labor men and progressives all over the world.

While the law was initiated by the Republicans in Congress, it was also voted for by the majority of the Democrats. President Truman, "for the record," vetoed the bill, but he made no effort to rally his support in Congress to defeat it.

Not content with even the anti-strike provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, the big employers, through their obedient government, are adopting new strike-breaking techniques. Among these is the seizure of strike-threatened industries by the government. What this means is signified by the fact that the railroaders' demands, in that controlled industry, remained unsettled for over two years.

Government Seizure—A Strike-Breaking Technique

The first use of the drastic seizure method was during the big national strike of 280,000 railroad engineers and trainmen in 1946, when President Truman took over the railroads, put the Army in charge, and threatened to draft the strikers into government service. The steel workers were being given a dose of the same medicine, even though a bit more politely, by the President. The substance of Truman's seizure of the steel mills was to deny them the right to strike.

Congress now has before it a whole series of the most drastic anti-strike, anti-union proposals. The worst bill is HR 7647, the one fathered by the notorious Representative Howard Smith, Jim Crower of Virginia and sponsor of the notorious Smith Act of 1940, under which the Communist Party is now being persecuted, and also of the wartime anti-labor Smith-Connally Act. The new Smith bill would, during strikes, have the government take over the striking union and conscript the workers. It is the worst piece of anti-labor legislation ever to come before Congress, and there is real danger of its passage in some form.

In many quarters the argument is being made that the workers' strike right must be curbed in the national interest, in this time of "national emergency." But this is a double lie. First, there is no national emergency, and, second, even if there were, the workers, the most patriotic elements in the nation, could be fully trusted to use their right to strike in

a most responsible manner. Thus, during World War II, when the nation was really in danger, the workers displayed their acute sense of national responsibility by eliminating strikes altogether through the voluntary no-strike pledge.

What is being served by the current anti-strike policies is not the interest of the nation, but the profits greed of the employers. Those who should be curbed are not the patriotic and democratic workers, but the reactionary employers, who are pushing the country toward the disasters of fascism and war.

Leaders' No-Strike Tendency Weakens Struggle

The most dangerous aspect of this situation is the no-strike tendency also manifest among the conservative labor leaders, who always reflect the interests and methods of the employers. This explains why they put up such a feeble fight against the Taft-Hartley Act, which they could have defeated along the lines proposed by John L. Lewis and the progressives and left-wing unions in the CIO.

It is the reason, too, why Walter Reuther and other such leaders are so enamored of their escalator wage clauses and other militancy-killing devices. And it explains why conservative labor leaders are so tamely accepting the taking over of the industries by the reactionary Truman Administration as the way to solve the workers' problems.

What is badly needed in the labor movement is a rebirth of its fighting spirit of the 1930's, when the CIO was being built. Or the spirit of the four Railroad Brotherhoods, 400,000 strong, during their famous eight-hour movement in 1916.

By evidencing their determination to strike, if necessary, the railroad workers at that time managed to get the very reluctant Congress to enact the Adamson eight-hour law, and when the Supreme Court, in line with its usual reactionary

course, was threatening to knock out the new law, the four unions set a strike deadline. The High Court, showing more speed than ever before, just got under the wire with a favorable decision, and organized labor won one of the biggest victories in its entire history.

The workers cannot possibly permit themselves to be robbed of the right to strike, either through employer-government arrogance or the conservatism of their official leaders. The weakening of the workers' right to strike, through whatever pretext, would not only mean a lowering of their living standards, but also an undermining of the people's democratic liberties in general. American labor history teaches unmistakably the basic lesson that the way to win and maintain the right to strike is to practice it whenever the workers' situation demands it.



III.

THE "NATIONAL EMERGENCY" FRAUD



THE DENIAL of the workers' right to strike, on the grounds that the country faces a "national emergency" and therefore cannot permit major strikes, makes it urgent that organized labor take a second look at this "national emergency" business and see just what there is to it. If this is done keenly, there can be only this conclusion: namely, that there is no real national emergency and that the present war scare has been deliberately cooked up by Wall Street and its political leaders for their own sinister purposes. The so-called "national emer-

gency" is a device against the labor movement and the American people.

