

# POLITICAL AFFAIRS

*A magazine devoted*

*to the theory and practice of Marxism - Leninism*

## EDITORIAL BOARD

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## *Contents*

JANUARY, 1947

Lenin on the Struggle for Genuine Political Consciousness: A Basic Lesson for American Labor Today	<i>Editorial</i>	3
THE DECEMBER 3-5 PLENARY MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE, C.P.U.S.A.		
Concluding Remarks on the Plenum Discussion	<i>Eugene Dennis</i>	8
The Situation in the Trade Unions	<i>John Williamson</i>	20
Conclusions from the New York Elections	<i>Robert Thompson</i>	37
The Denver Elections	<i>Arthur Bary</i>	47
On the Question of Negro Self-Determination	<i>William Z. Foster</i>	54
Summary Remarks on the Discussion of the Resolution on Negro Rights	<i>Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.</i>	59
Toward a Party of 100,000	<i>Henry Winston</i>	64
Economic Review of 1946	<i>Labor Research Association</i>	80
The Second Chronic Crisis in Agriculture	<i>Robert Digby</i>	89

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## Yes, this IS a New Year's message, after all . . .

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Up to the last moment, this page was reserved for a New Year's message to PA readers from its Editors. It was to be a special kind of message—one whose impact would be felt for many months to come. For we have lived through a year of vast and world-shaking change, and we stand today at the threshold of an even more fateful year—1947.

Then the thought came to us that January is Lenin Memorial Month, and that the best preparation for the big struggles that loom ahead is in a deeper and more intensive study of the dynamic teachings and theories wherewith Lenin was able to point the road ahead for all progressive humanity. We recalled that Lenin's Selected Works, in the new 12-volume *Lenin Home Library*, would be available until the end of January at the low—the unbelievably low—price of \$18.00 for the entire set (after January, the price goes up to \$25.00).

Just think of it! Twelve volumes, averaging 500 pages each, containing the essence of Lenin's imperishable heritage of Marxist-Leninist science, with a new 32-page index to the entire contents—at only \$1.50 each volume! Is it too much to say that if any other publisher had issued these books, the price of each volume would be closer to \$5.00?

Well, there it is in a nutshell. This IS a New Year's message, after all. And to our mind an effective message, too, because it opens up the prospect and points up the possibility for PA readers to acquire the *Lenin Home Library*, to possess it, to have it at hand at all times, to drink deep of its treasures.

The *Lenin Home Library* may be ordered at your local Workers and Progressive Bookshop, from your literature center or club, or direct from New Century Publishers, 832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y. Start the New Year right. Treat yourself to the *Lenin Home Library*. Do it before the end of January.

NEW CENTURY PUBLISHERS

Feb. 17, 1948

B.P.

# LENIN ON THE STRUGGLE FOR GENUINE POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

## A Basic Lesson For American Labor Today

AN EDITORIAL

THE 23RD ANNIVERSARY of the death of V. I. Lenin, the founder of the Socialist state, will be commemorated this year under conditions of the tremendous advance of the consciousness, unity, and role of the world labor movement. Twenty-two fateful years have passed since his death, but the works and teachings of Lenin are more alive, more vital than ever. The adherents of Leninism are more numerous than ever; they run into the scores of millions. The promise of socialism and the hope it holds out for the future of a free, happy humanity is more real and closer of attainment than ever.

In a whole series of countries, on this Lenin anniversary, in Europe and Asia, in Africa and on the South American continent, the labor movements have consolidated their positions as the indisputable leaders of the people. Labor has assumed its true place as the firm bulwark of national independence, democracy, and peace. The working classes are the unifiers of the peoples in the struggle to extirpate the fascist remnants, to prevent the restoration of the economic grip and political dictatorship of the reactionary monop-

lies. Labor, on a world scale, heads the resolute defense of world peace, and struggles to re-establish the firm guarantees of the peace, Big Three unanimity and cooperation.

To what can we attribute this new role of the labor movements in so many countries? Clearly, the present great role of the labor movements flows directly from their epic struggle against the fascist occupation, and their incredible heroism in the anti-fascist war. Labor's leading role today is thus a continuation of its decisive role in the war of liberation.

The working peoples of Europe and Asia are profoundly aware of the great debt humanity owes to the Socialist state founded by Lenin. It was from the Socialist state that they gathered inexhaustible strength and inspiration. In their darkest hours of agony inflicted by raging fascist terror, they were fortified by the superhuman endurance, moral courage, and unconquerable confidence in victory of the new Socialist man, molded in the spirit of Lenin and Stalin. In the peace as in the war they see the Socialist Soviet Union as the mighty bulwark of democracy,

peace, and the freedom of the peoples.

Where today is the role of the labor movement greatest? Where is the position of labor in society most advanced? Invariably where the influence of Leninism in the labor movement is most widespread. Labor is the very heart of broad peoples' democratic coalitions where the parties guided by the theory and practice of Leninism are great mass parties of the working class. The labor movements are the backbone of new peoples' democratic states where the working classes broke most effectively the stifling bonds of bourgeois ideology and emerged on the political arena as the unifiers, champions and leaders of the people.

Just as the teachings of Lenin have served as the surest guide to the historic advance of the working classes of Europe and Asia, Leninism shows the way to the solution of the life-and-death problems confronting the American labor movement. The course of the American working class has been distinctively marked by economic struggles of exceptional militancy, manifested in strike waves of great magnitude in which the labor movement time and time again proved its capacity for ingenuity, stubbornness, and heroism. Yet, historically, there has been a marked lag between the level of trade union militancy and that of political consciousness, of class consciousness. This has been the blight of the American labor movement in the past. The overcoming of this lag

stands forth today as the underlying task, whose fulfillment is the condition for labor's effective assumption of its true role as the leading social force in the nation.

No honest trade unionist, no sincere progressive can refrain from seeking a fundamental answer to the questions: How is it that the economic position of labor has deteriorated almost immediately after the recent widespread wage increases? How is it that the very existence of the labor movement can be so seriously threatened almost on the heels of a victorious strike wave unparalleled in extent in our history? Clearly, the economic struggles in themselves did not prevent the further capitulation of the Truman Administration to reaction and the further worsening of the position of the labor movement. Clearly, the victorious trade union struggles did not prevent the victory of Republican reaction at the polls. In reality, that victory was aided by the "pure-and-simple trade unionism" of the A. F. of L. Executive Council with its reactionary "reward your friends and punish your enemies" policy. This policy negated and denied the political role of labor. It demobilized and undermined the vigilance of the A. F. of L. trade unions in the critical November elections. It demonstrated afresh, in terms of the realities of today in our own country, the applicability of the lessons of Lenin's struggle against the deadly virus of economism, or pure-and-simple trade unionism, in the specific variant of

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its manifestation in the formative period of the Russian labor movement. For a working class to remain politically at the level of trade unionism is to remain ideologically subordinate to the bourgeoisie. This was Lenin's profound generalization from the experience of the world labor movement. That concept of trade unionism which Lenin characterized finds its classical expression in the United States in the craft unionism of the A. F. of L., the trade unionism that limits the goal and destiny of the most advanced class in capitalist society to the day-to-day bargaining with the employers. In this sense, the dominant A. F. of L. ideology today has not essentially departed from the outlook of Gompers, so classically expressed by Strasser, President of the International Cigar Makers' Union, in 1883:

... We have no ultimate aims. We are going on from day to day. We are fighting, only for immediate objects, objects that can be realized in a few years ... we are opposed to theorists. . . . We are all practical men.

The pure-and-simple trade unionism of the A. F. of L. is not so neutral in politics. To the contrary, the A. F. of L. chiefs are very active in politics, but in the politics of the capitalists—the politics that denies and seeks to hold back labor's independent political activity and role. In practice, the ideology of the top leadership of the A. F. of L. leaves unchallenged in the hands of the capitalists the monopoly of political

power which they have used for generations to defeat the economic demands and to attack the elementary rights of labor. And which capitalist democracy can rival the United States in the use of state power against the labor movement? Where has government strike-breaking—the use of injunctions, martial law, frame-ups and anti-labor legislation — been developed to such a fine art, and used so frequently?

Even the progressive political activity of the C.I.O., which marks a great advance for the independent political action of labor, proved, due to its still limited conception of labor's political role, incapable of preventing the victory of Republican reaction and the new serious dangers to the trade union movement.

It is a matter of unusual significance that the C.I.O., as an economic organization, saw it necessary from its very birth to create Labor's Non-Partisan League. The necessity to find forms of political activity of the progressive industrial union movement grew out of the very problem of maintaining trade union organization in the basic, highly monopolized industries. It would be wrong to underestimate the historic importance of Labor's Non-Partisan League and its successor, the C.I.O.-Political Action Committee. The great role of the C.I.O.'s political activity in bringing about the defeat of the pro-fascist Liberty League and the election of Roosevelt stands out as a high point in labor's advance

toward political consciousness and attests to the great potential of the independent political role of the labor movement. Historically, the advent of the L.N.P.L. and the C.I.O.-P.A.C. marks an important step in freeing labor from the paralyzing bonds of political "neutrality" and in hastening the development toward class consciousness. It would be a serious mistake, however, to overlook the limitations of the C.I.O. concept of political action. It is urgently necessary that the labor movement estimate these limitations and draw fundamental conclusions from the lessons of the last election.

The forms of labor political action developed by the C.I.O. correspond to the general direction of the movement of the American working class toward class consciousness. For reasons traceable to the concrete features of its historical development, American labor's course toward acquiring socialist consciousness proceeds by way of the development of its full political independence from the parties of capitalism. In the United States, in line with the Leninist conception of the modifying influence of national uniqueness upon general development, the working class is proceeding in the direction of class consciousness with its own historically determined national forms. The logic of the C.I.O.-initiated labor's political action demands its consummation in a new, labor-led independent political alignment capable of defeating monopoly reaction, of consolidating the past social gains of

the labor movement and its allies, and of registering new advances.

But the development of an independent party of labor and its allies is not automatic. Nor does it flow irrevocably from the C.I.O. concept of the political role of labor. While taking a fundamental position on general political questions of interest to labor, the C.I.O. concept still limits political action too narrowly to political demands essential to reinforce the trade union economic demands, important as the latter are. While its policies of coalition with all anti-monopoly groups of all classes are a progressive tendency, flowing from the needs of this historical period, the C.I.O. all too hesitantly approaches the urgent task of boldly advancing labor's role in the formation of an independent, peoples' anti-monopoly, democratic party.

Timely and cogent for American labor is the teaching of Lenin that "working-class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to all cases of tyranny and oppression, violence and abuse, no matter what class is affected." Labor is the only force capable of leading in the creation of a new political alignment, of forging a political alliance with all progressive, democratic sections of the people. The potential political power of the labor movement is enormous. It must not be dissipated in endless indecisive skirmishes of a defensive character for partial immediate demands, or

squandered in subservience to the capitalist parties. Engels' profound conclusion from the historic battles of the 1880's, when the American working class surged to the forefront of the world labor movement, that American labor has the capacity for "great historical leaps" in its development, can be confirmed in this crucial period.

The development of an independent political party of labor, farmers, the Negro people, veterans, youth, women, and progressive forces of the old parties is at this juncture indispensable to peace, democracy and further social progress. It is the path dictated by historical necessity for the defeat of Wall Street imperialist reaction, for consolidating the peace by strengthening our friendship and cooperation with our great wartime ally, the Soviet Union.

The most urgent immediate conditions for the advance of the American labor movement to the strong and honored positions occupied by European labor are the united action of the forces of labor and the decisive break with all economist concepts and practices that have traditionally retarded labor's political independence and class consciousness.

We have till now dealt with the general movement of the working class. We turn now to the role of the Communist Party in that movement.

The creation of the independent political party of labor and the people will not obviate the need for the Marxist vanguard Party. The fact

that the Communist Party has been the clearest and most consistent advocate of a mass people's party attests to the unceasing need for the scientific outlook and devotion of the Communist Party. In fact, the working class will be in more urgent need of an even stronger Communist Party as labor moves forward, leading the people in decisive conflicts with the forces of monopoly capital. The situation of British labor today brings the need for a strong Communist Party into sharp relief. The high level of political action which defeated the Tories, and placed the Labor Party in power, did not eliminate exploitation and oppression, imperialist violence and subjugation and threat to world peace. Clearly, the need for a Communist Party is as crucially urgent for the British working class as ever.

Imperialist reaction recognizes, here as elsewhere, the role of the Communist Party in the interests of the working class and the people. Reaction's frenzied Red-baiting is calculated to separate the working class from its Marxist vanguard, to remove the scientific shield of the working class and leave labor defenseless. The Communist Party will continue to fulfill its role unflinchingly, pointing out the road ahead at each turn of events, and, while resolutely fighting for every immediate need of labor and the people generally, never fail to advance the course of the class struggle as a whole toward the socialist objective

# The December 3-5 Plenary Meeting of the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE PLENUM DISCUSSION

By EUGENE DENNIS

FIRST, BEFORE COMMENTING on a few of the questions raised in our discussions, I want to say that, like the rest of you, I voted approval of the various sub-reports. However, I want to make this more than a formal act and to state my firm conviction that the extended remarks of Comrade Foster and the sub-reports of Comrades Williamson, Davis, and Winston were extremely important assets to our deliberations.

\* \* \*

Even though we have acted officially and terminated the discussion at this meeting of our National Committee on Comrade Ben Davis' report, I wish you would bear with me for just a few minutes for a couple of observations.

There is no question that the report of Comrade Davis and the very rich discussion of it mark the high point of this Plenum and a high point in the work and thinking, in the Marxist maturity of most of our leadership. And surely the conclu-

sions we have arrived at constitute a major contribution to the theoretical clarification of the Party on the Negro question as a national question.

Notwithstanding the viewpoint of some comrades, our conclusions here and the position we have adopted will serve to mobilize the Party to fight more effectively for all the immediate and partial demands and rights of the Negro people. There were, of course, many significant individual contributions in addition to those which were made tonight. I particularly want to single out from last night's discussion, in addition to the report, the remarks of Comrade Bittelman and especially of Comrades Jackson and Strong. I think that our Party, just as it will feel proud of the Marxist conclusions we have arrived at, will also and equally be proud of the role of these comrades in this connection.

We also have to take note of the fact that this discussion must alert

us to the immense job we still have to educate our Party to a clearer, Marxist-Leninist understanding of the national question in general and of the Negro question in the United States in particular. This discussion has emphasized further that the major work has to be done among our white comrades, just as it has to be done particularly among the white masses outside of the Communist movement.

All the comrades who originally opposed the report of Comrade Davis and the resolution accept, and agree with, the main slogan of action which our Party champions nationally in behalf of the Negro people, namely, the right of full political, economic and social equality for the Negro people. But these comrades have not yet grasped the cardinal fact that if this basic democratic slogan and Marxist principle is to mean what it says, then its application in the Black Belt—where the Negro people constitute not only a majority of the population, but have the fundamental characteristics of an oppressed nation—requires the exercise of the right to self-determination.

To talk of full equality for the Negro people of the South without advancing and fighting for their right to land and to the free determination of their own destiny, would be a denial of the struggle for equal rights for the Negro people, not only in the South, but also in the North. It would be a negation and abandonment of the great national liberation movement of the Negro people. At

the same time it would also deprive the American working class and people of this powerful anti-imperialist movement which aids and promotes their immediate as well as ultimate aims.

In our resolution and in Comrade Davis' report we have not merely reaffirmed our Marxist-Leninist principle of the right of the Negro people in the Black Belt to self-determination. We have, as comrades have noted, avoided the errors we committed in the past. For one thing, we did not enter into an academic debate or fruitless speculation on *when or how* this right will be realized, or precisely *in what form*. It is incumbent upon us scientifically, as Marxists, to state this fact.

I would just like to remark in passing that because we do not draw a blueprint and give all the answers here, we should not approach the question—that is, one aspect of the question—as put by one comrade. I don't want to get into the realm of speculation on this matter, but I think we would make a serious and harmful mistake if we were to associate the realization of the right of self-determination solely with the realization of socialism in the United States. If the American people, the labor movement in alliance with the great Negro people and all progressive and democratic forces, can check and defeat the onslaught of pro-fascist monopoly reaction, and bring into power, as an important phase of that struggle, a progressive presidential ticket and Congress in 1948,

with all that this would entail, many things will be possible, including, at least, tremendous strides toward the full realization of equal rights of the Negro people in the Black Belt.

Further, in contradistinction to the past, we do *not* present the slogan of self-determination as an immediate slogan of action, but as the affirmation of a historic right which guides and establishes the direction of all our work in the South. We must and can convince far larger sections of both Negro and white masses in the South that the struggle for the national liberation of the Negro people, including the fight for land, as well as for all other immediate economic and democratic demands, is the key to breaking the grip of monopoly capital in the South. It is the key to overcoming the industrial backwardness of the South, the one-crop system and all semi-feudal relations, the curse of pro-fascist Bourbon reaction which enslaves the Negro people and also impoverishes, holds down, and degrades the masses of the white population.

Finally, it seems to me that our entire Party, and all advanced workers and progressives, must realize that today, in the struggle against the growth of pro-fascist reaction, the fight for equal rights for the Negro people in every aspect of their economic, political, and social life, including the struggle for the equal rights of the Negro people in the Black Belt, is a central task as well as a most powerful weapon in the struggle against reaction. It is a central

part of the united people's movement to halt the rise of fascism. As such, it must be resolutely and skillfully supported and fought for in every part of the nation, and by every labor, anti-fascist and progressive element and organization.

\* \* \*

Before touching on what appears to me to be one of the most serious weaknesses in our discussions, with reference to the 1948 elections and the gigantic tasks to be fulfilled in the interim, let me say one word about a special problem.

We should not overlook, as a part of the continuation of the battle on November 5, some of the victories which are not yet won fully. These include the dangerous effort of the most reactionary forces in the country clustered around the G.O.P., American Action, Inc., as well as the Bilboes and Rankins, to try to unseat Congressman Marcantonio. We must do everything in New York State to muster support for him. But this is not only a New York problem. There should be reactions, and resolute expressions of opinion from every sector of the progressive movement in all parts of the country.

Now, it seems to me that there was a very serious weakness in our discussion on the results and consequences of the elections. With the exception of the remarks of Comrade Schneiderman, and to some extent of Bob Thompson, and of Comrade Bary from Colorado, most of the reports on the elections did not deal with the strategical and tactical prob-



lems that must be solved now, and from here on, to shape a new progressive political alignment now, and through 1948 as well as in 1948, for that gigantic task which will arise in connection with the coming presidential elections.

Comrade Foster was a thousand times correct when he stated that every district must, without delay, work out and move ahead on a concrete plan of action, geared to prepare for 1948. The question is not one of working out schematic blueprints and mechanical schedules. *The task is to have a clear perspective and orientation, plus a strategical plan, implemented with a specific program of immediate action.* Without taking up too much time and without repeating all the points raised in the report, I should like briefly to re-emphasize some problems we must solve quickly if the democratic camp is to attain its major objectives in 1948.

First, we must immediately take up, as we have stressed, the urgent task of organizing and rallying the labor movement and all progressives for effective united action in support of the miners' struggle and the forthcoming wage movement of the unions. Together with this, we must prepare now to conduct a new type of political, legislative, mass activity around the most burning Congressional, State, and City legislative issues. But let us understand that big mass struggles, in themselves, will not automatically bring about the new political alignment of which we

speak and toward which we work. We can easily remember previous periods of militant economic and political struggles out of which labor's political action and a new people's alignment did not develop, at least not on a broad or a national scale.

We must, therefore, consciously and systematically work, during the course of the present as well as the coming struggles, to help the working class and the progressive forces break, not only with the Administration and the Democratic national leadership, but also—it has to be said—with the G.O.P. We must utilize the experience of the masses, acquired in this struggle, to build up, not only the needed unity of action, not only a host of independent political organizations and greater independent political activity, but a new, deep, conscious understanding of the need to forge a new progressive party alignment.

This brings me to a second question. What is required *in the initial stage* in most states and communities to create a broad basis for that independent electoral machinery and alignment which must be established before a new people's party can function in 1948? What is required is the organization, in every ward and township, in every city and on a Congressional district basis, of some form of independent, political, legislative *membership* organization, as well as united front committees. Local coordinating centers comparable to and allied with the Conference of Progressives are important, but they are



not enough. Independent united progressive committees for the city elections are extremely important also and must be promoted. But something else is needed, something which will result in building down below, everywhere, a grass roots mass membership political action organization.

In addition, serious steps must be taken really to initiate and organize a serious and broad popular discussion in every people's organization and in the trade unions on the need of forming a new people's, progressive alignment and party, as well as on the nature and the program of such a party and such an alignment.

Furthermore, we must, without further delay, help to crystallize as soon as possible, representative committees in the various districts and states to conduct mass educational and public relations work to promote the idea of, and win support and adherence for, a new party alignment.

However, as we stressed in the report, *all this activity must be connected with a determined and greatly expanded effort to help unite and activate the pro-Roosevelt forces in and around the Democratic Party.* It is reported in the press, for instance, that Senators Pepper, Taylor, and Murray, and Congressman Sabath, together with a few other Senators and Congressmen, are meeting early this month and taking steps to organize a progressive bloc in the Senate and House, around a progressive pro-Roosevelt legislative program of action. Surely the time is ripe for

this. Comparable steps should be taken in the various State Legislatures. In addition, ways should be found to influence and bring together, even if initially only in a loose form, hundreds of members of the various County and State Democratic Party committeemen.

I do not want to take the time at this point to discuss the even bigger question of the preferential primaries which, on the one hand, create many difficulties and problems, but, on the other, present very big opportunities. Nor do I want to take the time to discuss a very important aspect of the work of the progressives among certain sections of the Republican electorate, as well as how certain struggles can and must be waged in a number of Congressional districts in the by-elections and in the next general election even in the Republican Party primaries. I should just like to emphasize that the highly significant and urgent task which can and must be accomplished, if the pro-Roosevelt Democrats are to be united and activated in their party, cannot be neglected by the labor-progressive camp. Nor can it be left to chance or solely to the Wallace-Pepper forces themselves. The forces of labor, of independent political action, will have to find the way to help influence, organize, and assist the struggle for a Roosevelt program and to effect a new progressive re-grouping within the Democratic Party, or at least in a number of its organizations.