Two clear facts go to prove that the United States is in no danger of an attack from the Soviet Union, which supposedly creates the national emergency. The first is that if the U.S.S.R., which is alleged to possess enormous armed forces and a malignant aggressive spirit, were out to invade Western Europe (which it is not), it would have marched three or four years ago, instead of calmly standing aside while Washington and its allies go ahead feverishly building up enormous armed air, naval and land forces.

And, second, it is most significant that in Western Europe, which is much closer to Russia and supposedly in even more imminent danger of invasion than we are, there is very little war hysteria and no proclaimed "national emergency" in any of the countries. Indeed, the European peoples fear that war may come from American, rather than Russian causes. It is a fact that if it were not for American funds and prodding, there would be very little rearmament taking place in Western Europe.

The simple reality, therefore, is that the so-called national emergency, which was arbitrarily proclaimed by Truman at the beginning of the Korean war in June, 1950, was cooked up by the warmongers, and is being utilized by them to frighten the American people into a ruinous armaments race. The fundamental purpose of it is to furnish the big monopolists, who dominate this country and its government, with a vast armed force with which to dominate the whole world. And not less important, this monster arms production is fabulously profitable for the capitalists.

Monopolies Want Frantic Arms Race

The employers, through their Truman Administration, could easily get a democratic peace with the U.S.S.R., which is a

Socialist, non-imperialist country; but peace is the very last thing they want. They want war, and to bring about such a war is the definite purpose of their frantic arms race, heavily camouflaged though it is with pretenses of democratic defense and national emergency.

The arguments being used by the warmongers to terrorize the American people into believing that war is just around the corner would be ridiculous if they were not so tragic. In 1951, for example, the United States spent \$51 billion in war preparations, or over 50 times as much as was laid out for armaments in 1938, the last "normal" peace year.

Yet we are told that this country nevertheless is practically at the mercy of the Russians, who produce not much more than one-fourth as much steel as the United States and its European allies. Any argument will do if it but makes the people afraid of a mythical Russian attack. The big military "brass" even have the insolence to alarm the people with assertions that at present the United States is not producing enough munitions even to supply adequately the armed forces in Korea, although as every one knows, virtually no fighting of real importance is now taking place there.

The great advantage to the warmongers of such deliberate ideological terrorism is that it enables them to override the American people's deep-rooted opposition to militarization, political reaction, and war. It makes it much easier for them to ram through gigantic, highly profitable, military appropriation bills in Congress, to adopt reactionary legislation of all sorts, and generally to shove the cost burden of the frenzied war preparations over onto the shoulders of the workers.

The "national emergency" is a costly business for the workers. Turning the nation's industrial capacity into arms production is sending living costs soaring, raising the workers' taxes sky-high, and cutting away the workers' economic fighting power, as we are now seeing so dramatically illustrated in the

steel industry. It has also been the means for forcing the adoption of many reactionary laws, which are heading this country towards a police state. Of these, the most dangerous is the new pro-fascist Smith bill to devitalize the labor movement. And worse than all this, if the workers and their allies—the Negro people, farmers, intellectuals, etc.—do not put a halt to the present mad course of Wall Street and its Washington politicians, both Democratic and Republican, the end result of the so-called “national emergency” arms race will be a ruinous atomic world war.

“National Emergency” Is Manufactured

The war policy of Wall Street imperialism, with its false “national emergency” and its hypocritical pretenses of “national defense,” is violently opposed to the interests of the workers and the great masses of the American people. The conservative labor leaders who are supporting the government’s active program of militarization and atomic diplomacy, and who are deceiving the workers into believing that munitions-making is the way to keep the industries going, are betraying the official trust placed in them by the masses. They are taking the labor movement along a course which, if uncorrected, can only lead to wholesale impoverishment, slavery, and slaughter of the people.

Clearly it is in the most fundamental interest of the working class and its allies to put an end to the so-called national emergency and also to the whole aggressive program of militarism and war for which it is the cover. The workers should insist upon their right to strike, they should demand that war appropriations be slashed to the bone, that the Korean war be promptly ended, that a five-power conference be held to ease world tensions, that American troops stationed in foreign lands be returned home forthwith, and that the whole batch of

thought-control laws and practices now infecting the national, state, and local government be done away with.