Finally, regarding this point, as we stressed so forcefully earlier, the

advanced workers and progressives, particularly, must bear in mind at all times the central task in 1948—to defeat the candidates and the camp of reaction and fascism, to elect a progressive presidential ticket and Congress. They must bear in mind that they cannot succeed unless the struggle for an effective and progressive realignment within the Democratic Party, and among the electorate following it, is vigorously pushed and fought for, and is closely coordinated with a gigantic and consistent effort to advance and organize in time, on a broad and representative basis, a new people's and progressive party. However, at this time, the question must be left open as to whether or not it will be necessary or advisable for this new party to place a third presidential ticket in the field in 1948.

Now, comrades, a few words on a question regarding which Comrade Schneiderman rose to present a motion. In this connection the comrades should understand I am not endeavoring to anticipate the discussion that will take place in the National Board on the evaluation of the *Daily Worker*. Also, I think it would be correct to say that on this point, prior to that discussion, the views I express are my own.

Everyone has taken cognizance of the fact that, in the course of the general discussion, some very sharp and very serious charges were leveled against the *Daily Worker*, against the political line pursued by the *Daily Worker* during the election campaign. I do not propose at this time

to enter into all the merits or demerits of these charges, nor of the many real and alleged mistakes of the *Daily Worker*.

Is it a fact that the *Daily Worker* made certain individual errors in the handling of this or that editorial, article, and issue, including the handling of several speeches by Mead and Lehman? Undoubtedly.

But is it not a fact, comrades, that there is also something else to be said about the role of the *Daily Worker* in general and in the elections in particular? I personally think there is. For I believe the facts will show that with all its deficiencies and limitations—and some of these are very serious—the *Daily Worker* played and plays a very positive role in the life and work of our Party as a whole and in the recent election campaign.

The *Daily Worker*, in the main, followed, reflected, and unfolded a sound, a balanced, a generally correct political line—the line of our National Committee. I think it should also be stated here that, except for consultations with the National Secretariat as a whole, or with individual members of the Secretariat, on a few of the important questions—and sometimes not even on these—the editors of the *Daily Worker* are largely on their own, by a decision, and a correct one, of the National Board. And I think, by and large, and particularly when I see many of the editorials which the comrades have written without any exchange of opinion with the National Board—I think,

by and large, a fairly creditable job is being done, thanks particularly to the editorship of Comrades Childs, Howard, and Max.

Moreover, I should like to call to the attention of the comrades here that there is not a single district, a single committee, in the Party which is subject to the same pressures as are the editors of the *Daily Worker*, who have to meet a daily deadline, who cannot have prolonged discussions. In addition to this, let it be said, the editors of the *Daily Worker* are every day in a "vulnerable" spot because what they do, what they think, what they say, is there each day, openly, before the Party.

I do believe, however, that we must examine and resolve some of the unsettled problems regarding the *Daily Worker* which, to my mind, are particularly those regarding its character and the quality of its work and contributions. I believe, for instance, that some of Comrade Cacchione's suggestions are well taken and should be studied and worked over, and a number of them adopted and carried out.

But I do not believe that the type of discussion or the type of criticism made here and elsewhere by some comrades regarding the *Daily Worker* will help either the *Daily Worker* or the Party. For instance, the two-way vendetta and factional attitudes which have been developed on the part of some comrades, and which now characterize the present relationships between some comrades in New York and the *Daily Worker*

editors, preclude any comradely criticism or exchange of views on how to strengthen the press and our Party as a whole.

A continuation of the present abnormal and unhealthy relations between the *Daily Worker* and some of the New York district comrades could only harm the Party. I should like to express the opinion, to all comrades concerned, that an end must be put to the present state of affairs. I should like to state further that, in my judgment, neither the editors of the *Daily Worker* nor the leaders of the Party districts have a monopoly on perfection or absolution from mistakes and certain incorrect tendencies on certain questions.

Nonetheless, I think it is necessary to state that the responsible and leading Party committees in charge of the *Daily Worker* and the New York District are today carrying out one political line, the Party's line. It is true that in doing this there are both "Left" and Right deviations that now and then come to the fore and that the entire Party leadership, which includes the leadership of the Districts and the *Daily Worker* leadership, is combatting and will combat.

I should like to conclude on this point by saying that if we are to root out all departures from our main political line whenever they crop up, let us examine them concretely and overcome each and every deviation collectively, in a comradely fashion, and in time. Let us also put

a halt to certain tendencies and inclinations to use the general political line of our Party as a club to stifle constructive criticism or to gloss over specific deviations.

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Reference was made in the discussion, and in my judgment in an unfortunate way, to the incorrect and harmful editorial which appeared in the *Daily Worker* in connection with Wallace's September speech in Madison Square Garden. I don't want to go into any details or into all the ramifications of this matter, inasmuch as the Party leadership quickly, immediately, and unitedly overcame this particular, unpardonable mistake. I don't want to do this, furthermore, because the entire matter was dealt with in a self-critical way both in the National Board, the *Daily Worker* Board and in an Eastern and Midwestern District organizers' conference.

It is a fact that neither the National Board nor the Secretariat discussed or read in advance either the speech of Wallace or the *Daily Worker* editorial. But, also, the fact is that while the editors of the *Daily Worker* bear a certain responsibility for the editorial, they do not bear the major responsibility. The main responsibility for this mistake rests with our entire national leadership, with all of us—even though most of us were not involved in the formulation of the *Daily Worker* editorial. This is so because, evidently, we did not create full clarity, a solid viewpoint,

in our entire leadership on a number of important questions.

For instance, up to recently the Party and its leadership displayed great initiative and performed invaluable services, as they are still doing, to the American people in the cause of peace, in signaling the aggressive aims and policies of American imperialism, its drive for expansion and world domination, its interventionist acts which threaten the peace of the world, and its military preparations for another world war.

Nonetheless, while doing this, serious errors were committed in the direction of misjudging the relationship of international forces, in underestimating the world forces and factors that have been operating to prevent the outbreak of a new world war in the immediate future.

Furthermore, those tendencies which did exist to regard World War III as imminent, as something that might break out any day or month (a position which, we should note, weakened our generally correct program of action in the struggle for peace) were not sufficiently combated. From this there developed certain sectarian attitudes toward forces, peoples, and movements, in the labor movement, as well as in the broad democratic camp, and toward certain potential allies in the labor-progressive coalition who, for one or another reason, have been slow in publicly breaking with the Truman Administration and its reactionary policies.

It was in part because of such

tendencies that the first editorial in the *Daily Worker* on the Wallace speech adopted such a completely negative attitude toward Wallace's position. This is why some comrades—and not only those on the *Daily Worker*—could not see the woods for the trees and were disoriented by the unjust and harmful remarks by Wallace on the Soviet Union and the Communists. Because of this, the comrades failed to grasp the fact that Wallace, in his own way and within the limitations of his position, was challenging the main line of the Byrnes-Vandenberg policy and, in the first place, the "get-tough-with-Russia" policy.

This is why some comrades who had excluded the possibility of any cracks, rifts, or fissures in the Administration or Democratic Party circles, no matter how small or limited, were misled in their first estimate of Wallace's speech because at that time he had not yet left the Cabinet, had not yet formally broken with the Administration. Suffice it to say that we must still be on guard against such attitudes and tendencies, and must eradicate them from our thinking and work if we are to apply successfully our unity tactics and policies, particularly in the struggle for peace.

But, at the same time, comrades, it is also urgent to warn at this Plenum that since we have corrected the previous tendency to exaggerate the imminence of a new World War, some comrades in some districts have relaxed their vigilance and struggle

against the war-makers. They have weakened the mobilization of the Left and progressive forces against the reactionary and provocative imperialist foreign policy of Hoover-Vandenberg-Byrnes and Co., against the bellicose, atomic bomb policy and diplomacy of the government and the monopolies, against the existence of American soldiers and guns on foreign ground, and against the threats to world peace from America's interventionist policy in various parts of the globe, and especially today in China. I think it is unfortunate, comrades, that, with one exception no one in the discussion dealt with that short but incisive section of the main report that posed a number of the problems in the struggle for peace.

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A word on the miners. The events of the past days, and in fact, hours, have given added weight to our estimate of the national and far-reaching significance of the miners' struggle and, above all, of the supreme necessity of mobilizing the greatest, the maximum united support of all labor and of every progressive behind the miners.

The action of Murray and Green today in filing joint appeals with the U.M.W.A. Council against the infamous decision of the District of Columbia Court against Lewis and the miners—this is important. But such united legal action, just as joint protests of C.I.O. and A. F. of L. against the injunction in formal resolutions, is completely inadequate.

The use of the injunction and the imposition of the monstrous \$3½ million fine upon the U.M.W.A. and the \$10,000 fine upon Lewis will, in all probability, be followed in the next days by further coercive action by the government, state as well as federal. It is also possible, and not to be excluded, that a special session of Congress may be called before January to enact anti-strike and other barbarous anti-labor legislation.

Every union and union leader, especially every Communist and progressive leader, must understand what is involved. They must understand that—regardless of the irresponsible and undemocratic policies of John L. Lewis, who is in cahoots with the G.O.P.—this evil, government-employer conspiracy menaces not only the miners, not only the wage demands and movements of the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. workers as well, but equally the existence and the future of the America trade union movement and of all democratic rights.

This fight is a key battle. Its outcome will seriously affect the immediate course of the coming economic and political struggles, and will help determine whether the offensive of monopoly reaction can be quickly checked before it is unleashed in its full fury.

Therefore we, and the entire labor and progressive movement, must take seriously to heart what we have already projected. We must take special measures to carry through those correct decisions which we have

formulated in the National Board, and here in this National Committee meeting. Above all, we must take emergency measures to achieve at least the first beginning of united labor action in several cities and states. In addition, we must take whatever form of common action or agreement beyond local actions which can be attained nationally so as to work out immediately some form of local, state, and national solidarity actions protesting the government's injunction and persecution of the miners, demanding an immediate settlement either by the government, or by the operators, of the just wage demands and of the inviolable trade union rights of the miners.

Whatever the form of these actions, whether joint demonstrative work stoppages, or joint labor-citizens' mass meetings, or the sending of joint statements and delegations to the White House, etc., they must be organized now, in a matter of days and not a few weeks hence.

Also, without speculating on whether the strike will continue or whether it will be terminated quickly, we should lose no time in initiating, in the mining states particularly, as well as nationally outside the mining areas, a great national relief movement for the miners, and especially for the miners' children. Starting with the District Organizers' meeting tomorrow morning, as already planned, we must take extraordinary steps to carry through these and a host of other measures.

Let us make this the first big drive



really to break through and to make some substantial and speedy advances in the forging of the unity of action of all wings of the labor movement, together with other sections of its progressive allies. This is a challenge, as well as a great opportunity, and we dare not fail to meet it.

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Finally, comrades, one additional point in reference to the coming economic crisis.

In the report we stressed that the program of the G.O.P. and the trusts is hastening the outbreak of the next cyclical crisis. I pointed out, even if only in a general way, those factors which make it clear that in all probability a cyclical crisis will break out in 1948, and possibly even in the latter half of 1947.

In so far as 1947 is concerned, this much already is certain: there will be an economic recession that will take place either in the late spring or summer. This may be followed either by a short period, lasting from six to nine months, of a levelling off, so to speak. Or it may be followed quickly by a precipitate drop in production and employment, by the development of a full-blown cyclical crisis. I think we need to pay more attention to the question of the economic perspective. (Here, I refer the comrades to the article in the November issue of *Political Affairs* by Comrade Bittelman and his special report on this subject.)

I think we have a solemn duty to warn and alert the labor movement and the people in a convincing way,

to what is coming, and what must be done *now*. For one thing, as we emphasized, it is necessary boldly and energetically to fight for such an immediate program of action as is outlined in the main plenum report, a program formulated to help impede, however slightly, the outbreak of this crisis, and above all, to safeguard the interests of the people from the ravages of the crisis.

Let me note in passing that, in my judgment, it will also be necessary to develop further a more extensive program for curbing the monopolists, including a more developed program of nationalization under democratic controls. This will mean in part that the movement for nationalization in the interests of labor and the people must be integrally combined with the idea of struggle for a new democratic alignment and for the election of a progressive presidential ticket and Congress in 1948.

Now, further on this question. We must understand that the next cyclical crisis in the United States will not just be a replica of either the 1920-21 or the 1929-33 crisis, as serious as these were. I do not refer solely to the severe economic consequences of the oncoming crisis in terms of mass unemployment, insecurity, intense misery and the mass impoverishment of the workers, farmers, the Negro people, and the middle classes. Nor do I refer only at this moment to the serious effects of this crisis in the U.S. on the economy of most of the world, especially in a number of war-devastated countries.



What I particularly want to stress is that the next cyclical economic crisis in the United States—whatever its special features or length—will enormously accentuate the danger of fascism in the United States, which already today is the main center of world reaction.

Undoubtedly, the most reactionary monopolists will not only intensify their reactionary offensive against the masses of the people, endeavoring to shift the full burden of the crisis on them. They will step up their efforts to organize a fascist movement with a mass base, particularly among the veterans and other sections of the youth. They will also try to drive full speed ahead to prepare for, and win, a reactionary, pro-fascist victory in 1948.

Therefore, the central, immediate objectives which we have stressed in this plenum, must be tackled and solved with the greatest dispatch, with all the vigor, fighting spirit, and initiative we can command. That objective is to unite the people against reaction, against the fascist-minded trusts; to forge everywhere, on every level, the unity of action of labor, of the progressives; to build an anti-monopoly, anti-war coalition, embracing all democratic forces; to fight every inch of the way for the economic interests and democratic rights of the people; and to develop the great and united economic and political strength of labor and the people.

This also requires exerting our maximum efforts to build up the

mass economic and political organizations of labor and the people, not only of the unions and other organizations; it requires particularly that we build our Party in time as a mass party of mass action, a point Comrade Foster hammers at so consistently.

This requires, further, not only that the people shall fight unitedly, but that they shall fight with a perspective, a strategy, so as to weld and shape the gathering labor-progressive-democratic coalition and direct it along the channels of a new democratic political alignment.

And we must understand, finally, that to achieve all this, we, ourselves, must pursue resolutely, and apply consistently, effectively and boldly, the tactic of the united front and of the democratic front. We must constantly consolidate our cooperation and our cooperative relations with other Left-wing and progressive elements and groups, while at the same time seeking out and securing new allies, new friends, new participants in the people's, democratic coalition.

To do this, of course, we must reinforce our Party base, our mass work and influence, and maintain our independent identity and political position. But we must do this in such a way as to widen and strengthen at all times our ties, our united front relations, with all labor, anti-fascist, and democratic forces, so as to influence, unify, and rally them in the coming struggles against reaction and fascism.

# THE SITUATION IN THE TRADE UNIONS\*

By JOHN WILLIAMSON

THE COAL MINERS' STRIKE was the first blow in the second round of wage-strike struggles that now confronts the nation. In discussing, as is the intention of this article, the general situation in the trade union movement, it will be worthwhile to deal first in some detail with the coal strike.

The key reason for the coal miners' strike was the refusal of the government and the operators even to consider the miners' just demands for wage increases to keep up with soaring price rises. However, the action of the government, with its injunctions, fines, and strikebreaking, soon turned the strike into a struggle that went far beyond a wage struggle.

The rest of the labor movement and its millions of members soon recognized that, from two points of view—firstly, the use of the injunction as a threat to all of labor, and, secondly, the danger of Lewis's setting an unsatisfactory pattern for the rest of labor in its wage fight—this struggle had to become the urgent concern of the entire labor movement. This was best dramatized in the significant letter of President Philip Murray of the C.I.O., addressed to the A. F. of L. and the Railroad Brotherhoods, urging that they "rise above any petty or personal quarrels," and take joint ac-

tion in support of the miners' struggle, as well as in defense of the general political and economic interests of all of labor.

The action of John L. Lewis in calling off the miners' strike in such a situation was a blow to the miners and the rest of the labor movement. It is no wonder that many of the newspapers hailed him as a "labor statesman." It is true that the main responsibility rests with the Truman Administration, which, on behalf of the coal operators, once again repeated its action of last May against the railroad workers, and broke a strike of workers. Lewis's capitulation (the mildest characterization one can give to it) without consultation with his own members, and precisely at a moment when all labor was grasping the significance of what was involved and getting ready to pass over to a new high in forms of labor struggle, was a disservice to the coal miners and to the entire trade union movement.

It is clear that the miners were under attack by the government injunction. It is also true that the bourgeoisie was poisoning the minds of certain non-working class sections of the population with its false propaganda. But, as against this, the growing response of the entire labor movement, the readiness for protest general strike action, as indicated in the proposal of the Detroit A. F. of L.

\* Based in part on a report delivered at the December 3-5 meeting of the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

Central Labor Council, gave the miners all the advantages for turning this attack into a victory for all of labor. It is not wrong to retreat and call off a strike if one's reserves have been exhausted and there is no other alternative. It is wrong to call off a strike without utilizing such great reserves as the readiness of all labor to support it, not to speak of calling the strike off without any public commitments from the coal operators or the government. In this situation, both the coal miners and the entire labor movement were let down at a critical moment.

From the first day of the miners' strike, the Communist Party was conscious of the dangers involved in the situation, as far as Lewis was concerned, and warned about them in National Board statements, in editorials and articles. The present writer said at the meeting of our National Committee on December 3:

It is imperative that with our own small forces we try to make the entire labor movement conscious of the fact that this is not just a miners' problem. . . . It is a problem for, and must be the concern of, the entire labor movement. It is because of this that we have been emphasizing that it cannot just be left to the U.M.W.A., or, more accurately, to one man—Lewis. The rest of the labor movement must take the initiative away from Lewis. This can best be done by joint action by the A. F. of L., the C.I.O., and the Railroad Brotherhoods.

The capitulation of Lewis, motivated in part no doubt by his realization and that of his Republican partners that there was a rising temper of all labor for unity and joint action, only re-emphasizes how correct these warnings of the Communist Party were.

What must never be forgotten is that the miners' original demands for shorter hours and higher wages—with the injunction still in effect against the miners' union—all remain central questions for the miners and all of labor. The rest of labor, both C.I.O. and A. F. of L., must stand shoulder to shoulder with the miners in support of their demands, by organizing united action committees against the injunction, and by supporting Murray's call for joint action against the threat to labor. This would be further stimulated by establishing close bonds between the U.M.W.A. locals and the locals and central bodies of the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. in the nearby cities. The temporary isolation of the coal miners from the rest of the labor movement must be ended and the traditional bonds of solidarity and unity of the fighting coal miners with the rest of the trade union movement re-established.

#### THE NEW WAGE DEMANDS

The Lewis capitulation, on the eve of the presentation by the principal C.I.O. unions of their new wage demands, will encourage the trusts and the government in their determina-

tion to "get tough" with labor. From many sources come numerous proposals for anti-labor legislation. Among the latest to speak up is C. E. Wilson, of General Motors. He outlined a 5-point program for re-writing labor laws, which is reported in the *New York Times* of December 11, as follows:

Prohibiting of industry-wide bargaining, banning of compulsory unionism, subjecting of unions to equality of the law, clarifying of collective bargaining regulations and outlawing of strikes. . . .

On the same day Nathan Miller, general counsel for the U. S. Steel Corporation, called for the repeal of all anti-injunction laws, saying in part:

Exemption of farm and labor organizations from the anti-trust laws and statutory curbs on equity powers of the courts in dealing with labor disputes . . . are examples of discriminatory laws that are injurious to the public . . . impelled by popular agitation and misleading slogans, anti-injunction laws have been enacted which . . . put some groups above the law.

It is clear that, as soon as Congress convenes, there will be a rush of anti-labor legislation aiming at: emasculation of the Wagner Act; abolition of the closed shop; prohibition of industry-wide contracts; prohibition of strikes in so-called vital industries; and various financial curbs, including the barring of the use of union funds for political purposes.

All labor must recognize that this

is a common menace. It is precisely such developments, among others, that underscore the urgency of action in response to Murray's unity appeal. The entire labor movement could well write into its consciousness the warning recently raised by William Z. Foster: "United Labor Action—or Else."

The "get tough" attitude of the trusts and the government will not be limited to pressing for anti-labor legislation, as evidenced by their hostile, bitter, and arrogant attitude toward labor's modest demands for increased wages.

While each of the "Big 3" unions of the C.I.O. is in the process of formulating its demands and the "Big 3" conference is still to be held, as this is written, the pattern of the demands of the C.I.O. unions is already clear in its main outline. The specific wage demands will range from 21 cents to 25 cents an hour, plus supplementary demands dealing with insurance, security, and health, a guaranteed annual wage and other fringe demands. Added to these will be demands for strengthening the unions' position in representing their members. These demands are pure and simple trade union demands and, in fact, are always predicated on the capitalist concept that recognizes that the trusts have "a right to a legitimate profit."

The C.I.O. has just released the Nathan Report. Always predicating its thinking on capitalist concepts, this report shows that:

a) Corporate profits are approaching 15 billion dollars, which is  $3\frac{3}{4}$  times as high as for the average of the years 1936-39.

b) The purchasing value of average weekly earnings has dropped so low, due to skyrocketing inflationary price rises, that it would take a 23% hourly wage raise, without price increases, to bring purchasing power back to January, 1945.

c) The increase of 8% in hourly labor costs (not considering increase in productivity) compares with an increase of 28% in wholesale prices of manufactured articles between January, 1945, and October, 1946.

d) Industry can grant a general 25% wage raise without an increase in prices.

The first day's reaction to these facts was an uproar from all spokesmen of the trusts and the editorial scribblers of the newspapers. The months ahead are going to witness a battle of statistics. *We must help labor translate the statistics into the real issues at stake in this battle—the welfare of labor and the great mass of the American people versus the profits of Trusts and their hangers-on.* In the course of this battle, we Communists must educate the workers to realize that their concern is not with "ability to pay" or with protecting the profits of the trusts. We Communists challenge the right of the trusts to any profits, since they are all stolen from the workers as a class, since the workers alone produce these profits.

The theme song of the apologists for the trusts has two shrill notes, as they attempt to challenge the right of the C.I.O. to demand any wage increase at all. They shout that increases in wages means increases in prices. Their trump card, as the *New York Times* attempts to show, is that "the basic fallacy underlying this argument is that it conceives of business profits as a common pool" and then proceeds to weep about the losses of the automotive and electrical appliance trusts.

Space does not permit a detailed answer to these arguments. Suffice it to emphasize that the workers want their wages to catch up with prices, and not the other way around. The real reason for rising prices is to be found in the monopoly control over the things the workers must buy, plus the abolition of price controls by the trusts and the Republicans in the last session of Congress. The actual facts are that, while profits have increased, wages have fallen decisively. This has been accentuated since V-J Day, with the abolition of overtime and the abolition of O.P.A. Actually, during 1941-1945, wages and salaries comprised a lower percentage of the gross national total income than they did during 1936-1940, while profits comprised a much higher percentage. Furthermore, as regards the "common pool" argument of the *New York Times*, the fact is that it is precisely the big trusts, like G.M. and G.E., that make higher over-all profits because of their gigantic pro-

ductive capacity as well as monopoly character. Lastly, the Nathan Report refers to the rate of profit. Where G.M. or G.E. close their plants for several months because they hope to smash the trade unions, the over-all annual profit will be lower. On the books, they may even show a loss (which was taken care of in 1946 by the tax kick-back from the government), but for the months worked, below full production capacity, the Nathan Report's figures on "rate of profit" are essentially accurate, despite the New York *World-Telegram* editorial headed, "It Isn't Necessarily So."

It is essential that all labor recognize that this round of wage struggles is going to be more difficult and complicated than in recent years. Too many labor leaders became accustomed to a condition in which the various Government Boards were the arena of struggle. Today, the Allis-Chalmers and the Hollywood studio workers demonstrate that the main arena of struggle is the shop and the picket line. All this emphasizes greater need for clarity of demands, adequate preparations, unity of action, and democratic involvement of the membership in decisions and activity. While it is correct to try to secure these wage increases without a strike, the only conceivable way to achieve that possibility, is adequately and fully to prepare for strike action. This is not sufficiently evident in the thinking of the labor leaders now making the decisions. In the hope of scaring

the trade union leaders away from this type of successful preparations for the wage struggle, the Right-wing Social-Democratic scribbler, Victor Reisel, declares: "Show me a mass picket line and I'll show you Communists trying to get into the act." Let us hope that the history of American labor struggles with their "mass picket lines" has not escaped the memories of anyone, and that this little Red-baiter will be repudiated with the disdain and language that workers have long known to use for such types.

The decisive thing about the present round of wage battles is that they cannot be solved in a routine and customary trade union manner. Any effort to wrest wage increases through a strategy of one union acting at a time or isolated from others, is doomed to failure. What is needed is a united strategy and a united command. A united strategy does not mean that every union concerned act or strike on the same day. It does mean that there shall exist a common understanding on objectives, on methods of struggle, on settlements, on utilization of reserves, etc. Furthermore, the unions will no doubt consider the present situation as bordering on an inflationary situation and base their demands, accordingly, on that belief. Agreements will be worthwhile to the extent that they have clauses for re-opening consideration of wage rates every few months.

Another indispensable aspect of



preparations for these struggles is for labor to win the support of the non-working class population. It is here that the bourgeoisie has been making some headway with its anti-labor propaganda. An extensive public relations or educational campaign is one that will bring results. It is necessary both to show that labor's demands are in the interest of the middle class, the storekeeper and the veterans, and to demonstrate that labor champions a tax program in the interest of all the people, especially the salaried workers and the middle class, as well as to support the demands of the Negro people and the veterans.

#### THE PARTY AND THE TRADE UNIONS

The present situation that confronts the C.I.O., and the urgency of united action of all labor, emphasizes the responsible attitude of the Left forces, including the Communists, at the recent C.I.O. National Convention. They adopted a position of striving to defeat the Big Business conspiracy to divide and weaken the C.I.O. They insisted upon defeating the objectives of the Social-Democrats within the C.I.O., like Rieve, Carey, and John Green, as well as the A.C.T.U. adherents, like Milton Murray, Grogan, and McDonald, who also desired to divide and weaken the C.I.O. from within by trying to have the convention resort to Red-baiting and adopt the slanderous Hearst-Rankin line of coupling

Communism with fascism and condemning the Communist Party as un-American and a "foreign agent." While these objectives of the trusts and the Right-wing were defeated, it was at the sacrifice of a compromise formulation, which the Communists and many Left-wingers knew was both inaccurate and unjust. Nevertheless, the Communists agreed to such a compromise, rather than allow the Right to split the C.I.O. wide open. They did this with the obvious understanding that this compromise was to be adhered to within the entire C.I.O. and that Philip Murray's declaration against "repressions" and the Convention's action in electing Ben Gold a member of the Executive Board, was a guide to action for everyone within the C.I.O. A full estimate of the C.I.O. Convention has appeared elsewhere.\*

Since the national C.I.O. convention, we see some of the same forces who were forced to retreat at the national convention proceeding in State Conventions as if nothing had ever happened. In Massachusetts, Communists were banned from holding office, and the nationally democratic practice of each union selecting its own representatives to the Executive Board was flaunted. In New Jersey, a resolution was adopted that contained within it reactionary and harmful Red-baiting attacks upon the Communist Party. As is usual, the first application of the anti-Communist

\* See the article by John Williamson in *The Worker* of December 1.



nist ban was against non-Communist conservative workers as well as Left-wingers, merely because they had both opposed this Red-baiting and divisive decision at the Massachusetts C.I.O. convention.

It is clear that this combination of Social - Democrats and A.C.T.U. adherents is listening to, and carrying out, the dictates of outside forces. The actions in Massachusetts and New Jersey have much in common with an article in the *Jewish Daily Forward* that declared in part:

Philip Murray betrayed the Right-wingers. They had a right to expect help from him. . . . It would have been better if the anti-Communists had accepted Murray's challenge and permitted him to abdicate. . . . Through his compromise maneuver, Murray has created "unity" and "peace" in the C.I.O. But the "unity" he has created is no less of a fake than the fake resolution which he has put through. . . .

Is it not clear that Walsh of Massachusetts and Abrahamson of New Jersey are listening to, and acting in accord with, the advice of the *Forward* to consider the unity policy of Philip Murray and the National C.I.O. Convention as a fake? This advice is both dangerous and harmful for the welfare of the C.I.O. and, irrespective of intentions, plays the game of the employers in dividing and weakening the C.I.O. Being contrary to the interests of the C.I.O. membership, and in fact threatening the capacity of the C.I.O. to enter the wage struggles, it should be met with

determined opposition by the C.I.O. membership.

These actions are, of course, the consequences of even the compromise formulation in which the National C.I.O. Convention went on record to "resent and reject efforts of the Communist Party or other political parties and their adherents to interfere in the affairs of the C.I.O."

It is well known that the Party does not now, and never did, interfere in the affairs of the trade union movement. The aim and responsibility of the Communist Party is politically to influence all workers, including trade unionists, but never to interfere in the affairs of the unions. There is a big difference between *political influencing* and *interference*. The first is our responsibility and natural right as a political party. The other would lead to confusing the role of the Party with that of the trade unions, and would bring with it division instead of unity and strength. To influence workers politically, both in the shop and in the community, to understand and support the program and the policies of the Communist Party is our right and responsibility. We can argue and debate our policies, among the workers, in contrast to the policies of the Democratic, Republican or Socialist Parties.

The decisive thing is for us to improve and extend the political influence and strength of the Party among the trade unionists. If there is a solid core of workers organized directly into the Communist Party,

and around them hundreds of thousands of non-Party workers politically influenced by our program as a workers' political party, we need have no fear of what the general line of activity of these workers will be. It will be one of uniting, building, and strengthening the trade union movement on a progressive program. This will not be because of any party interference. It will be because such workers, who think and act in their own class interests, will, on their own initiative, defeat Red-baiters, support a democratic, anti-fascist policy, support independent labor political action, and expose all capitalist agents and policies.

Individual Communists in C.I.O. unions have a record as union builders, organizers, strike leaders, and defenders of the policies and leadership of the C.I.O.; that is well known and needs no apology. Today, as always, they will be found in the forefront of the struggle for all progressive policies and decisions of the C.I.O. While struggling for the unity of the C.I.O. to make it the most effective force in behalf of the wage workers, they will also strive to influence all their fellow-unionists, to insist upon adherence to the program and the decisions of the national C.I.O. convention by everyone—and not merely by any one union or group of unions.

#### THE A. F. OF L. TODAY

Too many people in progressive circles, including some Communists,

think of the labor movement too much in terms of the C.I.O. membership, to the exclusion of the millions of members in A. F. of L. unions. It is necessary for all progressives, including Communists, to understand that they cannot hope to influence, or move forward with the entire working class, if they are isolated from the seven million members of the A. F. of L.

This is all the more necessary because the entire labor movement, both C.I.O. and A. F. of L., must prepare to engage in full strength in the present emergency round of wage struggles. In fact, as the miners' strike and the general strike in Oakland have shown, the A. F. of L. workers are second to none in helping to initiate this second round of wage struggles. A. F. of L. workers are actually beginning to break with the A. F. of L. Convention policy of soft-peddalling wage increases and of pushing class-collaborationist practices. These reactionary policies of the A. F. of L. Executive Council are not in accord with the interests of the A. F. of L. members or with the future of the respective A. F. of L. International Unions. In fact, these policies, inclusive of their aim of weakening or destroying corresponding C.I.O. unions, threaten the development of the entire labor and progressive movement of our nation and constitute also an interference with the development of the labor and people's movements and governments in countries abroad.

The 65th convention of the A. F. of L. reached a new low in the reactionary character of its decisions. This was particularly true because it wanted to keep in step with the world-dominating aspirations of American imperialism and to play a similar role on the field of labor. The convention was completely dominated by the reactionary clique of Green, Lewis, Hutcheson, Woll and Dubinsky. Not a single breath of progressive policy freshened the atmosphere of the entire convention.

The convention's reactionary decisions can be summarized as follows:

1) The workers, specifically the C.I.O., were condemned for fighting for an 18½¢ an hour increase in wages, and it was pointed out that the A. F. of L. had settled for less. A perspective was adopted that emphasized no struggle for better conditions but only speed-up in production.

2) Unqualified support was given to the reactionary Byrnes-Vandenberg foreign policy.

3) It was decided to challenge the World Federation of Trade Unions internationally by sending the A. F. of L.'s own "labor advisors" to all countries of Europe and the Far East, as part of the American military establishment; to open up offices in these countries; and to strive to create dissension and lay the base for an A. F. of L.—controlled reactionary splinter international. This policy was also further developed for Latin

America, into which dollars and manpower are already being poured in an effort to disrupt the C.T.A.L. (Latin American Federation of Labor) and to create a rival Confederation.

4) The tactic was adopted of trying to split the C.I.O. on the false issue of Communism. No longer attacking the entire C.I.O., attention was centered on dividing the C.I.O. This was dramatized in William Green's speech when he said:

... The Communist-controlled unions of the C.I.O. have returned to the dangerous game of baiting and undermining America. Again they are accusing the U.S. of imperialism. This situation is becoming increasingly insupportable to loyal American workers. They refuse to remain identified with any organization whose first allegiance is to a foreign nation. In my opinion, the disintegration of the C.I.O. will gain momentum during the coming months. I predict that some of the more firmly established affiliates . . . will break away from it and come knocking at our door.

Mr. Green, like his associates in the N.A.M., saw their predictions go up in smoke in Atlantic City as far as the C.I.O. Convention was concerned.

5) Lastly, this A. F. of L. convention gave support, in one way or another, to everything reactionary in America. While not daring to support the Republicans openly, these same top leaders in their home states gave them indirect support in many cases.

In estimating this convention and the A. F. of L. generally today, we should take note of a new development within its leadership. The decisive forces are no longer the old, fuzzy, one-foot-in-the-grave, reactionary types such as Mahon, Doherty, Duffy, and Berry, or even William Green. It is the alert reactionaries like Lewis, Hutcheson, Dubinsky, Meany, and Woll who are moving into the commanding, policy-making positions. It is this combination of capitalist-minded and shrewd Social-Democratic bureaucrats that has to be defeated in the A. F. of L. leadership today.

Does the reactionary position of the A. F. of L. convention and its top leaders correspond to the feelings of the rank-and-file of the A. F. of L.? There is substantial evidence to the contrary.

We have seen instance after instance of the determination of the A. F. of L. workers to struggle for improved conditions, higher wages, and democratic unionism. We have seen evidence of this among the longshoremen and teamsters right here in New York. We can see what is going on among the studio workers in California. We have witnessed the school teachers' strikes in St. Paul and recently in Connecticut. We have seen the strikes in Stamford, Rochester and Lancaster, and again today in Oakland, where the struggles developed into city-wide general strikes.

We can definitely conclude that it will be impossible for the A. F. of L.

top leaders to carry through their policy of emphasizing increased production and discouraging wage increases. The A. F. of L. workers, like all others, will fight for higher wages regardless of any convention decisions, as we already see. On another issue, we have seen how a rank and file that still unfortunately has explicit confidence in its union President on economic questions continues to reject his political recommendation to support the Republicans. I refer to the coal miners of West Virginia.

In various A. F. of L. International or State Conventions, which are by no means the best yardsticks for measuring the sentiments of the rank and file, we have seen their feelings breaking through, however. This was seen in the New York state convention, where the top leaders were prevented from endorsing Dewey. It was expressed in the Illinois state convention where a resolution was adopted calling for a return to the Roosevelt foreign policy. It was seen in Ohio where the convention went on record to support the "Bread for our Brothers" Campaign of the Committee for Affiliation to the W.F.T.U. It was reflected in the Bakers' and Painters' International Conventions, where substantial minorities were recorded favoring A. F. of L. affiliation to the W.F.T.U. It was directly responsible for the Painters' International Board sustaining the support by the N. Y. Painters Council of our National Committee member, Louis Weinstock. In the hotel and

restaurant workers union, the organized pressure of the membership has called a halt to the efforts to suspend the New York organization.

I do not want to exaggerate these points—each small in itself. They do, however, indicate the thinking among the rank and file and the lower-rank A. F. of L. leaders. Wherever there are progressive forces, they can stimulate the moods of the workers into finding expression in concrete actions, and bring the rank and file into conflict with the harmful policies of the Greens, Lewises, Hutchesons, and Dubinskys.

To understand the situation in the A. F. of L. today, it must be remembered that the A. F. of L. no longer embraces exclusively, or mainly, the aristocracy of labor, as in the past. It is made up, in large part, of production, construction, and service workers. It has in its ranks large sections of the basic workers of the U. S. Actually, because of the policies of the leadership, many A. F. of L. workers are worse off economically than the C.I.O. workers. Only a section of the A. F. of L. workers received the 18½¢ increase that the big C.I.O. unions received. As a matter of fact, while there is a big gap between the reactionary policies of the A. F. of L. Executive Council, and the generally progressive policies of the C.I.O. Executive Board, there is little difference in the thinking and aspirations of the average A. F. of L. and C.I.O. rank-and-file member.

*The decisive fact is that the activity*

*and even militancy of the rank and file and of local unions of the A. F. of L. develops only when it is given leadership—when the issues are made clear and discussed by the members themselves and when adequate forms of expression are found for the membership.*

The absence of a tremendous upsurge of activity within the A. F. of L., which could take issue with the reactionary policies of the A. F. of L. leadership, rests squarely upon the rank-and-file members and, first of all, upon the progressive-minded members, including the Communists. From top to bottom in our Party there is no real appreciation of the decisive importance of political-educational activity and recruiting among workers in industries unionized by the A. F. of L. It is important to remember that the A. F. of L. is not only larger than the C.I.O. nationally, but that it is also larger in such cities as Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, San Francisco, and Cleveland.

There are hundreds of thousands of progressive-minded members in the A. F. of L., including thousands of Communists. They should concern themselves with the problems and tasks of their great trade union federation. What is at stake here is the future of the entire labor movement, both A. F. of L. and C.I.O. Unfortunately, too many of these progressive-minded members are not active in their unions. Some have not attended their local union meetings for

years. They have capitulated to the completely wrong idea that the A. F. of L. membership is reactionary and hopeless. Unfortunately, this erroneous attitude applies even to some Communists.

I would like to cite a story I heard in an Eastern city a few weeks ago, that could probably be multiplied a hundred times. A Communist in the transportation industry, a paid-up member of his union, had not attended his local union meeting for a considerable period of time. Who was this comrade? A member of a Party Section Committee, doing good work as Literature Agent. Neither he nor his Section Committee had thought it important for this Section leader to be released from his other meetings so as to be able to be among the workers of his trade and attend union meetings. One night recently, however, when he knew that negotiations for a new contract were to come up, he got excused from his Section Committee meeting and attended his local union meeting. That local, like others in his industry, is not distinguished for its democratic practices. The usual procedure in the local was to leave everything to the officers. This member, however, made a proposal that a committee should be elected, with representation from each shop, to assist the officers in their negotiations. The officers were probably stunned. The rank and file applauded. A committee was elected, including this comrade, who had absented himself from meetings for

over three years and did not have much claim to belong to such a committee. I can assure you that this member was not the most able or effective trade unionist, but a mere gesture of leadership on his part served as a spark to ignite membership sentiment.

In addition to the facts already established with reference to the size, character and composition of the A. F. of L. membership, and its militancy when given leadership, it is important to note that the A. F. of L. today, in contrast with the situation after the First World War, is holding both its membership and its wartime gains and is actually continuing to grow. There are definite limitations to the ability of the bureaucracy to carry through in life its reactionary policies and perspectives. A most important obstacle to the A. F. of L. bureaucracy is the C.I.O. and its progressive and militant activities. But of importance also is the growing militancy of the millions of A. F. of L. members themselves.

The progressive forces in the A. F. of L. must find those issues that will arouse and activate the largest segment of the membership and even sections of the leadership. The single broadest and most effective issue which needs to be spelled out in each industry is an economic program to meet the attacks of the employers. This should include, among other points that will have to be worked out industry by industry:



a) The struggle for substantial wage increases.

b) A guaranteed annual wage.

c) Reduction in the work week without reduction in pay.

d) A health and security program at the employers' expense.

Next is the need for cultivating the pro-Roosevelt sentiments that are still deeply rooted in the ranks of the A. F. of L. members and sections of the leadership. Around the Roosevelt-Wallace program of peace and Big Three Unity and the 2nd Bill of Economic Rights, it is possible for the progressives to find the medium for rallying a substantial section of the membership, and even sections of the leadership that have not yet spoken out openly against the policies of the reactionary top leaders.

Then there is the need of raising the demand and fighting for a policy of united action of all labor. This will not be easy, since we know full well the determination of some A. F. of L. Internationals to smash the C.I.O. unions. That is made clear by the activities of the teamsters among the cannery workers in California, by what is now going on against the brewery workers in Pennsylvania and on the Pacific Coast, as well as by the ultimatum of the A. F. of L. in the maritime industry. But without joint action, all labor, both A. F. of L. and C.I.O., is in jeopardy. The present attacks that are being planned, after the temporary setback of the miners, open up opportunities on a local and national scale to achieve

such joint action within the next weeks. That it is not impossible to achieve joint action of the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. was seen in one of the most difficult situations, namely, among the longshoremen and the S.I.U. in the maritime industry in New York City and on the East Coast. This should emphasize the possibility of joint action in support of common demands, as well as in solidarity strike actions.

The situation is not ripe today for organic unity of the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. Nevertheless, there is an indispensable urgency, both nationally and locally, for joint or united action of the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and the Railroad Brotherhoods, precisely in connection with events like those confronting us today. The letter of Philip Murray on behalf of the C.I.O. to the A. F. of L. and the Railroad unions demonstrated real understanding of the burning need for united action. It is furthermore borne out by the parallel actions already taken. Both the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. spoke out in denunciation of the government injunction against the miners. Only last month both Murray and Green signed a common statement for world disarmament and "atomic peace." In the previous months both the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. agreed to support a permanent F.E.P.C., retention of rent control, federal aid to education, opposition to the Case Bill, support of the 65¢ minimum wage standard, and federal aid to education and public housing.



While such united action is an urgent necessity, it is also clear that C.I.O. unions cannot allow themselves to be chopped to pieces by any A. F. of L. International that shortsightedly resorts to such tactics. However, real broad progressive movements within the A. F. of L. will be important in helping to prevent this.

In the case of the maritime industry, it is essential to strengthen the collaboration of the C.I.O. unions through the Committee for Maritime Unity and to serve notice that they will not tolerate any A. F. of L. raiding. However, this could well be accompanied by an appeal to the A. F. of L. unions, and particularly to the rank-and-file seamen and longshoremen, pointing out that jurisdictional struggles play into the hands of the shipowners, and that the A. F. of L. rank and file should demand united action—not struggle against each other. There is a great need for joint action in the maritime industry between all A. F. of L. and C.I.O. unions precisely in preparation for the expiration of contracts on January 16.

The case of the teachers may be cited too. The great majority are unorganized. In many cities the A. F. of L. has organized only a mere handful. Yet, for a C.I.O. union to try to organize in this field would merely start a jurisdictional dispute between two equally small groups, and, as a result, turn the unorganized teachers against all unions. Today,

when there is such discontent among teachers everywhere, the first job is to take the initiative in developing a wage struggle for the teachers and all salaried workers. In the course of such a struggle, the teachers will judge which union is making the fight for them and draw their own conclusions.

The fact that a central issue at the recent A. F. of L. Convention was the question of how the A. F. of L. can hinder or smash the growing W.F.T.U., emphasizes that all progressive forces among the A. F. of L. membership and leadership should concern themselves with counteracting this activity and favoring international labor unity and solidarity. Considerable minority sentiment is demonstrated even within the A. F. of L. for its affiliation to the W.F.T.U., and for some time there has existed a committee and a monthly paper, sponsored by a committee of A. F. of L. members, expressing such ideas.