Especially, the labor movement, to combat the dangerous illusion that munitions making is a panacea against unemployment, should map out a comprehensive alternative program—higher wages, shorter hours, greatly improved social insurance, extended health and educational systems, broad public works projects, etc.—as a means to keep the industries in operation.

The “national emergency,” of which the steel workers are now getting such a bitter dose, is a snare and a delusion for the American people. It should be liquidated forthwith. The continuance of this “national emergency” fraud will lead to national disaster.



IV

THE MEANING OF THE STEEL SEIZURE



THE LEADERS OF THE STEEL WORKERS' UNION, and others, are telling the workers that the seizure of the steel industry by President Truman was a big gesture in their behalf. But this is not the case. Truman is the chief political representative of the capitalist class and his action was in the interest of that class, not of the workers.

In taking his drastic step of putting the plants under the control of the government, the President had several ideas in mind, the least of which was the welfare of the men who operate the mills. Truman's political stock-in-trade is promises for the workers and real concessions to the employers.

First of all, the President, by his drastic step, sought to keep the steel industry in uninterrupted operation, in order to continue the continuous flow of munitions production for the Korean war and for the general arms race.

Neither of these purposes is in the interest of the people. For it is a well-known fact that the great masses of the American people have repeatedly characterized the war in Korea as "utterly useless," and they have also displayed a marked reluctance to support the present plan to super-militarize the U.S. and capitalist Europe. This means that Truman's chief motive in taking over the steel plants was not to further the well-being of the workers, but to guarantee the employers' profits and to keep the workers tied to Wall Street plans of war and world conquest.

Another basic motive of Truman in taking over the mills was to prevent the workers winning a real victory, as they could do, by striking. Such a victory would have had electrifying effects far and wide among workers generally. It would have stimulated vast numbers of them into pressing their wage demands actively. Nothing is more terrifying to employers than such a broad-sweeping wave of militancy among the workers. In moving to prevent the swift growth of fighting spirit in the working class Mr. Truman, therefore, was conserving the basic interests of the employers.

Then, again, Truman, in seizing the industry, had in mind grabbing for the Democratic Party all possible credit among the masses for getting the steel workers a wage increase, which they were winning anyway by the strength of their powerful union. The Democratic Party, largely discredited among the masses and facing a most difficult Presidential election, is badly in need of such prestige.

The strengthening of this capitalist party, one of the pillars of the reactionary two-party system, is of precisely zero value to the working class in general and the steel workers in par-

ticular. Truman's itch for credit among the workers explains why he did not use the hated Taft-Hartley law in breaking the steel strike. He wants to give plant seizures more a pseudo-labor character.

Obviously, the steel workers were seriously handicapped by the government's seizure of the plants. They were denied the right to use their greatest weapon, their economic power, which would be particularly effective at the time. This definitely strengthens vastly the bargaining position of the steel barons.

Truman's Seizure Helps Employers

The day will surely come when, in the course of the struggle, the working class and its allies will move to nationalize this great industry; but that will be a very different proposition than Mr. Truman's formal taking over of the plants, with the bosses left in complete control and the workers placed at the mercy of corrupt politicians and judges.

But if the steel seizure was in the interests of the capitalists, why, it may be asked, are they and their Republican agents in Congress making such an outcry against it, shouting Socialism and threatening to impeach the President? The main answer to this question is plain enough. It makes a big difference whose ox is gored. The big monopolists welcomed, at the time, the repeated seizures of the railroads and the coal industry to break strikes, making no complaints. If they kicked over the traces in the steel situation, this was not because the government, to break the steel strike, took formal control of their plants, but because it did not see fit to grant in full their extravagant demands for increased steel prices.

The assertion of the government that it maintains firm price control is a fake. Its real policy is to cultivate a gradual inflation, as part of its plan of throwing the war armaments costs

upon the masses. Nevertheless, while ready to give the steel owners a very high increase of \$3 to \$5 a ton, the government cannot (not yet, at least) accept the galloping inflation implied in the \$12 increase arrogantly demanded by the steel barons. This is the fly in the steel owners' ointment and it explains why they are emitting their wild outcries that the world is about to come to an end.