The A. F. of L. today is diametrically opposed to the W.F.T.U. and it is working hand in glove with the State Department, serving as a center of disruption in world trade union affairs. This new line of attack against world labor is camouflaged by the so-called "International Bill of Rights," concocted by Woll and Dubinsky. The real purposes of this bill are: (1) to counterpose a program to the democratic constitution of the W.F.T.U.; (2) to supply a lever with which to criticize the trade

unions of all liberated nations on the grounds that they are not "free"; (3) to go so far as to launch a campaign for an economic boycott against all nations in which industries have been nationalized, on the ground that labor in such countries works under slave conditions.

While the main response for united action will come from among the rank and file and from local union leaders, there is also the need and possibility, side by side with this, of precisely such developments, as are occurring today, helping to influence the crystallization of a new relationship of forces among sections of the A. F. of L. leadership. It is wrong to think that the entire leadership of over 100 International Unions and scores of State and City bodies belong to the reactionary clique of Green, Lewis, Hutcheson, Woll and Dubinsky. A full and correct utilization of the Roosevelt-Wallace program is the medium to develop a broad current among the A. F. of L. members that will separate itself from the Convention's reactionary decisions.

Furthermore, in the period ahead, when the trade unions can expect the most intense attacks upon workers' conditions and wage standards, and when undoubtedly all of labor will be confronted with vicious anti-labor legislation in the new Congress and the various state legislatures, it is not impossible to visualize a definite crack in the Executive Council and among other International officers of

the A. F. of L. unions. Such a development would undoubtedly be predicated upon a struggle, however limited, against such anti-labor legislation and for a program of wage increases and improved conditions. All progressives should be ready to join with any force in the A. F. of L., top or bottom, on a united front basis, in common struggle against the developing offensive of the employers and reactionary government bodies.

#### NEGRO WORKERS

Of the approximately 850,000 Negro workers organized in trade unions, at least 400,000 are in the A. F. of L. In fact, the A. F. of L. claims more than that number, but it is believed to be close to the figure indicated. Of great significance, however, is the fact that the A. F. of L. in the South has more Negro members than the C.I.O. Furthermore, in the present Southern Organizing Drive, it is generally agreed that the A. F. of L. is making much more rapid headway than the C.I.O. in organizing Southern Negro workers. There are exceptions to this, as in the case of the good work of the F.T.A., the furniture workers, and other progressive-led unions in the South.

One reason for this is that the A. F. of L. has a policy of making a direct appeal to the Southern Negro worker. The C.I.O. Southern Organizing Committee does not do this in a satisfactory way. If all of the C.I.O. unions were in the Southern Organizing Drive, there could be a different

situation. In a very well-prepared pamphlet entitled *Pie in the Sky*, the A. F. of L. follows a clever line of argument. It is prepared in such a way as to attempt to refute its own guilt of white chauvinism. However, what does it emphasize?

1. The A. F. of L. was formed by an immigrant Jew (Gompers), and the A. F. of L. was named by a Negro delegate from Pittsburgh at its first convention.

2. The A. F. of L. is against all discrimination. Of course, it says, there are isolated cases of discrimination in the A. F. of L., but then it proves that these also occur in the C.I.O. and, therefore, the A. F. of L. is *no worse* than the C.I.O., according to its argumentation.

3. It undertakes to prove, naturally by stretching the facts, that the A. F. of L. guarantees equal pay for equal work and favors upgrading by comparing the wage-standards of the Negro workers in the A. F. of L. with those of Negro workers in other unions.

4. It cites the facts that the Gulf longshoremen are Negro-led and that when the employers refused to negotiate with this Negro leadership, there was a successful strike that forced the employers to meet with them around the table.

5. It lists the Negro officials in the A. F. of L., nationally as well as in the South.

It is clear that much of this is skillful propaganda and does not correspond to the facts. But, at the same

time, no one should close his eyes to things which are facts, such as:

1. The A. F. of L. is organizing more Negro workers in the South than the C.I.O.

2. There are thousands of A. F. of L.-unionized Negro longshoremen, railroad workers, laborers, and tobacco and service workers, in the South.

The Negro worker can and should be an important factor in influencing the thinking and the actions of important sections of the A. F. of L. in the South along progressive lines. And who should be better equipped than the Communists to be an integral part of these A. F. of L. Negro workers and thus contribute to the political and economic activities of the A. F. of L. unions?

Throughout the entire country, there are tens of thousands of Negro workers organized in the Pullman Porters Union and the Dining Car Employees Section of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union. These workers occupy the special status of pace setters in almost every Negro community for most of the other Negro trade unionists. In the case of the Pullman Porters Union, its local and national leaders are influential leaders of the entire Negro community. Yet in this Pullman Porters Union the Social-Democrats, Randolph and Webster, have exclusive leadership and there are few progressive forces, including Communists, active among these workers.

The other aspect of this entire

problem, of course, is the struggle everywhere for equal pay for equal work for Negro workers, for upgrading and the right to hold skilled jobs, for full equality within the union and election to leading posts. This is a struggle to be conducted in both the North and South, and it will vary from union to union; but it is permanently on the order of the day, in both A. F. of L. and C.I.O. unions.

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The Communists cannot hope to go forward with the entire working class, and fulfill their vanguard role, without immediately improving and extending in the most decisive manner their political-educational work and recruiting activities amongst those industrial workers from whom they are today isolated. The Communist Party must contest the ideo-

logical approach and proposals of the Republican, Democratic and Socialist Parties, as well as of their various spokesmen.

It is clear that, in the course of this political-educational work, Communists will be found shoulder to shoulder with their brother trade unionists in the everyday economic and wage struggles; in the struggle for independent labor political action leading to a new party alignment in 1948; and in the effort to achieve unity of action of the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and the R.R. unions around these common issues. In the course of these big struggles, the Communist Party must work hard to extend the circulation of its press, to recruit new members, and to educate the most advanced of the workers in its socialist program.

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# CONCLUSIONS FROM THE N.Y. ELECTIONS

By ROBERT THOMPSON

NEW YORK STATE contributed its full share to the National Republican victory. It gave Dewey a 680,000 majority and a victory for his State slate. It contributed six G.O.P. Congressmen and one Senator to Congress.

There can be no doubt that the *chief result* of the elections in New York, as well as nationally, is that Wall Street reaction has greatly strengthened its political position. I think Gene Dennis in his report has given a very sound analysis of the general factors contributing to the Republican victory, and of the consequences flowing from this victory.

In one important aspect, however, the results of the elections in New York differ in some measure from the national pattern generally. Within the framework of extensive Republican Party gains and Democratic Party losses, *the direct candidates and parties of the labor-progressive forces succeeded in maintaining their positions and in securing limited advances.*

The battle in which the labor-progressive forces had their greatest stake took place in the 18th Congressional District in New York City. Here the Republican Party used every resource at its disposal to defeat Vito Marcantonio. In this attempt it was joined by an unprecedented combination of forces within the

Democratic Party, and was openly and fully supported by the Liberal Party, the Catholic hierarchy, the New York City Central Trades and Labor Council (A. F. of L.) and the entire capitalist press, save for *PM*. The labor-progressive forces recognized and accepted the drive to defeat Marcantonio as the supreme challenge by reaction to their strength in the political field. Marcantonio was re-elected in what, I believe, was the toughest Congressional fight ever to take place in the United States.

In the extremely important 22nd Congressional District contest, the Republican Party made a determined bid to defeat the militant and progressive Negro Congressman, Adam Clayton Powell. Powell was re-elected by a vote 50 per cent greater than that given his opponent. Together with this gain an additional Negro Assemblyman was elected from Harlem.

From Brooklyn, the first labor Senator in New York history, Kenneth Sherbell, was elected to the State Senate. The A.L.P. retained its one position in the State Assembly through the election of Kaplan, thereby compensating for the severe loss incurred in Leo Isaacson's defeat in the Bronx.

On a state scale, the A.L.P. maintained its strength with a vote of 431,000 for Lehman and 427,000 for Mead.

Our Party was able to win and successfully defend its position on the ballot and doubled its 1942 vote, achieving a State total of 95,715 votes.

*Why didn't the direct candidates and parties of the labor-progressive forces in New York go down to defeat, together with the Democratic Party? The main reason this did not happen is that, while aggressively fighting the Dewey program and ticket, they were able substantially to differentiate themselves in the minds of the voters from the Truman Administration and the Democratic Party.*

The period of the primaries, from June into August, was decisive in the establishing of a substantial degree of political independence by the labor-progressive forces in New York. A bold and aggressive policy was pursued in the Republican and Democratic primaries. In addition to progressive incumbents a number of additional progressive candidates were projected into the major party primaries.

In the primaries in New York City, candidates directly identified with the labor-progressive forces won in the following contests:

In the Democratic Party: For Congress, Marcantonio, Powell, and O'Toole. For State Assembly, Kaplan.

In the Republican Party: For Congress, Longhi. For State Senator, Sherbell. For State Assembly, Kaplan.

Obviously, these victories in the

major party primaries were a pre-condition for what successes were achieved in the final elections in defending the political positions held by the labor-progressive forces and in securing limited advances.

Equally important is the fact that the policy pursued in the primaries served to open up a struggle on policy issues involving the enrolled voters of the Republican and Democratic parties. A few figures will illustrate this.

If we take seven of the main primary contests in the Democratic Party involving Marcantonio, Powell, Connolly, O'Toole, Kaplan, Isaacson, and Rooney, we find that each of these candidates was fully identified with the A.L.P., and, with the partial exception of O'Toole, campaigned on programs sharply critical of the Truman Administration. In these seven contests, there were 105,082 Democratic votes cast. Of this total, the seven candidates running on anti-Truman programs received a total of 45,952 votes, or slightly more than 4 out of every 10 votes cast.

In the Republican primaries, roughly similar results were achieved. In five of the Republican primaries involving Marcantonio, Powell, Isaacson, Jackson, and Addison, in which outright anti-Dewey campaigns were conducted, a total of 14,582 Republican votes were cast. Of this total, the 5 candidates mentioned received a total of 5,617 Republican votes, or slightly less than 4 out of 10.

Despite several serious mistakes in

specific situations—which I will deal with in a few minutes—the aggressive and bold policy pursued in the Republican and Democratic primaries was fully correct. It resulted in securing a number of vantage points for the labor-progressive forces in the final elections. It made the period of the primaries a high point of the entire campaign in the bringing of policy issues sharply to the voters and in the establishing of a substantial degree of political independence on the part of the labor-progressive forces.

Congressman Marcantonio's brilliant campaign was the model campaign in New York, and perhaps in the nation. Here the independent position of the labor-progressive forces achieved most effective expression. At the same time a firm policy of coalition with Democratic Party and other forces was pursued. Marcantonio campaigned on a Roosevelt platform, brought the issues to the people, met Red-baiting and all other attacks in an offensive, not a defensive, manner. This general type of campaign, while not on the same level, was also decisive in the victory of Powell, Sherbell, and Kaplan.

On a state scale, the A.L.P. benefited greatly from the measure of progress it made in establishing a sharply critical position toward the Truman Administration and in identifying itself with the Roosevelt-Wallace program.

Our Party, and its candidates, while centering chief fire against the Dewey program and ticket, main-

tained a position of sharply attacking the Farley forces in the Democratic Party, the Truman Administration, and the numerous capitulations to reaction of the Democratic candidates. Our Party, as the basis of its coalition policy, projected in May of this year the tactic of an anti-Dewey electoral front. This anti-Dewey electoral front envisaged an electoral alliance between two distinct groupings. The first of these consisted of the loose coalition of labor-progressive forces which found organizational expression in such bodies as the A.L.P., P.A.C., I.C.C., C.P., etc. The second consisted of the Democratic Party, and was based on the outlook of preventing the Farley forces from dominating the State Democratic Party convention.

In connection with the tactic of an anti-Dewey electoral front, the importance and meaning of our Party's independent election campaign was not fully understood in some sections of our Party. The significance of our Party's independent campaign this year consisted, in the first place, in that it began to solve the problem of our Party's relation to the labor-progressive coalition in a basically different way than in the Browder period. Under Browder the approach to the solution of this problem was the doing away with the independent electoral activity of our Party. The approach this year was that of intensifying the independent electoral activity of our Party. There was a great deal of opposition inside and outside



of our Party to the putting forward of two Party candidates in the elections, on the ground that this would lessen the effectiveness of our Party's coalition policy. After the elections, it is difficult to find any one who will question the fact that our Party's independent campaign, and especially Ben's splendid campaign, made an important contribution to the labor-progressive and anti-Dewey camp. Our Party's campaign was by no means a necessary evil, but was on the contrary a basic and important aspect of its over-all coalition electoral policy.

The tactic of an anti-Dewey electoral front represented an important departure from the tactic of the labor-Democratic Party coalition which operated in the past. It called for much greater independence and initiative on the part of the labor-progressive forces. Such an anti-Dewey electoral front was in actual fact, despite many shortcomings and weaknesses, achieved during the campaign. This tactic was the basis for the contributions which our Party made to re-orientating the broader labor-progressive forces in the direction of stiffening the attitudes of these forces toward the Democratic Party and achieving a higher degree of political independence. The tactic of the anti-Dewey electoral alliance, as projected and carried out by the New York District, represented a basically correct application of the national policies of our Party to the concrete political situation in New York.

*The primary reason, then, why the direct candidates and parties of the labor-progressive forces in New York did not go down to defeat with the Democratic Party, is because they did succeed in substantially differentiating themselves in the minds of the voters from the Truman Administration and the Democratic Party.*

The political situation in New York differs from all other States in one basic respect: in New York there is in existence a third Party, the A.L.P. The A.L.P. suffers from many shortcomings and weaknesses, including, in the first place, the fact that it is very decidedly a minority party. Yet with all these weaknesses and shortcomings, it is a popular mass party, separate and distinct from the Republican and Democratic parties. It is a party in which the labor movement has a determining influence. It is a party of the people, not of the monopolies.

*The existence of the A.L.P. is the cardinal reason why the outcome of the elections in New York departs in some measure, and in a manner favorable to labor, from the national pattern. Without the A.L.P., the results of the elections in New York would have been quite different. They would have been substantially more unfavorable to labor and substantially more favorable to Wall Street reaction. The existence of a third party in which labor plays a determining part was decisive in securing the victories of direct candidates of the labor-progressive forces,*

in securing the election of several middle-of-the-road local Democrats, in preventing the Farley forces from winning a dominant position in the Democratic Party and in creating the political atmosphere and alignments which made possible an anti-Dewey electoral front in the elections.

*Perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn from the results of the elections in New York is that these results substantiate our Party's national policy of working resolutely to bring into being a new people's party nationally.* While the A.L.P. is by no means a model for what a national people's party must be, it nevertheless demonstrates that a third party does not lead to an isolation and lessening of labor's influence, but on the contrary, is a most valuable and indispensable condition for effectively exerting labor's influence on the political field.

#### WEAKNESSES IN THE CAMPAIGN

Could the labor-progressive forces in New York have made a better showing in the elections? Could they have made a number of really important gains? Could they have appreciably cut into the Republican Party gains and substantially changed the over-all results of the election in New York?

The answer is—*Yes*. The results of the elections could and would have been substantially different, had full advantage been taken of favorable possibilities and had there not

been many serious weaknesses in the work of the labor-progressive forces, including the Communists.

The most serious weaknesses of the labor-progressive forces come under the general heading of failure to develop sufficiently their independent political initiative and activity.

The A.L.P. labored under very great difficulties because it had no independent state-wide candidates in the field. If in addition to supporting the top of the Democratic state ticket, it had placed one or two of its own candidates in the field for lesser offices, its entire campaign would have been greatly strengthened and made more effective. This is especially true because neither the Republican nor the Democratic Party put forward a single Negro candidate for state office. Under these circumstances, the failure of the A.L.P. to put forward a Negro candidate for state office is evidence of a serious lack of understanding of the need for according the Negro people political recognition commensurate with their role and contributions, and of a lack of understanding of the policies which the labor-progressive forces must pursue if their alliance with the Negro people is to be consolidated and extended. If the labor-progressive forces did not suffer as much as they might have from this mistake, they have the Communist Party, and the splendid campaign of Ben Davis, to thank for it.

Neither the A.L.P., nor any other sector of the labor-progressive forces,

developed serious and sustained activity and mass struggles around issues during the campaign. This was perhaps the most fundamental weakness of the campaign. The boat was missed, and masses were not involved in struggle on issues such as housing and O.P.A. Greater initiative and militancy on the part of our Party could have substantially affected this situation. I think the failure of our Party in New York adequately to fulfill its responsibilities in initiating and helping to develop struggles on issues was its most serious weakness in the campaign.

The A.L.P. conducted a narrow campaign. There was little in the way of determined efforts to use the campaign to enlist broader support and participation from the A. F. of L. and the Railroad Brotherhoods. The fact that, at the State A. F. of L. Convention, the Federation leadership was blocked in its effort to secure an endorsement of Dewey, together with the fact that a number of up-State Central Trades Councils endorsed Lehman and Mead, shows that such possibilities existed. Further, the campaign was not developed in such a way that the A.L.P. began to emerge as a people's party with a program for the farmers, small businessmen, and middle class.

There are some who draw wrong conclusions from the narrow character of the A.L.P.'s campaign. They point to this basic weakness and then say: "See, the A.L.P. is not broad, and the reason for this is that too

much stress is put on independent political activity." The direct opposite is the case. The main reason the A.L.P. has not as yet seriously tackled the problem of becoming a mass people's party is that it has not yet decisively broken with the concept that its role is that of a "labor arm of the Democratic Party," and a bargaining agent for labor, and for the C.I.O. in particular, with the main mission of wringing concessions on program and candidates from the major parties. To the degree that the A.L.P. breaks decisively with such concepts will it begin to tackle the problems of competing with the Republican and Democratic parties for the leadership of the farmers and middle class, of basically consolidating and extending its alliance with the Negro people, and of broadening itself into a party representative of all three wings of the trade union movement. In the course of broadening and building itself, the A.L.P. must fight every step of the way to retain and extend every coalition relationship and tie which it has with progressive forces in the Democratic as well as the Republican Party.

It can be said with assurance that, if these weaknesses in the work of the labor-progressive forces had not existed, the outcome of the elections in New York would have been substantially different. The most important difference is that the A.L.P. would have received a vote in the neighborhood of at least 700,000 instead of 430,000.

How would this have changed the outcome of the election? Among other things, such an increase of from two to three hundred thousand A.L.P. votes would have provided the margin necessary to defeat Ives and elect Lehman; to elect a number of additional labor-progressive candidates such as Longhi and Addison; would have cancelled out Republican gains in at least a few contests in which mildly conservative Democratic candidates were involved; and would most certainly have been a very effective boost in the direction of the basic political realignment our country needs.

Our Party in New York, in addition to its share of responsibility for general labor-progressive weaknesses already noted, contributed a few special mistakes of its own to the campaign.

The most serious mistake in a specific situation occurred in the 17th Assembly District in Brooklyn. There a Negro woman, Maude Richardson, running on the Republican ticket, lost the election to a white Democrat by fewer than 50 votes, while another Negro progressive, Ada Jackson, received 4,000 votes on the A.L.P. line. In this community of Bedford-Stuyvesant the Negro people have been fighting for years to elect a Negro to public office.

The basic mistake in this situation, for which our Party bears a major responsibility, was that of not fighting to unify the Negro people and white progressives behind Maude

Richardson before the primaries, once it became clear that she was irrevocably in the race. This mistake had its source in three things:

1. An unfounded and false estimate on the part of labor-progressive forces that because Maude Richardson was not identified with them she therefore had no considerable following among the Negro people.

2. A narrow approach of setting arbitrary Left standards to which a Negro candidate had to measure up in this situation before being considered acceptable.

3. Most important, a basic underestimation of the over-riding necessity in this area of securing recognition and representation for the Negro people through the election of a Negro to office.

It is of extreme importance for our Party to learn fully the lessons of the mistake in the 17th Assembly District, since similar tendencies have affected our work from time to time in other Negro communities.

A very serious weakness in the work of the New York District was corrected, at least in large part, with the help of the direct intervention and assistance of our National Board. This weakness consisted of a marked one-sidedness in the fight of the New York leadership to carry through its correct election policy, a one-sidedness expressed in a failure to estimate correctly the extent to which harmful "Left"-sectarian moods existed in the Party, and to develop

an effective struggle to overcome such moods.

This assistance took the form of a meeting of the National Board on June 24, at which the following resolution was adopted:

1. The National Board endorses the main political and tactical policies elaborated by the New York Party leadership for the 1946 elections in New York, as expressed in Comrade Thompson's report, and considers these to be based on our Party's National policy.

2. The National Board considers that the New York State leadership has not been sufficiently alert to the need for combatting certain dangerous sectarian moods and tendencies, and instructs the New York leadership to combat more vigorously such tendencies.

On the basis of this resolution, the State Committee and the State Bureau undertook seriously to improve their work in this respect and did in fact substantially improve it. Undoubtedly, the fact that it had not done this earlier had a harmful effect on the degree of clarity and mobilization of our Party membership in the campaign. This found expression in some sections of the Party in feeling that we should abandon the tactic of an anti-Dewey electoral front and place a full Party slate in the field.

Undoubtedly among the most serious of our Party's weaknesses during the campaign in New York is the fact that no really significant results were achieved in Party building and press circulation. Intensive election

activity is, of course, the very opposite of an explanation for failures in these two fields. That this is so is highlighted by the fact that without a really well organized and determined effort, 600 members were recruited in the last month of the campaign, more than double the number of recruits secured in any earlier month of the campaign.

Two reasons stand out in my mind for our bad work in Party building, including press circulation.

First, the lack of a sufficiently determined and resolute orientation toward Party building on the part of the leadership, and a consequent failure to enthuse our membership with a Party building spirit.

Second, the failure of our Party to come forward sufficiently before the people as an initiator and organizer of struggle on issues such as housing and prices.

#### FOLLOWING THE ELECTION STRUGGLE

The results of the election campaign point to four main lines along which the activity of the labor-progressive forces in New York must develop on the political field in the period ahead.

1. Mass activity and struggle on economic, legislative, and other issues, must be developed on an altogether new scale.

Two issues of crucial importance are now before the people of New York in the form of a direct continuation of the election struggle. The

first of these is the despicable effort of the Dewey Administration to manufacture a political frame-up against Marcantonio out of the Scott-origgio case. The House Elections Committee has now joined hands with Dewey in this attempt to rob the people of the 18th Congressional District, and the labor-progressive forces nationally, of their victory in the elections. An aroused labor movement, and a powerful people's protest, is the key and indispensable necessity for beating back this most dangerous attack of reaction.

The second of these issues, representing a direct continuation of the election struggle, is the attack which is being prepared in the next session of the State Legislature in New York on the election laws which provide for candidates being nominated and run on more than one party ticket. This attack is directly aimed at undermining the effectiveness of the A.L.P. Again, nothing less than a great ground swell of protest from labor and the people will be sufficient to defeat this attack.

Similarly, mass activities and struggles must be developed around rent control, the five-cent fare, taxation and other issues, as they are shaping up in city councils and the State and National Legislature. The struggle against the Byrnes-Vandenberg foreign policy around such issues as the withdrawal of troops from China and the severing of relations with Franco, must be developed in a more sustained and organized way.

In all such mass activities, the extent of parallel and joint activity that can be secured between the three wings of the trade union movement will be decisive.

2. The A.L.P. should begin to play more fully the role of the mass independent people's party in New York.

To do this, it must come forward as the powerful instrument of all three wings of the trade union movement on every issue which is in their common interest; as the champion of every special demand of the Negro people; and as the party which fights for the interests of the farmers and middle class against Wall Street. It should utilize fully its base in the trade unions to build up a vastly more extensive network of election district clubs and organizations.

3. The labor-progressive forces must do everything within their power to help arouse and organize the anti-Dewey forces within the Republican Party and the anti-Farley forces within the Democratic Party. The perspective is one of increasing differentiation and struggle within both of these parties of monopoly capital. Undoubtedly, in this connection, the major party primaries in 1947 will be of decisive importance.

4. Our Party must be built, and its press circulation extended, on the basis of a firm policy of concentration directed towards the major industries and key unions. A firm policy of working to secure the election of more Communist representa-

tives must be pursued. As I understand it, this question of Party building is the heart of the political line being presented by this Plenum, and in Gene's report. Undoubtedly, this question will be fully developed under Winston's report, and I only want to underscore its importance at this time.

I have spent my time under this point in probably what is pretty much an election post-mortem. I don't think that it is bad that a few of us should do this. We have just been through a very big political battle and we should weigh—and, if necessary, debate—the value and correctness of tactics and policies that were pursued. We have the job of

“milking dry” the experiences of this election campaign for conclusions that will be of value for 1948 and for the period up till 1948.

I think Comrade Dennis' report has done the main job in drawing these conclusions. On the question of perspective, I think his report has charted very clearly a firm and balanced policy for our Party, one that, if carried through, will pay big dividends to the American working class and people. I think the experiences of the campaign in New York, and the conclusions I have tried to draw from it in my remarks, fit very well into the framework of the political and tactical line presented in the main Plenum report.



# THE DENVER ELECTIONS

By ARTHUR BARY

COLORADO IS THE ONLY STATE in which a reactionary governor was replaced by a liberal, and Denver is one of the very few Congressional districts in which a progressive candidate won over an incumbent reactionary in the recent elections.

The factors that made this victory possible are therefore worth examining, particularly since the victory climaxed a fairly continuous development of independent political activity in Colorado, beginning with a special Congressional election early in 1944, which extended uninterruptedly through the 1944 national election campaign. The lessons of this activity formed the basis for our work this year.

In our opinion, this continuity is of special importance because we were able to test and prove in experience this year the thoughts about political action that we had developed on the basis of our 1944 work.

## THE NATURE OF THE COALITION

The factors that we want to examine here in some detail are: first, the nature of the coalition that supported and elected John Carroll to Congress from Denver; second, the precinct organization that was developed in support of Carroll; third, the issues in the campaign and the

method of bringing them before the people; and, fourth, the Party's role.

Carroll's main organizational support came from organized labor (all branches); from the Rocky Mountain Council for Social Action, an N.C.-P.A.C. affiliate; and from the Young Democrat Club of Denver. He also had the support of the head of the National Farmers Union, which is an important factor in Denver; of a number of important veterans' leaders, including unofficial support of the A.V.C.; of Negro and Spanish-speaking organizations; and of about 50 per cent of the Democratic Party Precinct Committeemen and women. In the last days of the campaign, the Mayor's organization gave him more than nominal support. However, he never received any help from the Denver Democratic Party Central Committee (which is a different organization from the Mayor's city hall machine, although the Mayor has strong influence in the Denver Democratic Party Central Committee).

Carroll was nominated as a result of a series of meetings of representatives of the Railroad Brotherhoods, the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O., together with the Rocky Mountain Council, the Young Democrats, the A.V.C., and a few women's and Negro representatives. These meetings were called together by James Patton

of the National Farmers Union specifically to select a candidate upon whom all liberal forces in the city could agree.

Once Carroll was selected, these meetings were discontinued until after the election. Each group carried on its own activity, coordinated at the top by Carroll, with the help of Patton and of Charles Graham, Democratic candidate in 1944, and at the precinct level by agreement between Carroll headquarters and the Rocky Mountain Council (R.M.C.).

Carroll faced a primary campaign against the nominee of the Red-baiting leadership in the Democratic Party; after the primary, additional regular Democratic Party workers came to his support, and the city hall machine joined in a few days before the election.

In a sense this can be described as a coalition; but it was a loose one indeed, offering the utmost latitude for activity and the least accountability to any center by each of the various groups supporting Carroll.

It never became possible to form a working coalition to plan the campaign, or to carry on precinct activity; the so-called coalition was really a number of groups moving parallel with one another toward the same end. The broad activity which this made possible was the important factor in the election.

#### THE PRECINCT ORGANIZATION

Each labor group worked pri-

marily among its own members and friends. The Rocky Mountain Council set up and directed the precinct organizations, except in a few election districts handled by Carroll directly.

Thus, on the precinct level there was central organization and direction, independent of the Democratic Party, of Carroll (though working closely with him), and of the labor unions.

A structure parallel to the Democratic Party's apparatus was set up by the Rocky Mountain Council, with a chairman for each election district who directed the chairmen of the precincts in his district.

Many of these chairmen were carried over from the 1944 campaign, in which a somewhat similar structure had been developed by the C.I.O.-P.A.C. However, because the structure this year was not under the C.I.O.-P.A.C. and because new forces came forward, many more people were involved this time than in 1944.

Furthermore, work in 1944 was confused by a lack of clear independence of activity from the Democratic Party, and by considerations involved in working with the various elements in the C.I.O. This year the approach developed was one of independence from both, but of working with, and even utilizing elements from both, who were willing to work for Carroll under the general leadership of one Council for Social Action.

No effort was made to persuade the Railroad Brotherhoods, the A. F.

of L. and the C.I.O. not to set up their own precinct structure. But, as in 1944, the labor organizations proved unable to do this. It had been concluded, on the basis of 1944 experience, that the labor organizations, as constituted at present, were incapable of setting up an independent political apparatus. Sometimes incompetent leadership, sometimes their inner struggles, and almost always their concentration on economic matters alone, placed any such new field of effort beyond their reach at this stage. In general, a large number of union members were invited, but they functioned as R.M.C., not union, representatives.

The A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. seemed completely muscle-bound throughout the campaign, but the Railroad Brotherhoods carried on vigorous and effective work, employing two people at full-time to work with their membership in the campaign.

Also, the question of the relation to the Democratic Party was more correctly judged this year. In 1944 the idea had been accepted uncritically of unity with the Democratic Party to the extent of pooling the forces of the progressives with theirs in the precincts wherever possible. Of course, this was only possible by conceding that the Democratic Party Captain or Precinct Committeeman should have direction of all forces in his area. The result was that the progressive forces were not used properly, if at all, in a majority of cases.

This year, the progressives maintained their independence throughout the campaign. The only Democratic Committeemen who had direction of the progressive forces in the precinct were progressive people who had been elected Democratic Committeemen.

The fact that Carroll faced a primary contest against the regular Democratic Party organization was of real value in building an independent organization.

The maintenance of their independent apparatus by the progressives was important, not only in permitting full use of the independent workers, but also in making it much more difficult for old-line Democratic Party hacks to sell out the progressives. The danger of a sell-out was present, and only by the closest check on the Democratic Committeemen and by the sternest threats of reprisals were the progressives able to avoid the stab in the back that Graham got in 1944.

The facts about the nature of the work carried on in the precincts are worth bringing to your attention.

1. Prime attention was paid to getting the progressive and Democratic voters registered and to the polls; that is, the same kind of activity was not carried on in working-class as in middle-class areas. More forces were consciously thrown into working-class and national group areas. The first objective was to get all voters in these areas registered and to the polls. Only when it was clear that

there was sufficient organization to make this possible, were the forces that could be moved about permitted to work in middle-class areas, even of their own residence. Complete coverage of heavily Republican areas was not attempted. In those areas, work was limited to contacting the members of labor unions and the registered Democrats. If the progressive election workers in those areas had time to spare above this, they campaigned in working-class districts.

In other words, the slogan "A big vote is necessarily a good vote" was not mechanically followed. While this slogan has a certain over-all validity, it is sometimes misleading as a guide to concrete action.

The progressives, as usual, had inadequate forces and funds to do a complete job. Therefore, what was available was placed where it would do the most good. No time or money was wasted in radio appeals and leaflets urging people in general to register and vote.

Registration leaflets were distributed only in Democratic or doubtful areas and were pointed to get those people to register who responded to the issues as we saw them.

Neither was time nor money wasted in joining with the Junior Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, etc., in general registration appeals and propaganda, although we did not oppose such action in principle.

This year it was calculated, from a study of precinct registration sta-

tistics, that two-thirds of the 12,000 people who registered on precinct registration day in October were progressive votes. In 1944, about 60 per cent of the 33,000 who registered on that day were Republican votes. In 1944, a relatively good deal of time and money was expended on general registration ballyhoo. This year the progressives saved their breath for places where it would do the progressive forces most good.

2. The R.M.C.'s precinct organization was pointed toward precinct registration and election days. In 1944, the progressive forces had not yet had the experience to see the decisive importance of work on these days. No amount of canvassing or agitation in the precinct could have carried us through, had such work not been linked up with organizing for these days.

All canvassing was pointed toward developing lists of names of unregistered people who could be taken to register on registration day, and toward getting necessary information so that they could be followed up effectively on election day.

It was figured that at least ten workers were needed for each precinct in heavy Democratic areas from 3 to 7 P.M. on election day—four cars with drivers and four additional workers, one with each driver, to go with the cars. In addition, one worker was needed outside the polls, and one watcher inside, all day.

The watcher inside checked off names of voters as they came in and

coordinated his work with the drivers; and the worker outside the polls carried sample ballots and a minimum of other literature. They each had lists of registered voters in their assigned blocks, and regularly checked in with the watcher to mark on their lists the names of people who had voted.

In Republican precincts in which the progressives had a chairman, one or two workers (one car driver and sometimes one watcher) working all day, were all that were spared.

#### CLARIFICATION OF ISSUES

The major general issues developed during the campaign related to inflation, a fair break for minorities, veterans' rights and housing, and foreign policy. The labor legislation issue was of great importance in labor organizations, especially among the Railroad Brotherhoods.

In general, the Rocky Mountain Council tried to tie in its leaflets, etc., on issues with the work of its precinct organization. Little time was put in on general work with regard to issues that did not link up with and strengthen the precinct work.

Carroll took a generally correct stand on issues but a cautious one, until the last week of the campaign. Then he began to speak out effectively on each of these issues. It was important to Carroll's victory that he disassociate himself from the Truman Administration.

A major part in developing incumbent Republican Congressman Gil-

lespie's relation to these issues, and building up an informed group of people, was played by the newspaper *Challenge*.

The effect of this paper's message each week in bringing facts and reasoning on issues to several thousand Denver citizens is hard to estimate, but it was undoubtedly of great value.

*Challenge* was, for example, the only paper to publish the facts about Gillespie's own companies' overcharging and the resulting O.P.A. suits against him. *Challenge* was also the only medium for publishing and exposing Gillespie's assertions about the "inferiority" of minority peoples.

Experience showed that, together with continuing independent precinct organization, a regular people's newspaper is needed to maintain a continuing awareness of issues, and a knowledge of the facts, on the part of the people.

#### THE ROLE OF THE PARTY

The Party worked within the organizations supporting Carroll to ensure concentration on his election, and also ran its own campaign in a way calculated to strengthen the total progressive vote, and thus the Carroll vote.

The Party constantly stressed that the main political task in the election was the defeat of Gillespie, and Party forces worked through their unions and the Rocky Mountain Council to aid in this task.

The Party also ran two candidates

—Robert Paul, a Negro comrade, for the State Senate, and Robert Trujillo, a Spanish-speaking comrade, for the State House of Representatives. Neither the Republicans nor the Democrats nominated a Negro for the Senate or one of the Spanish-speaking people for the House.

The Party candidates were therefore particularly able to clarify the issues for the Negro people and the Spanish-speaking people and to rally them to turn out to vote.

Our candidates' campaign was also directed toward exposing the reactionary State Administration and Gillespie's record.

The Party candidates received over twice as many votes as the Party had ever secured in Denver—2,500 votes. The correctness of our work is shown, not only in the total vote, but also in the fact that these votes, although heavier in Spanish-speaking and Negro areas, came from every section of the city

#### NEXT STEPS

Every one who took part in the work of the progressive forces during the election campaign feels the need to go ahead on two main fronts:

1. To continue to bring closer together labor and the independent groups that supported Carroll. This will be a slow process. A great mistake would be made in pushing for any immediate formal coalition, but informal meetings and agreements can be worked for and used as a

basis for strengthening this grouping into a real working coalition. Representation of Spanish-speaking and a few additional elements—liberal church spokesmen, for example—is needed in these meetings.

2. To continue to strengthen the Rocky Mountain Council precinct organization. This need introduces problems of organizational work, a new emphasis on the development of issues, etc.

Without attempting to summarize, we shall conclude by bringing out two or three ideas we have about the projection of the political action struggles for the next year or two, as related to the development of the independent political activity of labor and the outlook for a third party.

First, even though it appears that, in Colorado at least, the struggle will revolve around the drive for progressive Democratic Party candidates and program, the struggle must be carried on by an organization independent of the Democratic Party.

For example, where the progressive forces elect Democratic Party Committeemen, these committeemen should be associated with a progressive center. We found that a number of the progressives elected in 1944 as Democratic Committeemen had become typical Democratic Committeemen and were therefore immobilized in this election. However, where these committeemen were retained within a progressive organization, the Rocky Mountain Council,

they were more effective as Democratic Committeemen than they would have been otherwise.

Secondly, the labor organizations in Denver are now in no way ready to set up an effective political structure. Perhaps this will change as economic conditions sharpen. Labor there, in the next year or two, will become involved in a real independent political organization, not by creation of this organization by the trade unions, it would appear, but by involvement of labor people in broader organizations supported by,

yet independent of, the trade unions.

Finally, there are many new forces, working-class, national groups, and intellectuals, who are anxious for political activity and expression. We need only open the door for them, a door which the existing organizations—the Democratic Party and the trade unions in particular—are keeping shut. The main contribution made in this election campaign in Colorado, we feel, was in establishing forms through which these new forces will be able to express themselves.



# ON THE QUESTION OF NEGRO SELF-DETERMINATION

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

I DID NOT EXPECT to speak in this discussion but inasmuch as an announcement was made that I was to speak I will say a few words extemporaneously.

One thing that must strike all of us here is the high level of this discussion on the question of self-determination. I have participated in many discussions in our Party, but I do not recall any that was on a higher theoretical plane than this. Such a discussion, it is hardly necessary for me to add, could not have taken place under the Browder regime. Then we would have had a ukase from above and God help him who challenged it. Now, however, we have had a free, open and comradely discussion. It has been such that it will cause us all to leave this meeting with a better understanding and a greater unity in the Party on this question than we have ever had.

Some of the comrades who have spoken against the resolution would probably not make the same speech now if they were to speak again. The discussion goes to show that Comrade Davis' report and the resolution before us have stood up.

What have we been saying in this discussion? We have been re-examining the whole theoretical basis of our approach to the Negro question, not

simply the application of the self-determination slogan. During the course of this discussion, we have clearly established three or four fundamental propositions regarding the mooted question of self-determination in the Black Belt of the South.

First, that the Negro people in the Black Belt are a nation, that they possess the essential qualities of nationhood, as elaborated in the works of that great expert on the national question, Stalin. This lays a firm basis for the self-determination slogan. So I will not deal further with this basic matter of whether or not the Negroes in the Black Belt are a nation.

Secondly, we have made an important contribution in answering a question that has puzzled our comrades for the past twenty years, namely, why, if the Negro people are a nation, don't they put forth the slogan of self-determination. Fundamentally, the reason is that they are essentially a young nation, a developing nation. A nation has to be at a certain stage of political growth before it advances the demand for self-determination. As a number of comrades have pointed out, all over the world there are to be found people who do not advance the slogan of self-determination. We have had one illustration from India. I might

add further that there are some 18 distinct peoples in India, with very few of them advancing the slogan of self-determination. Nevertheless, the Communist Party of India does advance this slogan in their name.

Nations are a matter of growth, of course. Our own nation took some 150 years at least before it had developed a real national consciousness, until it advanced the slogan of self-determination, backing it up to the point of separation from Great Britain. Of course, the Negro people in the United States are developing under far more complicated and difficult circumstances than did the 13 American colonies.

It has been pointed out in this general connection (and I think this throws much light on the question) that some of the nations of India are advancing their self-determination slogan under the guise of religion. It is also true that in certain circumstances national slogans are put out by other peoples in primitive or in distorted forms, for example, as racial slogans. One of the characteristics of the American Negro people has been that they, too, have put out what are basically national slogans very largely in a racial sense. Hence we have to look more closely than we have in the past at these racial slogans and at the conceptions the Negro people have with regard to race and racial oppression. Behind these prevalent concepts of race are actually developing national concepts. I think the discussion has proved that

it is no decisive sign that a people does not constitute a nation if it does not advance clear-cut slogans for self-determination.

Thirdly, our discussion has shed considerable light on another very elementary matter, bearing directly upon the central question of whether or not the Negro people in the Black Belt are a nation, and on the slogan of self-determination. Some comrades in the discussion have said that the Negro people are not only not now a nation but also that they are not moving in the direction of becoming a nation. To help clear up this matter we have pretty clearly shown in our discussion what the orientation, or general course of development of the Negro people, really is. This orientation is developing along two general lines:

First, the Negro people most distinctly feel themselves to be Americans in the fullest sense of the word and they are fighting resolutely for full participation in all phases of American life on the basis of complete economic, political and social equality. The second main trend in the orientation of the Negro people is to unify their own ranks on a national basis and to develop more and more systematically a definite national consciousness. One of the most important developments in this respect has to do with the change that has already been noted by some comrades, namely, that the Negro people no longer speak of themselves so much as a race, but rather as a

people. When the Negro people begin to designate themselves as a people rather than as a race, they are already taking a long stride in the direction of national consciousness.

There are many other signs, of course, of the developing national consciousness of the American Negro people. They are building up many movements that are definitely of a national liberation character. They are also closely identifying themselves with the national liberation struggles of colonial peoples all over the world. They feel a kinship with these movements. Very significant in this general respect was the demand made by the National Negro Congress to the United Nations to take up the grievances of the Negro people in this country. This demand, I understand, was very favorably received by the Negro masses and intellectuals. Such an act was essentially that of a nation appealing over the head of the American government to the peoples of the world for justice, much as almost any other colonial or oppressed nation might do.

Let me sum up on this general point: that is, the orientation of the Negro people is first, toward full participation and full equality in American life, and second, toward the development of their national consciousness. Comrade Ed Strong made a good contribution when he stressed the basic harmony between these two streams of courses of development. One of the major difficulties we have had to contend with has been a ten-

dency of our opponents to pose one of these currents to the other, thus making it appear that the demand for self-determination slogans is in contradiction to the proposition that Negroes fight for the fullest rights as Americans. Comrade Strong knocked this nonsense on the head when he pointed out so forcefully that it is impossible for the Negro people to achieve their full economic, political, and social equality as Americans unless they organize as a nation, unless they forward the slogan of self-determination for the Black Belt of the South.

The foregoing three major points in our discussion, relating to the reaffirmation of the basis of Negro nationhood, the clarification of the question of the Negro people not putting forward the self-determination slogan, and the analysis of the orientation of the Negro people, lay a solid basis for our theoretical development and use of the slogan of self-determination. From which we may conclude that the soundness of our Negro resolution has been proved and its adoption by our National Committee justified.

Even with these things said, we have, however, by no means exhausted the matter. There are numerous aspects of this general problem to which we have to pay more attention in the immediate future than we have done in this discussion. First, there is the question of the whole concept and role of race, which I have already alluded to. In past

years the tendency in the Party was to brush this entire matter of race aside, on the assumption that it was some sort of distortion that had no significance except as an obstacle to the Negro people's acquiring a national consciousness. But the question cannot be evaded so easily. I am sure that if you ask the Negro people on what grounds they are oppressed, 99 out of 100 will give you a "racial" answer, in spite of the fact, as I have indicated, that they are beginning to develop, more and more, a national consciousness.

We know, of course, that science has shattered the "race theory." Nevertheless the term "race," loosely used, has served as a powerful instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie for the oppression of the Negro people, and we have got to trace much more carefully than we have in the past this relation of the concept of race to the whole question of the brutal oppression of the Negro people.

Secondly, there was another point that was not very well developed in our discussion, and it is one to which we also have to pay much more attention if we are to grasp the essence of this complex question and to make headway. I refer to the relation of the national minority of Negroes in the North to the main body of the Negro nation in the South. The connection between these two sections of the Negro people is a very close and a very vital one. We must pay very close attention to the material

inter-relationships of one with the other, not the least because the leadership of the Negro people as a whole is developing chiefly among the national minority in the North. This is not to ignore the very striking new development that the Negro people in the South are courageously beginning to develop real leadership right in the heart of the Black Belt itself.