The capitalist reactionaries in general are attempting to turn this whole situation to their advantage by crying out that it is Socialism. And their Republican agents are undertaking to exploit it for partisan purposes in the elections. Now that the Supreme Court has said in substance that Mr. Truman's seizure of steel was illegal, the steel bosses and their political tools are presenting themselves to the people as the defenders of democracy—which is ridiculous.

It is a mistake to believe, as Murray asserts, that the taking over of basic industries by the government during wage disputes is an advantage to the workers. The steel workers can win far more by direct pressure upon the bosses and without government control of the industry. The coal miners and the railroad workers have had much experience with such government control and they want no more of it. They prefer to rely upon their powerful unions, rather than to trust to the good-will of capitalist politicians and judges. The steel workers have now had a taste of the same costly lesson.

Significantly, at the very moment when Mr. Truman, with the backing of Philip Murray, was asking the Supreme Court to legalize the seizure of the steel industry, representatives of the Railroad Brotherhoods, as a result of bitter experience, are also asking the Court to take an opposition stand by declaring illegal the government's seizure of the railroads, under which the workers have suffered for two years without wage increases.

The tactics of breaking national strikes by "seizing" the

struck industry got a blow by the Supreme Court's decision on steel, but it is a very convenient strike-breaking method that the employers will seek to preserve.



V

THE TRADE UNIONS AND THE GROWING POLICE STATE



THE DENIAL TO THE STEEL WORKERS of the right to strike, the threats in Congress of new drastic anti-labor legislation, and the poisonous attitude generally of big business during the steel crisis, should arouse the steel workers and the whole working class to the grave danger of fascism in this country.

The ruthless trampling upon the Bill of Rights, the establishment of "loyalty" tests, thought-control systems, government witchhunts, persecution of the Communists, attacks upon the Negro people, etc., during the post-war period—all signify that the big monopolists are working ceaselessly to build a police state in the United States.

The immediate cause for this sinister police-state trend is that, in order for the monopolists to force through their war program, they must cripple the masses' opposition by stripping them of their democratic rights. Its most fundamental cause lies in the fact that, inasmuch as the capitalist system of the world (including that in the United States) is breaking down and the world's working class is rapidly advancing in strength, the international ruling class realize that the only hope they have of controlling the situation, even temporarily, is by abolishing democracy and turning toward the methods of

The present general assault upon the liberties of the people is being carried out under the Hitler flag of a "crusade against Communism." The Communist Party, because it is the most valiant fighter against war and for the freedom and well-being of the masses, is the main target of the reactionary offensive. That's why its members are being jailed wholesale, and why such ruthless efforts are being made to outlaw and destroy the Party.

Liberties Violated under Flag of "Anti-Communism"

But the redbaiters and warmongers do not stop with their outrageous persecution of the Communists. In line with Hitler's methods, they also extend their "anti-Communist" campaign to include non-Communist progressives in every field. They organize K.K.K. attacks upon the Negro people, subject school teachers and government employees to organized spying and blacklisting, and drive everybody and everything progressive out of the press, radio, television and movies.

Thought-control censors dominate our entire cultural system, and a green light is given to reaction in every form. The FBI has become a monstrous system of secret police, informers, and professional stool-pigeons, spying on everyone. Not even under the notorious Alien and Sedition Acts of a century and a half ago were the people so terrorized as they are now.

The trade unions have also suffered heavily from this all-inclusive trend toward a police state. The Taft-Hartley law, a product of the current pro-war, pro-fascist hysteria, is a deadly blow at the whole labor movement. So, too, is the Presidential practice of breaking strikes by seizing control of the industries concerned. Likewise, the screening of trade union leaders and blasting of all progressive officials by the Wood, McCarran and Humphreys committees of Congress, are serious invasions of trade union rights.

And now Rep. Howard Smith, author of the notorious Smith and Smith-Connally Acts, is proposing a new and still more deadly edition of the Taft-Hartley law, one which would throw the unions into a government receivership during periods of big strikes. To cap the climax, C. E. Wilson, former Mobilization Director, is calling upon the monopolist interests to oppose industry-wide collective bargaining and to open up a general offensive against the trade union movement.

Growing Police State Menaces Labor

For the trade unions, the growing police state means more and more crippling domination by the capitalist government, Hitler fashion. For the individual workers it means lowered living standards, diminished freedoms, and weakened trade union protection. And the most dangerous aspect of the whole situation is that the conservative trade union leaders—the Greens, Murrays, Reuthers, Wolls, and Dubinskys—are condoning and helping this trend toward a police state.