Another important question we shall have to study much more than we have done in this session is the concrete relations of the Negro nation to the American nation as a whole. In the past, when we first developed the self-determination slogan, we also brushed this question aside very cavalierly. There was a tendency to plump for a Negro Republic. But the situation is much more complicated than that. Talk of an American Negro Republic has no foundation in present-day reality. The relation of two or more peoples to each other within broader states is an extremely complicated one and assumes many forms in different nations. We have to become very familiar with these forms, especially as we begin to popularize the slogan of self-determination among the Negro people. I, for one, have no doubt that before very long, when we find the way of advancing the slogan more skillfully, the Negro people will begin to accept it. Especially I felt this when I listened to our brilliant young Negro Marxists discuss this question at this National Committee meeting.

The last point I want to touch upon is the practical use of the self-determination slogan in the national liberation struggle of the Negro people. We did not deal with this practical question sufficiently in our discussion. What we have done mostly has been to establish the validity of the slogan. The practical use we are going to make of the slogan in the struggle is going to take much more study than we have given it here. There are two things I am sure of: first, that this slogan is not going to be put on the shelf as one comrade indicated; and second, that we are not going to go to the other sectarian extreme of using it to propagandize for the setting up of a Negro Republic. We have got to find the proper methods of using this slogan. In my opinion, our use of it will be pretty

much in an educational sense in the beginning. But experience will teach us in this matter. Slogans are often two-edged swords. They can do great harm if wrongly applied, and this slogan can only be of value to us if we use it properly.

Now, comrades, this is all I have to say on the question of self-determination. In this meeting, although we have not discussed all phases of the question, we have certainly discussed the fundamental ones. This is very important. In my opinion we have established a correct and basic attitude toward the general question during the course of the discussion. We should, therefore, on the basis of our discussion, endorse Comrade Ben Davis' report and our draft resolution.

# SUMMARY REMARKS ON THE DISCUSSION OF THE RESOLUTION ON NEGRO RIGHTS

By BENJAMIN J. DAVIS, JR.

## COMRADES:

I think it would be somewhat anti-climactic to review all the points developed in the course of the discussion. The remarks of Comrade Foster practically eliminate the need for a summary. I would like, however, to make a few brief observations.

I think that this is the most important political discussion in our Party since the July, 1945, convention. It is the highlight of our Plenum, and, I am certain, contributed to the political understanding of all of us. Its importance rests in the fact that the Negro question, the question of the Negro people as an oppressed nation, of their national liberation, is in the center of all the problems today facing the American working class and its allies. It is also in the center of all questions in respect to the final, socialist emancipation of the American working class.

The report which I made was the basis of perhaps the richest political discussion I have ever experienced; it was deepened considerably by the contributions of all of the comrades. All of us have, I am sure, a certain inner glow of pride in being a Communist, and especially because of the

tremendous contributions made in the discussion by younger Negro comrades — Comrades Jackson, Strong, Berry, and others. The fact that these three comrades are veterans should impress something else on our minds, namely, that the almost one million Negro veterans who have come back are going to go a long way in developing further the sense of internationalism of the whole Negro people. I also think that the contributions of other comrades—Comrades Bittelman, Weiss, and Allen—certainly were outstanding in the discussion. I believe that some of the comrades who spoke would probably make a somewhat different report or remarks if they spoke now. But they also contributed to the discussion because they have shown that in many respects we have not said everything that there is to be said on some of the questions raised. As Comrade Foster pointed out, there are still questions to be studied and worked out and related more intimately to the actual trends and developments which are taking place among the Negro people generally.

It is my opinion that the adoption of this resolution, the position which

it maintains, and the report which is based upon it, is going to mark the formal and final defeat of the remnants of Browder's revisionism and bourgeois liberalism on the Negro question—a question in which revisionism did so much damage to our Party's work among the Negro people, and also to our Party's work generally.

As has been pointed out, it is interesting to note how democratic has been the discussion which has taken place on the right to self-determination. No such full and open discussion on this question, or on any other question, took place during the period when Bowder was the General Secretary of our Party.

But we have had a year of discussion, with all of its imperfections, and the opportunity during this discussion to draw upon the rich creativeness of our Party comrades, a very important feature of the action that I am confident we will take on the resolution.

It is my belief that the National Committee here tonight is in a position to settle this question in so far as the basic approach of our Party is concerned. The discussion we have had for the last year, the reports and documents circulated at least to our Party leadership in the states and districts, the document sent out by the Negro Commission, the series of articles in *Political Affairs*, and the discussion on the report and the resolution at this Plenum, fully equip us to make a decision on this ques-

tion now. We must so act now, in my opinion, because in the present period, which is going to become more critical as sharp class battles develop, we cannot continue to work without a Marxist-Leninist perspective on this question, for this affects the form and content of our work. It is the basis for the formulation of our program for the Negro people on the day-to-day issues. In order to formulate this program we must know where we are going, what slogans and demands correspond to the level of the work at any given moment. All our Negro work has suffered in the past period, notwithstanding certain progress which we have made, because we did not have a firm grasp of the Marxist-Leninist compass provided by the resolution which is presented here tonight for your action.

I think that the position taken in the resolution is a sound position, which, when it is properly mastered and fought for within the ranks of our Party and carried to the masses of the Negro people and the white workers, will be accepted by them.

As I see it, the main arguments made here in opposition to it have not been sound. The discussion has demonstrated that, and I do not propose to go into them because I think they have been well answered by many of the comrades who have spoken on the question.

The position on self-determination as put forward in the resolution avoids two main dangers. First, it



does not state, in a sectarian manner, as we did in the past, what the form and the exact manner would be in which this self-determination would be realized or exercised. This sectarian position or attitude or approach to self-determination is adequately and correctly avoided in the resolution before you.

Secondly, I think that the resolution avoids tailing after events, after history, as some comrades place it, and does not leave everything to take care of itself in the future, which in my opinion was the main Right danger developed in the discussion by those comrades who were opposed to the adoption of the slogan.

It should also be added that this resolution shows the basic relationship of self-determination, that is, the concept of the Negro question as a national question, to all of the current struggles for Negro rights as we face them today.

I think there is something new in the resolution, in the approach which has been argued for by those comrades who support it. That something new is the formulation of this position on the basis of what is taking place in the struggles of the Negro people, and the trends among them, the objective conditions, the actual status of the Negro people, the facts of life existing outside us. That approach is definitely reflected in the resolution, and that was the approach of the report. It offers a basis, not only for a correct theoretical position with regard to the Negro ques-

tion, but also, in my opinion, a correct approach and theoretical stand with regard to all questions on which we have formulated basic policy and fundamental positions.

It is interesting to note that in the opposing arguments that have been raised, the question of the land, the guarantees that the Negro people will acquire the land rightfully theirs, and the highest form of those guarantees, of self-government, were questions which were not answered, with no adequate substitute offered, with no alternative presented which was realizable, which could offer to the Negro people a real guarantee that they will be able to determine their destiny and own the land which constitutes the heart and seat of their nationhood.

I also believe that some of the positions argued for certainly tend in the direction of the Social-Democratic position, that is, the view of the Negro question in this country as a narrow class question. The resolution correctly rejects any such position, and I think the discussion shows that there must be a fight for correct thinking on the Negro question as a national question and not just as a narrow class question.

I think, further, that the resolution will be one of the heaviest blows against white chauvinism delivered by our Party since our July, 1945, convention, prior to which time, because of Browderism, white chauvinism developed and was not sufficiently combatted, and our Party lost

much of its sensitivity on this question.

As to many questions and doubts which have been expressed that the slogan of self-determination will be harmful to Negro and white unity, I think these are doubtings due to the fear of really tackling the white workers, showing them their common interests with the Negro workers, and of supporting this slogan in the South. I feel that it will help us to cleanse our own ranks mercilessly of white chauvinism which manifests itself in so many different ways—the question of mobilizing our Party as a whole and the white workers as a whole in struggles for Negro rights; the question of promoting Negro leadership, in line with the example set by our National Committee at its last session with the election of Comrade Winston as Administrative Secretary of the Party; and the question of fraternal and social relations among our Negro and white comrades, of actually making our Negro comrades feel much more at home in our Party.

The resolution will also help us in revitalizing the Marxist position of our Party that the white comrades take the initiative on all questions relating to white chauvinism, to education on questions of struggles, in public discussions, writings, and in actual leadership of day-to-day work. This will immeasurably strengthen the fight of our Negro comrades against Negro nationalism.

As we apply in practice this reso-

lution on self-determination, one of the results will be certain immediate applications with respect to the fight for Negro rights. I think, for example, that we have not grasped sufficiently the epochal symbol of the struggle of the Negro people in the South, in Mississippi in particular, in the "Oust Bilbo" movement. We should realize that this "Oust Bilbo" movement represents a tremendous lever for further developing the national consciousness of the Negro people, for characterizing it and accelerating it as a real national liberation struggle of the Negro people.

The heroism being shown by the Negroes in the rendering of testimony against Bilbo has not been fully seen by our Party and therefore we have not transmitted its full significance to the American working class, the labor movement, and the allies of the labor movement. What the Negroes are demonstrating is in keeping with the highest traditions of the American working class, of the struggle for democracy in our country.

I would propose that our Plenum find the way to express publicly its solidarity with the Negro people in Mississippi in this anti-Bilbo movement and really to estimate it in line with the new spirit and the new concept which our Party, I am confident, will put forward as a result of the action to be taken here tonight. This movement to oust Bilbo, it seems to me, is a movement which we already see challenging the "white supremacy" advocates who dominate the

governments in the deep South, developing further the self-unification of the Negro people and their unity with their white allies, and also showing very distinctly their desire for self-government and for representative government in the deep South.

I think that we can regain the moral

strength on this question which was sapped to such a large extent by Browder's revisionism. This resolution gives us an instrument which we can immediately use in all of our work, within the Party as well as without. I therefore move, comrades, that the National Committee adopt this resolution.

# TOWARD A PARTY OF 100,000\*

By HENRY WINSTON

WE APPROACH THE YEAR 1947 with a deep concern over the serious menace represented by the G.O.P. electoral victory to our people and our nation. The convening of the new Congress in January presents further dangers for the labor and progressive movement. The G.O.P. program is an assault on progressive legislation, democratic liberties, peace, and security. But the forces and the program do exist which, if united and applied, can prevent reaction from winning new victories, lead to the defeat of its entire program, and lay the basis for new advances for the labor and progressive movement.

Whether labor, and the people generally, will be successful in forging the needed united action will depend in large measure upon the role and the activities of our Party. Events are moving with seven-league boots—masses are in motion—and the supreme task before us is to make a qualitative improvement in Communist leadership of the crucial struggles already taking shape in the country. Our Party, immensely strengthened as a result of its resolute struggle against Browder's revisionism, approaches the New Year better able to perform its vanguard role.

## A YEAR OF STRUGGLE

It is more than a year since our Party reconstituted itself as a Marxist-Leninist organization, as a party

of action and struggle. The Party transformed its organization in the course of active participation in the various struggles which developed during the past year. Our membership and Party clubs made no small contribution to the strike struggles of the workers in the first wave of postwar strikes. Our Communist trade unionists set examples of great militancy and tireless work in all strike activities, manning the picket lines and raising the morale of the workers. Community clubs mobilized support in the form of finances, food, and entertainment, and, in some cases, reinforced the picket lines with people from the communities. When the whole price structure was threatened by the abandonment of O.P.A. controls, Party clubs helped in the collection of petitions, resolutions, and telegrams addressed to the President, and organized hundreds of street corner and indoor meetings (which created the conditions for mass resistance to the elimination of price control.) On the peace front, while our work was not uniformly developed, many clubs organized meetings, and Party members advanced resolutions in many shops and organizations, especially around the issues of China and Spain. Our Party clubs were particularly active in the

\* Full text of a report delivered at the December 3-5 meeting of the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

development of mass movements, delegations, and meetings against the lynch-terror assaults upon the Negro people.

Typical of some of the work of the Party were its activities during the election campaign. As we have already discussed, this was a complicated election struggle. The Party had the task, not only of contributing to the building of a firm electoral alliance of labor and the progressive forces to defeat reactionary candidates, not only of clarifying the main issues in the elections, but simultaneously of playing an independent role in support of its own program and candidates in the elections.

We can say that, in the main, the Party was able, in one of the most complicated elections of recent times, to speak out forcefully against the G.O.P. menace, to bring the issues before the masses, and to rally support for its own candidates.

Indicative of the Party activities in these elections are the following facts: New York State issued 2,200,000 leaflets (not including leaflets issued by the clubs, sections, and counties); Ohio, 550,000; California, 1,250,000; New Jersey, 382,000; Indiana, 85,000; and Connecticut, 70,000. We are not in possession of figures from all the districts; but these are sufficient to indicate that our Party spoke to millions during the election period. Leaflets were used as one of the main media through which the message of our Party on all questions was brought to the people.

Some districts, such as Philadelphia,

Pittsburgh, and New Jersey, ordered special editions of *The Worker*: New Jersey, 100,000 in two separate editions of 50,000 each; Philadelphia, 50,000; and Pittsburgh, 10,000.

In addition, the Party distributed 500,000 copies of *The Menace of Red-Baiting*, the Madison Square Garden speech by Comrade Dennis. It held hundreds of shop-gate and street corner meetings, symposia, and forums. Ohio alone organized 175 house-gatherings. These activities were conducted simultaneously with actions by Party clubs in defense of labor's rights, for housing, against lynch terror, for civil liberties, and in support of the strike struggles of the workers. If the reported shift in votes to the Republican Party that took place among the workers and the Negro people did not assume more serious proportions, much credit for this is due to the activities of the Communist Party.

Among broad sections of the workers and the people generally there is a growing respect for our Party. This was expressed by the vote received by Communist candidates. In New York State, our candidates, Ben Davis and Bob Thompson, running for Attorney-General and Comptroller, received 95,000 votes, William Harrison, Communist candidate for the State Senate in Massachusetts, received 3200 votes, or 23% of the votes cast in the ward. In Minnesota, Communist candidate Robert Kelly, running for State Senator, received 30% of the votes cast. Archie Brown, Communist candidate for Governor

in California, received at least 25,000 write-in votes.

### THE RED-BAITING ATTACK

The Party's defense of the needs of the people and the response to the Party's program have struck fear into the hearts of the men of the trusts. In direct proportion to the Party's struggle for the burning needs of the people, the spokesmen of Big Business fiercely strive to discredit these efforts and to isolate the Party by raising the false alarm of the "menace of Communism," by unleashing an anti-Communist campaign.

There is an all-out effort at present on the part of the N.A.M., the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, the Catholic hierarchy, the G.O.P. high command, the K.K.K., the Social-Democrats, and the Executive Council of the A. F. of L., to blackmail the American people into support of reaction's program. They are trying to disunite the people with the aid of Hitler's weapon of anti-Communism. The frenzy of the ruling circles indicates that they are very sensitive to the moods of the masses. They are conscious of the growing discontent which exists among the workers, the Negro people, and the middle classes. Their aim is to behead the struggle of the people. Nor is their campaign limited to ideological assaults; they have started on witchhunting and are determined to pass repressive legislation.

But the masses are looking for new leadership through which they can promote their fight for economic and

social security. The attack against our Party is primarily due to the fact that its Marxist program coincides with the fundamental interests of labor, the farmers, and the Negro people. The fact is that increasing tens of thousands, despite the Red-baiting drive of Big Business, are provoked to honest thought about our Party. They want to know more about Communism.

What are some of the lessons that we can draw from the Party's recent activities and these intensified Red-baiting assaults? Our experiences during the election campaign show that our Party received a warm response when it reached the workers in the communities, shops, and industries. Red-baiting was ineffective where the Party was on the job and workers were able to identify their most pressing problems with the activities of the Party, with the work of individual Communists. Wherever Communists and non-Communists participated in joint struggles in the communities, unions, and shops, Red-baiting was beaten back or defeated.

Among the many typical examples proving this fact is the following incident. In a certain shop, the reactionary Right-wing elements were determined to pass a Red-baiting resolution. The discussion on the floor at the union meeting indicated that this resolution would be passed, since no voice had been raised in defense of the Communists. One of the union leaders, a Communist, but not widely known as such by the workers, recognized the danger to the union in

such a resolution, and decided to identify himself publicly with the Party at that meeting. The result: a change in the relationship of forces was secured and the resolution defeated. Since then, this comrade now finds himself surrounded by many workers eligible for the Party.

The vote received by Communist candidates is a confirmation that among large masses Red-baiting has not been effective. But what must be emphasized here is that Red-baiting can and does cause serious damage precisely where the Party is non-existent or is still too weak to challenge the Red-baiters boldly. Among those strata of the population, in those industries, plants, and communities where our Party has conducted little or no activity, reaction gains a foothold. That is why the central problem this Plenum must consider is how to overcome the present numerical weakness of the Party—a problem which is central to the fulfillment of the tasks projected in the report by Comrade Dennis.

#### THE PARTY MUST BE BUILT

If we are to contribute to the new struggles that are developing, if we are to assist in the development of the coalition movement among the workers in the shops and communities, we must find the path to the building of a stronger Communist Party. This remains our key task. Only by constantly grappling with this problem can we at the same time advance toward the solution of our many existing unresolved organiza-

tional problems, especially those found at the base of our Party, in the clubs.

During the past year we recruited some 20,000 members, an increase of 38 per cent. Only a few districts grew more rapidly than this. In the South we increased our membership by 150 per cent; all Southern districts doubled their membership, while the new district of the Carolinas quadrupled its membership. Of the main concentration districts only Michigan and California maintained a tempo of recruiting throughout the year which brought their growth above the national average of 38 per cent. Districts like New York, Eastern and Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois showed growth, in the past year, which was substantial but below the national average. Some districts, like Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Connecticut, have been stagnant for a number of years, their rate of growth remaining at an extremely low level during 1946.

In general, our recruiting shows that we have not learned how to build the Party as a year-round task. The bulk of the recruits came through the recruiting drive and not from day-to-day in the process of consistent mass struggles. This was most glaringly expressed during the election campaign, a period when we spoke to millions and had direct contact with tens of thousands, and yet recruited only in the hundreds. Had we made only the merest beginning in mastering the art of systematic, day-to-day recruiting in the



midst of expanding mass work, we could have readily doubled our recruiting results.

What should be our perspective in Party building for the coming year?

There is a growing consciousness on the part of our leadership and the membership as a whole of the need to build our Party more extensively during 1947. However, many comrades, while recognizing the need for building the Party, view the many unresolved organizational problems in the clubs—the low attendance, the small number of activists, the low dues payments, the difficulties in gearing the clubs to mass activities and struggles—as insurmountable obstacles to Party growth. They maintain that before any real concerted drive to build the Party can be carried through we must first go through a period of “consolidation.” They urge a “breathing spell” during which time the clubs can be stabilized.

This approach to the problem of “consolidation” is an “inner concept,” out of touch with living reality. If accepted as a guide to our work, it would result in stagnation and retrogression, and not in the extension of the mass base of our Party. It would have the effect of narrowing down the Party to a small core of activists, concerned only with administrative problems, at a moment when history compels us to assume greater responsibility and to multiply manifold our mass work and our numerical strength. The consolidation of Party clubs is possible only when

the clubs are engaged in mass activities designed to solve the economic and social problems of the masses. The consolidation of the Party clubs is possible only when the clubs continue to grow in numbers by constantly attracting new people into their ranks. We must learn how to solve serious political and organizational problems as part of expanding mass work, as part of intensified Party building.

#### A GOAL THAT MUST BE REACHED

Our Party, for years, has placed before itself the objective of reaching a membership of 100,000. This now becomes a goal that we must realize, a goal we can reach, by the time we celebrate the 28th Anniversary of our Party in September, 1947. But, if we are to achieve such an objective, we must raise our sights to a higher level than at any other time in the history of our Party.

What does such a perspective mean for the districts? It means that a district like New York, now approaching its 30,000 mark, must become a Party of at least 40,000. California, which for many years has striven for a membership of 10,000, can now surpass that mark and become a Party of 12-14,000 members. In Illinois we must begin to fight for a Party of 10,000 members. Serious thought should be given in Michigan and Ohio to building the Party to 5,000, while Pittsburgh must consider in a new way the building of a mass base in that city as a condition for moving

onward. In the South it is necessary speedily to achieve the already established perspective of 5,000 members. To become a Party of 100,000 also requires expansion into new territories—building new districts in virgin territory, building new sections and clubs in hundreds of industrial and rural towns, where we are still small or non-existent.

In projecting the perspective of a Party of 100,000 we do not propose to recruit by picking up members here and there at random. First of all, and above all, we must recruit among workers in the basic industries, and from among the Negro people, the veterans, and the women.

#### OUR CONCENTRATION POLICY

The Emergency National Convention of July, 1945, placed before the Party as its main task that of strengthening the working-class base of our Party, first of all in the key industries. Upon the completion of registration at the beginning of 1946, some 38 per cent of our Party members were employed in industry, but only 19 per cent in basic industry. Party members in the A. F. of L. constituted only 15 per cent of our total membership. We, therefore, once again renewed the system of work which must characterize our organizational practices, the application of a consistent policy of concentration. Industries, and key plants within these industries, and key industrial towns and cities were selected for concentration. Forces and funds were

allocated. We were determined to re-establish firm connections with the workers in the basic industries.

During the recruiting drive, most districts held fast to the policy of industrial concentration, with the result that 57 per cent of all recruits were industrial workers, with 33 per cent coming from the basic industries, and with the recruits from the A. F. of L. amounting to 14 per cent of the total.

As a result of a firm concentration policy, the industrial workers on Party rolls increased from 38 per cent at the beginning of 1946 to 43 per cent at the end of the drive, and basic industrial workers increased from 19 per cent to 22 per cent.

While this is an advance, it is clearly far below the possibilities and the needs of the present moment. Thus, the problem posed by our 1945 Convention, of changing the industrial composition of our Party still remains our major problem today.

Before this Plenum is the task of establishing guarantees to speed the process of shifting the base of the Party from community clubs to shop and industrial clubs in general, and to workers, above all basic industrial workers, in particular. The National Board has taken some steps in the direction of fulfilling this task. Organizers have been sent into the main concentration sections. Coordinated leadership is now provided in a number of industries. But sending in capable organizers, or improving the leadership of our work in important industries, is merely the first step. To

make a real change requires the development of many-sided activities to which every department of the Party must be geared, to which the attention of the entire Party must be turned.