Such protests as they may feebly make from time to time are only “for the record.” Being altogether committed to Wall Street’s war program, they, too, are advocates of the insane capitalist “crusade against Communism.” Their policy is a crass betrayal of the labor movement.

The current anti-Communist hysteria, under cover of which the police state is gradually being built, is a deadly menace to everything democratic and progressive in the United States. To halt it is of the most basic concern for the entire working class. Those who believe that the anti-Communist drive is directed only against the Communists live in a dream world. It is an assault upon the whole body of democracy.

The workers should battle relentlessly against the growing menace of anti-trade union laws and demand the liquidation of the whole network of thought-control laws and committees

associated with the names of Smith, McCarran, Woods, Humphreys, Feinberg, Voorhis, etc. They should actively support the Negro people in their fight against lynching and every form of discrimination, and insist upon the passage of strong Federal F.E.P.C., anti-poll tax and anti-lynching laws.

Especially the workers must clearly understand that the defense of the Communists from persecution and imprisonment is the front line working class fight for American democracy, and they should demand the immediate release of the Communists and all other political prisoners.

The course of the struggle in the steel industry makes it doubly necessary for the workers to intensify their fight against the developing police state. The independence, fighting strength, and very life of the unions, are in danger. For the big employers, alarmed at the power of the great steel workers union, are cultivating and stimulating the reactionary offensive on all fronts.



VI

THE BI-PARTISAN TREND TO PRESIDENTIAL DICTATORSHIP



THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES, which has always been a very powerful office, is now tending more and more to take on dictatorial aspects. This has become especially manifest during recent decades. The trend is basically an expression of the domination of big capital in this country and of its integration with the state. That is, the monopolists, in their

ceaseless grabbing for ever more economic and political power, find it to their interest steadily to strengthen the position of the President. They would like to have an American Fuehrer.

This development is being speeded up by Wall Street's aggressive imperialist drive to master the world. It is part and parcel with the intense armaments race and the whole complex of reactionary laws and executive orders now being devised and applied for the purpose of transforming the United States into a police state. It is a tendency to create a fascist-like military dictatorship, as a convenient means for monopoly capital to push through its reactionary domestic and foreign policies.

Both major parties, being equally loyal servitors of big business, support the capitalist tendency to confer ever greater powers upon the executive branch of the government, which means primarily upon the President. It will be remembered that many shouting demands were made for a dictator, from both Republican and Democratic leaders, during the depth of the great economic crisis of 1929-33. President Roosevelt, in pushing through the New Deal, exercised broad and unusual powers of policy making and execution and the same general tendency has been very much in evidence throughout the Truman Administration. It has reached a climax in the widespread charges of dictatorship which are now being directed against Mr. Truman, because of his arbitrary seizure of the steel mills.

Among the many examples of this anti-democratic dictatorship trend by President Truman were the needless and horrifying A-bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which he ordered primarily upon his own responsibility, the making of vital international agreements, virtually treaties, without securing Senate approval, the arbitrary involvement of the United States in the Korean civil war, without so much as a by-your-leave from Congress, the one-man proclamation of the present "na-

tional emergency," which has had very far-reaching effects upon American life, the liquidation of several national strikes, usually by arbitrarily establishing government control over the industries concerned, and the implication by Mr. Truman that the President also has the power to seize the press, radio and television, if he sees fit to do so.

Further examples of this type of one-man government, in very crucial matters, were Mr. Truman's reckless boast that he had sent an ultimatum to the Soviet government, ordering it to move the Red Army out of Iran, where it was located by treaty agreement, his statements that treaties with the Russians are worthless, that there must be an unconditional surrender of the Soviet Union, and that if Stalin wants to see him he must come to Washington, presumably hat-in-hand, and the claim of administration lawyers in court, defending the government's seizure of the steel mills, that the President has virtually unlimited "inherent" powers.

Trend Toward Anit-Democratic Dictatorship

Most of these dictatorial acts have been performed by the President during the present so-called national emergency and "cold war." But in this situation he has only been accentuating the dictatorial trend which was developing long before. Besides, the "national emergency" and the "cold war" themselves have been largely called into being by the arbitrary use of executive power. What we have to look forward to in this respect, according to government spokesmen, is many years of acute international tension, during which, presumably, the dictatorial trend will go on flourishing.