It becomes absolutely essential that we review the application of our concentration policy during the past year, extending this policy further in order to guarantee results, especially in those industries where we remain weak and in the concentration cities where we have just taken the first steps to build the Party. We must not veer for one moment from our concentration objectives. That is why we need the following:

1. To review our forces in the concentration industries and to strengthen the leading core where necessary.

2. Once again to set up definite objectives for building the Party, to be achieved in each plant, industry, and town of concentration, and to be checked on a monthly basis.

3. To organize conferences on an industry basis for the purpose of discussing new methods of building the Party.

4. To place concentration work in specific industries regularly on the agendas of state boards.

5. To allocate certain responsibilities to the community clubs to be achieved in relation to our concentration perspectives.

It is from the key shops, industries, and working-class communities that a large section of the new members in our 100,000 goal must be secured.

## SHOP AND INDUSTRIAL CLUBS

In addition, we have the primary task of strengthening the existing shop and industrial clubs as well as building a large number of new ones in many shops and industries. During the past year, our Party has made headway in the establishment of shop and industrial clubs. It is estimated that, today, 18 to 19 per cent of our members are organized in shop and industrial clubs. In most industrial centers this percentage is much higher. Thus, Indiana has 40 per cent of its membership so organized: Detroit, 31 per cent; Ohio, 29 per cent; Illinois, 27 per cent; Western Pennsylvania, 24 per cent; New Jersey, 20 per cent. Some districts, however, have but an insignificant number of their members organized into shop and industrial clubs.

The establishment of these shop and industrial clubs has already enabled the Party to record certain definite advances and to make substantial contributions to the labor and progressive movement in defense of the economic and political interests of the workers.

1. A large number of our active shop and industrial workers, who for years had only formal connections with the Party through the community clubs, have now been reactivated and today play an important role in advancing the program and the policies of our Party.

2. The shop and industrial clubs have, in general, proportionately

higher attendance and dues payments than the community clubs.

3. We have improved our regular contact with Communist shop-workers and trade unionists and have consequently strengthened our ties with tens of thousands of workers in important shops and basic industries which had been seriously weakened during the period of Browder revisionism.

4. The re-establishment of the shop and industrial clubs has resulted in well-planned, well-organized work and the recruiting of thousands of workers from key industries, thereby strengthening the working-class base of the Party during the past year.

5. The Party has been able to play an effective role in the workers' struggles in the shops and on the picket lines.

However, a host of new problems now face us, as complex as the plants and industries in which our shop and industrial clubs function. Already a number of questions are coming to the fore. Some shop and industrial clubs, with an attendance upwards of 60 per cent to 70 per cent, are now showing a falling off of attendance. There exist strong tendencies to reduce these clubs to fractions, concerned, in the main, with economic questions alone, on a narrow trade union basis. There is no orientation to political activity. The leadership that we have given to our shop and industrial clubs has too often been of a one-sided character, directed toward the solution of economic problems, and has not had

the character of general, all-round political and organizational guidance. Hence, we must review these clubs with the objective of further defining the role of the shop and industrial clubs, strengthening them as centers of Communist political mass work.

The main problem confronting all shop and industrial clubs is to learn how to integrate properly our major political tasks with the problems of the workers in the shops and industries. We must learn to overcome all tendencies for the club to function on a "narrow trade union basis," as a "caucus" or a "fraction."

The shop or industrial club has a two-fold function, namely, to establish a correct approach to the problems arising in the shop and industry, and at the same time to win the workers for action on economic and political questions which transcend the specific problems in each shop and affect the lives of all labor, in fact of the majority of the people. Communists do not and cannot ignore the economic problems confronting the workers. On the contrary, Communists are deeply concerned with the economic problems of the workers and must rally their fellow-workers in defense of the day-to-day grievances, initiating and giving leadership to the most effective forms of struggle to win the workers' demands.

But in these struggles Communists have an additional responsibility: to raise the understanding of the workers, to develop their class consciousness. Thus, every question and every

problem on the minds of the workers, which arises in the course of these struggles, must be answered by our Communists so that the understanding of the workers will be prepared for struggles on a higher level.

The work of the shop and industrial clubs must be qualitatively strengthened by helping them to relate all the major problems of the nation to the specific needs and conditions of the workers in the shop and industry, since this is a condition for winning the workers for important political struggles. In this connection, the shop and industrial clubs still have to learn how to translate every major political issue into the most concrete terms, relating it to the everyday lives of the workers, in the shop, industry, and at home, and to find the forms for involving the workers, on the jobs and in the departments, in discussions and actions around every major issue.

The leadership in the districts must make it possible for the membership of shop and industrial clubs to be drawn into the formulation of Communist policies, and must assist the clubs in the concrete application of policies to the specific shop or industry in which they function. Especially is it necessary for the shop and industrial clubs to master the tactic of the united front, which remains a phrase until it is specifically applied to each shop, each department, each industry and section of industry.

We must also give every assistance to the shop and industrial clubs in

working out concrete programs based on a growing knowledge of the shop or industry (ownership, monopoly control, profits, methods of increasing surplus value, the relation of the corporation to the home and domestic market, etc.), a knowledge of the composition of the workers, their background and experience in struggle, the influences upon them of bourgeois ideas, etc. Such a program can help the clubs to formulate clearly short-term objectives, as well as enable them to advance the political understanding of the workers on the basis of the most concrete exposure of conditions of work within the shop and industry.

The independent Party role of the shop and industrial clubs cannot be conceived of as activity divorced from the problems and actions in which the workers themselves are involved, but rather all forms and activities of the clubs must be aimed to identify the Communists with the best interests of the workers, to bring about greater understanding and unity among the workers, with the Communists playing an active part in all their struggles.

In this connection, it is of prime importance that at each level—department, building, plant, and local—there be Communists who are widely known to the workers. It is impossible to extend or build new shop and industrial clubs unless the workers can identify the policies advocated by the Communists with men and women with whom they work and fight. Communist spokes-

men, known among the workers, will help to dispel many of the misconceptions and prejudices spread by the N.A.M., the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, and other enemies of the workers. This remains an important question that should be discussed in each shop and industrial club. Shop and industrial clubs should also consider undertaking the issuance of leaflets, the organization of forums, the formation of discussion groups, and wherever possible the organization of shop-gate or industry meetings and the initiation of petitions on important issues, such as rent control, which will identify the club with issues that affect all workers, including those in the shop and industry.

But the medium through which it is possible to present most systematically the position of the Communists is *The Worker* and *Daily Worker*. The distribution of our press, as well as the mass distribution of pamphlets, in the shops, must become a year-round, continuous task for our shop and industrial clubs.

#### THE COMMUNITY CLUB

While we have emphasized the shop and industrial clubs as the major concentration of the Party, it would be wrong to conclude that less attention is needed for the community clubs or to underestimate the difficulties confronted by the leadership in these clubs. When we realize that 81 per cent of our membership is still to be found in the community clubs, we can realize how

much time and energy must be devoted to their problems and activities.

Some real headway has been made in the development of mass work by the community clubs. These developments, however, are not uniform, and in many clubs where activity has been developed it is not on a sustained and systematic basis. Many of the club leaders are so preoccupied with a number of very serious inner organizational problems that it tends to distort their outlook on mass work. The degree of preoccupation with these problems in any club reflects itself in the clubs' mass work.

The need for mass work is commonly recognized. What is it that prevents the club from developing such work in a sustained fashion? Some comrades state that the leading core is preoccupied with the question of getting inactive members to attend meetings and that this hinders the development of mass work. Others state that too few comrades are involved in work, thereby limiting the possibilities of developing work in the community. Some argue that the club has too many general campaigns, and can never develop its own independent life and activities on the basis of the conditions in the community. There is no question but that these real problems exist in our community clubs, and cannot be minimized or relegated to a secondary place. To help the clubs solve these problems is basic to the further development of our mass activities. But these problems cannot be resolved in



a vacuum, of and by themselves. Getting the inactive comrades to do work is not a narrow, inner question; it is related to the improvement of the mass work of the club, the organizing and bringing of people together for struggle on the live issues in the community. Clearly, these problems will not be solved overnight. They will be solved only to the extent that the Party club is anchored in the struggles of the masses in the community.

The club has the task of translating the general tactical line of the Party—the building of the people's coalition—in such a way as to make it come to life within the community in which the club functions. Thus, the need for concrete guidance to the clubs presents itself as a major problem. This need can best be illustrated by dealing with one problem, for example the struggle against the high cost of living, which requires the development of a mass movement on a community level, a movement directed against the big monopolists. The individual club has the job of working out a program that will involve masses, including small shopkeepers, in the anti-monopoly struggle in its community. The club, to be successful, must initiate activities on an election district or precinct level involving every family in each house and block. It must conduct research to determine the prices of various commodities. It must consider calling, on the basis of the work developed, a community conference, not only involving the or-

ganizations in the community, but also delegates from each family in a house or apartment. Such a conference would discuss the high cost of living as it affects Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Public and *act*. The club will have to develop popular techniques of struggle so as to involve the broadest masses. The aim of the struggle is not to shut down the small corner store, but to negotiate agreements with the small storekeeper and the community in the struggle against high prices. Such struggle can take the form of picket lines before chain stores, dairy centers, meat-packing warehouses, etc. Such a program of action could be developed by boycotting different consumer items on each day of the week. The club must use the greatest amount of imagination and boldness. The movement must be alert and mobile. A common understanding much be reached by all participants.

If we could involve the hundreds of Party clubs in such actions—which means hundreds of communities—monopoly prices could be affected. Such community work is no substitute for the action by the labor movement but rather an important auxiliary to it. Beginning on an election district basis, such a movement has the possibilities of extending on a ward, a city, state and national basis. It is possible, especially now, to build such a movement on local levels. It is quite possible, for example, for Party clubs to develop mass movements against landlord robbery for:



1. The maintenance of rent control.
2. A reduction in existing rents.
3. A 3-year moratorium on evictions.
4. Improvements in apartments and homes in terms of repairs, plumbing, plastering, painting, and better facilities.

That is what we mean by building the coalition below. That is how our clubs must begin to work.

We must help the clubs to work in such a manner as to make each community alert centers of democratic action and anti-fascist struggle. The Party club in the community must become the best defender of the home and family, their well-being and culture, and must at the same time become the best champion of the civil liberties of its neighbors, and their right to live in a peaceful world.

The development of such activity will give a new life to our clubs and go far toward overcoming the passivity and inactivity that still exists among large numbers of our members. It will open up new possibilities for Party growth, far beyond the present limited perspective of most of our clubs.

Special mention must be made of certain problems in the clubs which require attention. These cannot be resolved by making general blueprints, but on the basis of the specific conditions of work of each club. From this standpoint it is especially important to review our operative leadership to the clubs, and ensure the supervision and direction of the

clubs by the leading personnel of our Party on a concrete, day-to-day basis, particularly in order:

1. To strengthen the club executives as centers of leadership in the clubs; and in the coming January elections to fight for the election of the most qualified leaders, with stress on promoting workers, veterans, and Negro comrades into leadership.

2. To develop a higher concept of Party membership which includes attendance, regular dues payments, participation in the activities developed by the club, etc.

3. To help each club to formulate and apply programs of action that correspond to the needs and interests of the people in its community, and to supervise the execution of such programs.

4. To re-establish the group system on a functional basis, with the groups responsible for the development of specific aspects of the club program between the regular meetings of the clubs.

5. To guarantee that Communists in mass organizations become an organic part of club life and give the membership the benefit of their knowledge and experiences.

6. To launch a cadre training program for the development of club, section, and county officers and to involve a minimum of 5,000 individuals in such a program by the time of the National Convention.

#### BUILDING OUR PRESS

The goal of 100,000 members is inseparably linked with the building

of *The Worker* and the *Daily Worker*. Lenin wrote that the press was not only an "agitator, but an organizer." This statement is borne out by the experiences of our brother parties in France, Italy, and all other countries. We have not, unfortunately, grasped this central fact. Yet the building of a mass Party is dependent upon a mass circulation of our press.

At the July National Committee meeting we decided to launch a press drive. Our goal in the drive was to achieve a circulation of 100,000 for *The Worker* by the end of 1946, and 35,000 for the *Daily Worker*. What are the results, as of the week ending November 30? Some 10,734 out of the required 40,000 new subscriptions and renewals for *The Worker*, and 1,920 subscriptions out of the required 5,000 new subscriptions for the *Daily Worker* have been secured. But it must be pointed out that 9,202 subscriptions of *The Worker* expired, leaving only a net gain of 1,532.

How can we explain the obviously slow progress of this campaign? The most common explanation was that "we were involved in the election campaign and could not develop two campaigns at the same time." Some comrades now say that "we are in the midst of registration," and therefore we cannot push the subscription drive. In many respects, it seems, we are still a "one campaign at a time" party, still groping with the problem of overcoming the one-sidedness in our work.

When our Party undertakes a project of importance, the first pre-condition for success is direct political supervision of the execution of the project by the leadership of the Party. It must be stated here that the Party leadership did not exert the guidance and supervision in the press drive necessary to guarantee success. Of course, plans and objectives were worked out. The State and District Committees discussed the drive. But, if we are to judge by results, we must state that the press drive was not viewed as a major campaign of the Party. The execution of the plans were relegated to the press directors, and not in every instance is the press director capable of rallying the Party membership ideologically and organizationally behind such an important campaign.

True, the leadership of the Party was engaged in an important election campaign and in other vital tasks facing the labor movement and the country. But we must decide whether the building of the press is a paramount task of the Party, equal to that of any other task facing us at any time, or whether it is of secondary importance. We must decide, furthermore, whether the building of the Communist press is an integral part of our general political tasks or whether, in times of struggles and campaigns, the Communist press must wait its turn. We must decide whether the Communist press is to be used as a medium to convey the message and program of the Party to workers engaged in struggle or

whether, in times of struggles, time and forces are too limited for the use of the Communist press as a weapon.

How then do we explain the fact that, after twenty-three years of existence of the *Daily Worker*, we have this state of affairs in our Party? It seems to me that at this National Committee meeting we have to restate some elementary yet most basic propositions in regard to the Party press. We witness an attitude in our ranks toward the Party press that is most disturbing. Let us state the facts as they are. The *Daily Worker*, like the Party itself, is not immune from weaknesses or exempt from criticism. The *Daily Worker*, with all its weaknesses, is still the best paper America has today. Too often weaknesses in the *Daily Worker* are used as an excuse for the failure to build the Communist press. Let us not exaggerate weaknesses beyond proportions. In the most frivolous and promiscuous fashion, accusations are made against the *Daily Worker* unheard of in a Communist movement. How can we mobilize the membership and sell the paper to the people when some of us hold the paper in such low esteem? How can we extend the influence of the Party and build our press if in times of struggle we do not believe that the *Daily Worker* offers solutions for the workers' needs and problems? The issue is one of fundamentals, namely, an appreciation in word and in deed of the role the *Daily Worker* can and must play. To put it in the words

of Comrade Foster, "the *Daily Worker* is the best paper the American labor movement has ever produced." That means:

1. A declaration of war against any and all attitudes which tend to undermine the role and purpose of the central organ of our Party.

2. The undertaking of an ideological campaign within the Party to imbue our membership with a spirit of understanding, enthusiasm, love, and devotion for the Communist press.

3. To consider the building of the Communist press a major task, second to none, and that this task be the responsibility, in the first place, of the leaders of the Party and not one to be relegated to someone having no other assignment.

4. In each state and district organization, the organizational secretary shall assume direct responsibility for the building of our press. This must not be merely political responsibility in the abstract, with the actual work delegated to someone else. The work of an organizational secretary, and that of the entire leadership, will have to be judged, among other things, on the basis of how the Communist press is built.

5. The establishment of a permanent apparatus within the clubs, whose sole responsibility shall be to secure renewals of expired subscriptions to *The Worker*. Comrades, once assigned to this task, should not be withdrawn from it, however urgent another post in the club needs to be filled.

In this connection, I should like

to add that a study of the *People's World* shows that in California they have laid a basis for the full solution of the problem of renewals. I understand that some 60 per cent or 70 per cent of the subscriptions are secured on this basis from year to year as a result of a sound approach to the question of organization.

6. Leading bodies of the Party, including club executives, shall proceed to work out plans for the building of the press, receive regular progress reports and take the necessary organizational and other steps to guarantee progress. Only by taking such steps can we make a turn and build our press. A continuation of the present state of affairs is equivalent to an admission of defeat, if not bankruptcy.

In criticizing existing harmful attitudes toward the *Daily Worker* I have no intention of minimizing its many weaknesses and the need for a sharp improvement in its content and form.

We are here proposing that the National Committee likewise instruct the National Board to set up a subcommittee responsible for carrying through a further examination, within the immediate period, of the content of the *Daily Worker*, to examine the circulation of *The Worker*, and to take those steps necessary to bring about an all-around improvement of the press.

If I have been critical in my remarks about our press, it is meant in the spirit of self-criticism. That is how Communists frankly and

openly discuss their weaknesses and take steps for improvement. It is in this sense that we propose to extend our present press campaign to the end of January, and complete it, making it the primary task of the Party.

#### REGISTRATION

In conclusion, we must emphasize that to achieve the objective of 100,000 members, we must complete in the most rapid manner the maximum registration of our present membership. In spite of all the unanswered organizational tasks enumerated in this report, there is a widespread feeling that we can achieve the highest registration in the history of the Party. It is on this basis that districts are working in a new way, striving to complete this task by January 15. Thus, Illinois registered 50 per cent during a two-week period; New York under 50 per cent, with Kings County leading with 55 per cent; California, 43 per cent, with San Francisco achieving 55 per cent; Philadelphia, 48 per cent; the Northwest District, 48 per cent; Ohio, 30 per cent; New Jersey, 37 per cent. There should be no slackening in this drive. The hardest job is the last 25 to 30 per cent, which means that greater organizational and political work is needed for that part of registration.

This task of registration is made more complicated because of certain weaknesses in our work during the course of the year. One of these is

our failure properly to interpret and apply fully in life what we mean by integrating our members into the life of the Party, which is the essence of Party building. The registration must be the beginning of the solution of this problem. Party building is not merely the mechanical process of enrolling a new member. That is merely the first step. The step after that is to make the new recruit a full-fledged Communist. Steps should be taken, from the moment he pays his initiation fee, to show him how best he can serve the working class. The club leadership has the job of transforming the new recruits, many of whom are shy and retiring, into people with self-confidence, with initiative, helping to develop their creative energies. Our educational methods should help to create conditions whereby the individual can be involved in club activities on a level which is in line with his present understanding and capabilities. From the beginning, the Party press, *The Worker* and the *Daily Worker* should be introduced to the new members, steps taken to stimulate interest in self-study, and the enrollment in new members' classes. This is no small task, but one which must

be tackled during the coming year.

The successes registered this year will materially reduce fluctuation. The next few weeks should witness more intensified activities to the end of reducing fluctuation to the minimum, as well as to increase the rate of recruiting. This should be regarded as the first phase of an all-out effort for 100,000 members.

It is the opinion of the National Board that the membership can be really inspired to assume new responsibilities and undertake objectives much larger than in the past. We, therefore, project the idea that we begin preparations now, in the course of registration as well as during the months of January and February, to launch a drive to bring our membership up to 100,000 by the time of the celebration of the 28th Anniversary of our Party in September. As a beginning in this direction, the months of March, April, and May are to be a period of uninterrupted recruiting as the primary task of the entire Party. We are confident that every Party member will greet this perspective of 100,000 members. We are confident that all of us will act to make that goal become a reality.

# ECONOMIC REVIEW OF 1946

By LABOR RESEARCH ASSN.

THE YEAR 1946 will be remembered as the year in which total corporation profits reached the highest level in American history. For the year as a whole net corporate profits were expected to reach \$12 billion, a total of \$3 billion in excess of the 1945 total. It will be remembered, too, as the year in which production and employment reached an all peacetime high, while the real wages of America's workers declined to the pre-war level and the relative position of the worker was worsened. These contradictory developments received a notable commentary in the form of a sharp decline in stock market prices in September, with no real recovery during the remainder of the year. This reflected the collective judgment by America's capitalist class itself of the underlying unsoundness of economic conditions in a period which the Cleveland Trust Company's *Business Bulletin* (November 15, 1946) referred to as one of "pessimistic prosperity."

## EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTION

The total civilian labor force stood at approximately 60 million in the

last quarter of 1946. This was approximately 5 million higher than the wartime peak and nearly 7 million higher than the December, 1945, total. Most of the increase in the civilian labor force came from the demobilization of the armed forces which decreased from 7.8 million in December, 1945, to 2.4 million in August, 1946.

Employment (including agricultural and the self-employed) increased more or less steadily during the entire year (up to the time of the coal strike) going up from 51.4 million at the end of 1945 to approximately 58 million in the last quarter of 1946. Unemployment, according to the dubious estimates of the Bureau of Census, stood at about 2 million in the last quarter of 1946, the high point for the year—2.7 million—having been reached in March. These totals were far below the estimates of 8 to 10 million unemployed which were predicted by government and labor economists for the early part of 1946.

While total employment was up nearly 7 million from the end of 1945, a major portion of the increase was attributed to self-employment and agricultural employment. The number of wage and salary earners in all non-agricultural employment increased only about 2.5 million during the year, while the increase during the year in manufacturing industries alone was about 1.5 million. While total employment in manufacturing increased over 10 per cent during the

year (from September, 1945, to December, 1946) for 1946 as a whole average employment was estimated as only 4 per cent higher than in 1945—a 14.5 million average for 1946 as against 13.9 million for 1945. Average employment of *production workers* in manufacturing industries was actually about 4 per cent less in 1946 than in 1945—an average of 11.2 million for 1946 as against an average of 11.7 million for 1945.

Overtime and average weekly hours worked were sharply down from wartime levels during 1946. In manufacturing industries, average weekly hours per production worker remained fairly constant during the year at about 40 hours, the high point being 41.0 hours in January and the low point 39.6 hours in July. The wartime peak was 46.2 hours and the 1945 average 43.6 hours. Total man-hours of employment of production workers was about 10 per cent less in 1946 than in 1945.

Time lost on account of strikes and lockouts was substantial in the early part of 1946, about 86 million man-days being lost in the first half of the year. While this is equivalent

to a reduction in the total employment force of less than 2 per cent, production losses due to strikes and lockouts were considerably higher due to the general disruption and disorganization of production which occurred.