At the present time the Republican leaders are filling the air with loud charges of dictatorship against Mr. Truman and they are violently threatening to impeach him forthwith. But all this blather is hypocritical, being mostly for partisan elec-

tion purposes. Their pretenses of democracy are ludicrous. The record shows that in the past these Republicans went right along with the President in most of his arbitrary actions. Thus, they enthusiastically applauded his taking over of the coal industry and the railroads (long before Korea), when it was a case of smashing national strikes in these industries. And it is still fresh in the public's mind what a great bipartisan hero they made of President Truman when he irresponsibly plunged this country into the Korean war, the most dangerously dictatorial act ever performed by any President in the history of this Republic. It was only when they get their own toes stepped on a little bit in the steel seizure that the good friends of the steel trust are squawking so much in that respect. One need not have a very vivid imagination in order to picture the dictatorial practices of one or the other of the Republican generals, Eisenhower and MacArthur, in the Presidency. Mr. Truman's dictatorial tendencies are not mere personal peculiarities of his: they represent basic policy of the biggest monopolists in the U.S. toward a highly centralized state. The Supreme Court's decision in the steel case does not reverse this trend.

The great danger in all this is that the American President, whether Democrat or Republican, with his extensive powers of high personnel appointment, his control over the spending of scores of billions of dollars annually, and his almost unchecked conduct of vital foreign negotiations, as well as in a host of other vital executive acts, is already in such a position of arbitrary authority that he could of his own volition, should he deem the situation ripe, plunge the United States into a world war. Mr. Truman taught us this crucial lesson in the Korean matter. The war that he launched then might well have become a great international conflagration, and the President probably thought it would do just that.

Such vast authority in the hands of the already too powerful

government, one representing not the Moguls of Wall Street, but the vast bulk of our nation. If they are not doing this now it is because, locked up in the two-party system, they are being dominated and led by the agents of big business.

The Democratic Party, which is regularly supported by the big majority of trade union officials, is altogether under capitalist control. It is a political twin of the Republican Party, and no real dividing line can be established between them. The anti-working class character of the Democratic Party is to be seen in its program, which gives everything to the employers and only a few minor and mostly illusory concessions to the workers.

The role of the workers towards this party as conceived by the Greens, Murrays, and other top union leaders, is to furnish the necessary number of votes and then to content themselves with the few crumbs that the agents of the big monopolists see fit to dole out to them. Significantly, a majority of the Democrats in Congress voted for the Taft-Hartley Act, and it was a Democrat, Smith, of Virginia, who introduced the infamous Smith Act of 1940 and also the present labor-smashing Smith bill to seize striking unions during strikes in basic industries.

Further decisive proof of the anti-working class nature of the Democratic Party is to be seen in the type of public officials and party leaders that it produces. Among these, labor men are as scarce as hen's teeth. There are no workers or Negroes in the Cabinet, none in the Senate, and none in top leading positions in any of the major executive departments. Likewise, no workers are to be found in the ranks of state governors, important ambassadors, or big city mayors. And in the top leadership of the party, workers and Negroes are distinguished by their almost complete absence. The workers and their political allies, to become factors in government, will have to develop their own political organization.

Labor Misleaders Tied to Capitalist Parties

In no industrial country in the world are the democratic strata so completely devoid of independent political organization, program, and influence as they are in the U.S. This is because the conservative labor officialdom in this country are still following the pro-employer, Gompers' political policy of "rewarding your friends and punishing your enemies." This anti-working class policy puts the workers under the tutelage of the capitalist politicians who are running both the Republican and Democratic Parties. It is as stupid and treacherous as though capitalists were put at the head of the trade unions. It is why so much reactionary legislation gets through Congress, and why the union-smashers dare to offer such outrageous legislative proposals as the present Smith Bill, to put the unions into receivership.

The big monopolists, with their program of fascism and war, are driving our country and the world to the brink of disaster. This crucial situation imperatively demands the abandonment by the workers of the reactionary Gompers policy, which is the darling of the labor misleaders at the head of the AFL, CIO, Coal Miners, and Railroad Brotherhoods.

The workers and their democratic allies have the potential power to elect a truly representative government, one capable of putting a halt to the imperialist aggressions of Wall Street.

The power of the war-making monopolists must be curbed and eventually broken. They have ruled this country all too long. The workers and other democratic elements have the strength to deal them a smashing defeat, once they set themselves to the task.

Labor Has Strength to Curb Monopolies

A democratic victory in the U.S., committing this Government to a policy of peace and democracy, would have world-

wide effects by freeing the many peoples of their dreadful fear of war.

Such a democratic victory will require a decisive break by labor with the paralyzing two-party system, the freeing of the workers from the control of capitalist politicians, and the creation of a great independent political coalition of the trade unions, Negro organizations, farmer groups, etc. This coalition would not have a program of Socialism, but one of reversing the country's present fatal trend towards war and fascism.

The Progressive Party, with its Presidential candidates, Vincent Hallinan and Mrs. Charlotta Bass, indicates the correct general political direction for the masses.

In the furtherance of effective political action, labor and its allies should hold, in the near future, a broad, all-inclusive national political conference.

The main tasks of such a conference would be several-fold: to liquidate the war policy of Wall Street and to develop a genuine peace program, to reverse the general tendency in this country towards the building of a police state, with special emphasis upon defeating the infamous new Smith labor-crushing bill, to shatter root and branch the outrageous Jim-Crow system, which has for so long dirtied and scandalized American life, to develop a broad economic program for the workers, as a practical alternative to the present insane idea that the production of munitions is an effective means of furnishing jobs for the workers, and to lay the organizational basis for a wide anti-war, anti-imperialist coalition of the workers, Negro people, farmers, etc., independent of the Democratic and Republican Parties.

The several independent progressive unions have the historical responsibility of giving active labor leadership to this badly needed democratic mass political movement.

The present Presidential election campaign offers an unprecedented opportunity to make the break with the deadly

two party system, which for generations has been a millstone about the necks of the workers. The workers, aroused by worsening economic conditions and alarmed at the country's trend towards fascism and war, are increasingly ready for a breakaway move.

Labor Has Big Stake in 1952 Elections

The Democratic Party, which pretends to be the party of the workers, is now demoralized by the misdoings of the reactionaries, demagogues, and crooks who lead it. This chaos and pessimism will vastly increase should Gen. Eisenhower get the Republican nomination, as seems to be quite likely; for he would cut heavily into the Democratic vote and he already has the Democratic leaders scared and confused.

The workers, confronted with a Presidential selection among a bunch of reactionaries about as much alike as peas in a pod, are less and less influenced by such traditionally crippling arguments as that such and such a capitalist political faker is a friend of labor, that this one is a "lesser evil" than the other, or that the worker will be wasting his vote if he casts it for independent, progressive candidates.

There are no substantial differences between Taft, Truman, Eisenhower, Stassen, Kefauver, and the other candidates for the Presidency. They are all supporters of the war program of big business and they are all following policies that are cutting the people's living standards and are leading to the creation of a police state in this country. The Republicans are the more outspoken reactionaries, but the Democrats, although freely using liberal phrases, are heading towards the same general goal of fascism and war. Only very rarely, in their Congressional tickets, can there be found candidates who actually oppose war.

The formation of a great independent coalition of the labor

and progressive forces of peace and democracy will constitute the biggest step forward ever made by organized labor in its whole history. It will set the unions to growing rapidly, it will greatly strengthen the trend towards labor unity, it will tend to develop a new and more progressive labor leadership.

But most important of all, it can give the U.S. a genuine policy of peace and democracy.

This is why every labor reactionary, decayed social democrat, and bosses' tool, both within and without the labor movement, is so violently opposed to independent political action by labor and its democratic allies.

This is indeed a critical moment for the U.S. labor movement. The big capitalists who own and run this country, are, with their policies of fascism and war, heading our nation and the world to overwhelming disaster. The trade unions, with about 15,000,000 members and many more millions of friends, have the power to change all this. They can, if they will, elect a government dedicated to a policy of peace. They cannot escape this historic responsibility. The alternative to independent political action by the workers and their political allies is to share the disaster now being organized by the greedy and ruthless barons of Wall Street.

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