It should always be remembered that a large part of corporate America was on strike against the people in 1946. The whole process of reconversion was slowed down as the big companies in steel, metal, automobile, electrical, farm machinery, and other industries refused to bargain with their workers and, for many weeks, failed to agree to any adequate increases in wage rates to maintain reasonable take-home weekly pay. This virtual *sit-down strike of the employers* was encouraged by the corporate tax laws which had been passed despite the opposition of President Roosevelt and the progressive forces.

Measurements of the physical volume of production exist only for manufactured products and minerals. A brief picture of the development of production is given in the following table.

*Index of Industrial Production* (Federal Reserve Board)

	(1935-39 = 100)		Dec., 1945	Feb., 1946	Oct., 1946
	1945	1946 <sup>a</sup>			
All industrial production .....	203	170	161	148	182
All manufactures .....	235	177	167	151	189
Durable goods .....	274	192	184	136	214
Non-durable goods .....	166	163	154	162	169
Minerals .....	137	138	126	134	144

<sup>a</sup> Estimated



The above table shows that the drop in industrial production in 1946 as compared to 1945 was largely due to the drop in the manufacture of durable goods in the early months of the year. This branch of production was most affected by the cut in war orders, by reconversion problems and difficulties, and by corporation resistance to the wage demands of the workers. It is clear, also, that the temporary decline in productivity, which one arrives at by comparing the drop in industrial production in 1946 from the 1945 level, with the smaller drop in man-hours of employment—a 15 per cent drop in production as against a 10 per cent drop in man-hours of employment—was due, in the main, to temporary conditions of partial disorganization of production in the durable goods industries and in no way reflected a decline in labor efficiency. As a corollary of this we should expect productivity, *i.e.*, the ratio of output to employment, to be increasing rapidly toward the end of 1946. Such data as were available bore out this expectation. We estimate the output per worker in manufacturing to have risen over 5 per cent between February and September, 1946. (See also Labor Research Association, *Economic Notes*, December, 1946.)

#### PRICES, TAXES AND PROFITS

Despite the drop in production be-

tween 1945 and 1946 and the higher "labor costs," corporate profits, as noted, reached an all-time high. This was the result of booming prices, far in excess of the increased wage costs to which the price increases were uniformly attributed by the reactionary press, and of reduced corporate taxes, the effect of eliminating excess-profits taxes and reducing the regular corporation income tax. In addition, many corporations received substantial tax-refunds under various provisions of past and present revenue laws.

According to a report of O.P.A., a survey of 15 industries showed that they had received price boosts in a given period—the wartime month in which workers' earnings reached their peak to June, 1946—averaging 6.4 per cent, although all that was required to offset wage increases was 1.8 per cent. (Office of Price Administration, *18th Quarterly Report*, p. 11.)

The iron and steel industry received an 11.1 per cent boost while wage costs were up only 1.6 per cent.

The temporary suspension of O.P.A. controls which took place in July sent prices sharply upward, and the complete surrender of President Truman on November 9 on the price control front resulted in another upward spurt. Official data on wholesale prices told the following story.

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*Index of Wholesale Prices*

(1926 = 100)

	December, 1945	June, 1946	August, 1946	Nov. 16, 1946
Combined index .....	107.1	112.9	124.3	135.8
Manufactured products .....	102.5	107.3	123.9	130.4
Raw materials .....	119.2	126.3	145.7	152.6
Farm products .....	131.5	140.1	161.0	167.3
Foods .....	108.6	112.9	149.0	164.1

While the increase in prices of manufactured products was somewhat lower than in the raw material, farm products, and food categories, such increase was of a more permanent character, being supported by a network of monopoly controls and being, in general, less subject to subsequent speculative and market influences. Toward the end of the year a price break occurred in several groups of raw material and farm products. It seemed to most observers that farm prices had about reached their peak for the inflation period.

According to government budget estimates, corporation taxes were expected to yield about \$3 billion less in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1947, than in the preceding fiscal year. On top of that, federal tax refunds, which went mainly to corporations, totaled about \$3 billion in the year ending June 30, 1946, and were expected to total at least \$1.9 billion in the year ending June 30, 1947.

The net effect of all the influences operating on the level of corporation profits was expected to lift the total of profits before taxes to almost as high a level as last year, about \$20

billion compared with \$20.8 billion in 1945. Due to the lower taxes, however, the net profits after taxes will have reached an all-time high, rising from \$9 billion in 1945 to somewhere in the vicinity of \$12 billion in 1946. Indeed, during the final quarter of 1946 these profits were at fantastic heights, ranging around \$15 billion.

These estimated profits for 1946 are about 200 per cent higher than the average profits in the pre-war "normal" period, 1935-39. They are even 25 per cent higher than the war-boom profits of the years 1942 through 1945.

The vast profits, it should be emphasized, show that the C.I.O. unions were entirely correct in their contention that the wage increases of early 1946 could have been given without the need for any offsetting increase in prices. As the C.I.O. *Economic Outlook*, November, 1946, put it, "Industries could have paid the 1946 wage increases without increasing prices of their products, and still have been left with profits at least equal to those made during the war years 1942-45. But instead of heeding the position of the C.I.O., American industries went ahead to unnecessarily

increase prices and bring on our present dangerous inflationary situation."

#### WORKERS' INCOME AND CONSUMER MARKETS

During 1946 as a whole wage and salary workers fought a losing battle against the rising cost of living. The conservative "consumers' price index" of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, which stood at 129.9 in December, 1945, was in the neighborhood of 150 at the end of 1946, a rise of 15 per cent for the year.

While this rise in the cost of living was taking place, average weekly wage earnings in manufacturing industries rose from \$41.21 at the end of 1945 to about \$44.50 at the year end, an increase of only 8 per cent, about one-half of the increase in the cost of living. Real weekly wages thus dropped about 6 per cent during the course of the year 1946.

Total salaries and wages for all employees were expected to decrease from the 1945 total of \$110.2 billion to about \$105 billion in 1946. These totals include military pay-rolls. The index of payrolls for production workers in manufacturing industries which stood at 288 for 1945 was expected to drop to about 252 for 1946 or by about 9 per cent. Since the number of employed production workers averaged about 4 per cent less in 1946 than in 1945 while the cost of living for the year as a whole was about 9 per cent higher than in 1945, it follows that average real wages of production workers in man-

ufacturing industries in 1946 were about 13 per cent lower than in 1945. This decline in real wages is the combined result of elimination of overtime, cost-of-living increases which outstripped wage-rate increases, and of time lost through corporation hold-up of production which caused strikes and layoffs, especially in the early part of the year.

While workers' income, measured both in money and in real values, fell in 1946, the income of all other classes of the population rose sharply. Total national income payments which totaled \$161 billion in 1945 were expected to reach \$165 billion for 1946.

Dividend and interest payments which totaled \$12.2 billion in 1945 were expected to top \$14 billion in 1946. Cash income from farm marketings which reached \$20.7 billion in 1945 was expected to top \$24 billion in 1946.

Considering the decline in workers' income in 1946 it is at first rather surprising to find that total consumer expenditures for goods and services totaled higher in 1946 than in 1945, whether measured by monetary value or by physical volume. The dollar value of such expenditure climbed from \$106 billion in 1945 to about \$124 billion in 1946. Even allowing for the rise in prices, the increase in physical volume was over 5 per cent. Most of this increase in physical volume was accounted for by increased purchases of consumers durable goods, total sales of which climbed from \$7.7 billion in 1945 to over \$14

in 1946. Toward the end of 1946 it appeared that the physical volume of sales of consumers' soft goods was falling despite the continued increases in dollar volume of such sales.

A number of factors contributed to the rise of consumer expenditures in the face of decreasing workers' income. A large proportion of such expenditures was in the luxury class and the swelling incomes of the upper income groups were reflected in the increases in the sales of non-essential goods and services. The large number of servicemen returning to civilian life also raised consumer expenditures above their usual levels. The money spent by the veterans reflected not only their normal needs but also special outlays, which they had to incur in getting back into civilian life. The discharge benefits paid to veterans were an important contribution to the support of consumer expenditures.

Of great importance too was the decrease in savings of individuals from a level above \$35 billion in 1945 to about \$22 billion in 1946. These aggregate figures concealed the fact that most low-income earners not only were not saving out of current income but were drawing on past savings. Redemption of Series E savings bonds exceeded new sales by wide margins, while there were practically no redemptions of Series F and G bonds. The significance of this is that Series F and G bonds are big amount issues held entirely by

wealthy people, while a substantial portion of Series E bonds are held by workers. The difference in the redemption rates of the E series and the F and G series could only be due to large-scale liquidation by the low income groups.

As 1946 drew to a close, many of the factors which had sustained the consumer goods markets at above-normal levels were becoming exhausted. Savings were disappearing, more and more people were being "priced" out of the retail markets, resistance to excessive prices was rising, and even some luxury lines appeared to be in at least a temporary slump. The decline in real wages and the real incomes of consumers as a whole were the main factors tending to undermine the market for consumer goods.

#### HOW THE NATIONAL PRODUCT WAS SOLD

The Department of Commerce prepares and publishes a rather peculiar set of statistics which it refers to as "gross national product or expenditure." This is defined as market value at current prices of all goods and services produced. Among the "services" included in these totals are the services of the armed forces which are valued at pay and subsistence costs, the services of people who invest in government bonds which are valued as equal to the interest they receive, and the services of all categories of civil service employees

which are valued as equal to the salaries they receive.

These statistics are so constructed that the "gross national product" can be divided into three main categories—the shares absorbed by government (federal, state and local), by purchases of individuals for consumer goods and services, and by individuals and businesses for "gross private capital formation." The latter includes four main divisions, namely, construction of dwellings and business or productive properties, purchases of producers durable equipment (capital goods), increase in business inventories, and excess of exports over imports.

Another feature of these statistics is that the excess of savings of individuals and businesses over gross capital formation is always exactly equal to the excess of government expenditure over government tax revenues, *i.e.*, the government deficit or increase in government debt.

The main importance of these statistics lies in the fact that they provide a fairly good picture of the current conditions of realization of surplus value or at least of that portion of surplus value which is accumulated as capital. The picture for 1945 as compared with the 3rd quarter of 1946 was about as follows:

	1945	3rd quarter, 1946 (annual rate)
	(billions of dollars)	
Gross national product .....	197.3	195.8
Absorbed by or sold to government .....	83.0	36.8
Consumers goods and services .....	104.9	126.0
Gross private capital formation .....	9.4	33.0
Savings of individuals .....	34.9	22.0
Gross savings of business* .....	12.3	12.0
Total savings .....	47.2	34.0
Gross private capital formation .....	9.4	33.0
Increase in government debt .....	37.8	1.0
Construction .....	2.7	10.0
Producers' durables .....	6.4	11.0
Increase in inventories .....	....	6.5**
Net exports .....	.3	5.5
Gross private capital formation .....	9.4	33.0

\* Undistributed profit plus reserves for depreciation.

\*\* Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion estimate. But Department of Commerce reports third quarter rate of \$14 billion per annum.

The 1945 analysis shows the tremendous role that government expenditure played in providing adequate markets. It shows, also, that most of the surplus value realized as accumulated capital in 1945 took the form, not of real capital, but of government bonds.

#### YEAR-END TREND

Toward the end of 1946 the situation was drastically changed. Government expenditures had declined 60 per cent, government budgets were virtually balanced and government deficits were no longer providing an easy mode of realization of surplus value. The maintenance of production now depended on the existence of outlets for real capital accumulation or investments which were in equilibrium with the rate of savings. Any diminution in such outlets relative to savings would be magnified four or five-fold in the decline of production.

As the year closed, contradictory tendencies began to become more manifest. Productivity of labor was increasing more rapidly and with it the total national product. Corporate profits, as noted above, were skyrocketing. But unless wage rates were raised into line with the rising cost of living, or prices sharply reduced, sales of consumer non-durables and services were bound to decline. Sales of consumer durable goods would probably increase in view of accumulated shortages and the planned ex-

tensive use of installment credit (total consumer credit rose about \$2 billion during the year), but total consumer goods sales would tend to fall in proportion to total production unless, as noted, wages were increased or prices reduced.

In the sphere of real capital accumulation the strongest support was provided by construction activities which appeared to be on the increase in spite of many obstacles, especially the over-pricing of veterans' homes and the failure to provide R.F.C. financing for the manufacture of prefabricated homes. However, the sales of producers' durables (machines, etc.) were tending to fall off as the year ended.

The sharp growth of business inventories was the most ominous point in the business picture. The November *Survey of Current Business* reported that inventories had increased \$3½ billion in 3 months, *i.e.*, at a \$14 billion annual rate, to reach a total of \$32.3 billion at the end of September. They have since been continuing to accumulate at an annual rate of \$12-\$14 billion. Inventories have thus been rising toward the danger point. As the rate of increase tends to slacken an important outlet for real capital accumulation will be closed off.

Net exports were expected to continue at present high levels for some months to come; but unless capital exports (*i.e.*, foreign investments and loans) are sharply increased, commodity exports would tend to fall off sometime in 1947 as foreign coun-

tries exhaust their reserves of dollar exchange.

Any downturn in the heavy industries should be watched with particular concern. For when orders to this sector of industry begin to drop off, the stage is being prepared for a real capitalist crisis.

Although there has been a big increase in capital expansion since the war the greater increase that took place during the war itself constitutes, under the "free enterprise" system, a distinct threat to the whole economy. For the fact that these investments in machinery and equipment

were made at that time tends to contract the current market for such heavy goods and thus brings nearer the day of the cyclical crisis inherent in the nature of capitalism.

The advent of such a crisis will of course be accelerated by the accumulating inventories, the lowered real wages, the reduced buying power of consumers as a result of the increased cost of living. All these "maladjustments" are tending to undermine the boom and to create a situation that can only lead toward an economic recession sometime within the current year.

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# THE SECOND CHRONIC CRISIS IN AGRICULTURE\*

By ROBERT DIGBY

FREDERICK ENGELS, writing in 1881 on "American Food and the Land Question," pointed out that the rapid expansion of American agriculture brought havoc to the English farmers in the last quarter of the 19th century. They did not expect, said Engels, that the development of American agriculture would "upset the time-honoured relations of British agriculture, revolutionise the immemorial feudal relations between landlord and tenant at will, smash up English rents, and lay waste English farms."\*\*\*

And yet that is what happened. Not only was British agriculture hard-hit by the flood of low-cost American grain which invaded its home market, but also, over most of western Europe, farm families felt the economic impact of "this American revolution in farming."

Engels is here describing the first chronic crisis of capitalist agriculture,

and his discussion is particularly significant at the present time when farmers, particularly the American farmers, are again faced with the prospect of declining markets. Though America's industry is now in a boom phase that far exceeds the former peacetime peak of 1929, our farmers are being told that not even in this boom can industry provide a market capable of absorbing the present volume of farm output. Thus, the Hoover Republicans, the Southern landed interests, and the Truman Administration are sounding the call for a return to crop reduction measures at a time when industry is in the midst of a feverish, postwar boom and when millions of war-stricken people all over the world are hungrier than ever before.

Prior to the first chronic crisis, there had, of course, been many specific, localized crises of comparatively short duration in agriculture. But the crisis of 1873-95 was the first one that spread over a considerable sector of the capitalist world and assumed a chronic character. Even so, it was partial, being chiefly limited to Europe and the northeastern region of the United States, and it was essentially a *grain* crisis. The second chronic crisis of agriculture came after World War I, and, unlike its predecessor, this crisis, which began in 1921, embraced most farm products and practically the whole of the capitalist world. Whereas the first chronic crisis occurred in a period when capitalism was still expanding, the second chronic crisis of agricul-

\* The second half of this article will appear in the February issue of *Political Affairs*.

\*\* Frederick Engels, "American Food and the Land Question," in *The British Labour Movement*, (a compilation), International Publishers, New York, 1940.

ture accompanied the general crisis of capitalism.

"No European farmer can compete with it—at least not while he is expected to pay rent," said Engels in commenting on the mounting volume of wheat that flowed from the United States in the 70's. Shouting their hosannas to "free enterprise," much like our monopolists today, many British manufacturers urged a repeal of the duties on wheat in order to facilitate its import. As Engels pointed out, his fellow textile manufacturers wanted to repeal the Corn Laws so that the torrent of lower-priced grain from America could afford a means for cutting the wages of the English workers.\*

The American farmers were so busy plowing up the fertile, virgin soil in the West and trying to protect their farms against the designs of the railroads, landsharks, or other marauders that they were hardly aware of the economic repercussions abroad brought on by their endeavors here. In this first chronic crisis of agriculture, the farmers of America, at least those in the western wheat fields, were among the beneficiaries, rather than the victims, even though predatory interests usually robbed them of whatever "benefits" were left after grasshoppers, chinch bugs, or drought had taken their toll. During this period of expansion, American agriculture set the pace for the world

markets, and, for wheat as well as for various other staples, world prices were determined by the cost of production (plus transportation) on American fields.

#### SOIL EXHAUSTION AND FARM MECHANIZATION

Marx and Engels accurately foresaw, not only that the capitalist development of American agriculture would be more rapid than any previously seen, but also that the exploitation of our soil resources would be far more wasteful and more precipitous than anything previously recorded in history. In *Capital*, Marx declared:

Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is a progress towards ruining the lasting sources of that fertility. The more a country starts its development on the foundation of modern industry, like the United States, for example, the more rapid is this process of destruction.

Fully confirming Marx's analysis and prediction, a recent report of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service analyzes the "impoverishment" of soil resources through "exploitative farming" and declares, "Productivity of the land has been seriously undermined."\* Of the 2 billion acres of

\* Frederick Engels, "The Wages Theory of the Anti-Corn Law League," in *The British Labour Movement*, International Publishers.

\* U. S. Soil Conservation Service, June, 1945. "Soil and Water Conservation Needs, Estimates for the U. S. by States."

land in the United States, only one-fourth is now suitable for continuous cultivation, according to the Soil Conservation Service. It estimates that 282 million acres of non-urban land have been "ruined or severely impoverished" and that, in addition, 775 million acres have been seriously "damaged."

As our soil fertility declined, American agriculture began to lose its earlier ascendancy in the world markets. Ever larger numbers of farmers in the United States began to find that their production costs, over long periods of time, were higher than the prices prevailing on the world markets. In order to hold down their costs, the big farms have constantly been seeking new methods of mechanizing their operations, of expanding as well as intensifying their exploitation of the soil. This has meant, of course, a higher organic composition of capital in American agriculture, the development of more and more capitalistic methods of production, with a larger and larger share of the commercial market passing into the hands of the big producers.

#### MARKET PROBLEM BECOMES ACUTE AND CHRONIC

After World War I, it became increasingly apparent that a chronic crisis of a new and much more acute form had begun to grip our agriculture. Whereas the producers in England and Western Europe had, during the crisis at the end of the

19th century, been able to find markets for their crops, though at somewhat reduced prices, American farmers found that their world markets were shrinking and that a considerable portion of their "surpluses" could not be sold at prices remotely resembling production costs even on the big farms. Many farmers were forced to pay for the privilege of sending their crop to market, since the receipts did not cover handling costs and transportation costs. Engels pointed out that, in the first chronic crisis of agriculture, it was not until the seventh year of the crisis, when "the crop was bad in all Western Europe" and "a failure in England" that the farmers there became generally aware of what the influx of American grain meant to them. This became especially visible when the price of wheat in their countries did not rise, even though the domestic crops had failed. Since capitalism was still in a period of expansion, during this first chronic crisis, it was able to absorb the great outpouring of wheat which flowed from the newly-plowed prairies of the New World. The rapid extension of railroad networks made it possible to carry large quantities of produce to distant parts of the world and encouraged the development of world markets, with closely synchronized prices.

But, in the second chronic crisis of agriculture, the market problem had become central and critical for capitalism as a whole. In the early stages, a wide variety of ineffectual

dumping schemes, including the McNary-Haugen and Export De-benture Plans, were designed in the futile hope of dispelling the crisis. These plans sought to "get rid" of unsalable export "surpluses" and thus prevent these "surpluses" from depressing prices at home. All of these unworkable and highly superficial plans pointed in the direction of outright reduction. By the time the Roosevelt Administration came into office, the food trusts, implement manufacturers, insurance companies, and banks had become generally agreed that a policy of crop reduction, and even destruction, such as the meat packers had long been advocating, was necessary to cope with the situation.

This 20th century crisis in agriculture came as a component part of the general crisis of capitalism and its root causes were the same as those which brought on the general crisis of capitalism *i.e.*, the contradiction between the drive toward expansion and the restriction of markets resulting from the appropriation of surplus value. This contradiction had, of course, been intensified by the removal of an area comprising one-sixth of the world's land surface from imperialist expansion as a result of the great Socialist revolution in Russia. In his report to the 15th Congress of the C.P.S.U. in 1927 Stalin declared:

This contradiction between the growing industrial possibilities and the relative stability of markets lies at the

bottom of the fact that the market problem now constitutes the main problem of capitalism. Acute problems of market sales in general, especially acute problems of foreign markets and the acute problems of markets for export capital in particular, constitute the present state of capitalism.

In the history of capitalism, there are many specific agricultural crises and industrial crises, even though only two chronic agricultural crises and one general crisis of capitalism. These specific or particular crises of agriculture and of industry do not necessarily coincide, and despite the fact that one affects the other and is in turn affected by the other, the agricultural crisis cannot be regarded as a mere by-product of the industrial crisis. In fact, the whole character, the pattern, and the timing of the agricultural crises have been noticeably different from those of industrial crises. Lenin pointed out that crises tend to break out in the weakest and most backward sector of the capitalist economy, and, since the capitalist development of agriculture lags behind that of industry, it is not surprising that agricultural crises usually precede industrial crises. Moreover, agricultural crises tend to outlast industrial crises, and, as Varga has so penetratingly pointed out, the lifting of the chronic agricultural crisis within the setting of the general economic crisis of capitalism can be achieved for any protracted period of time, only by the degradation of agriculture itself. As at the present time,

war can temporarily alleviate the crisis, or socialism can eliminate it, but under present-day capitalist conditions, only the degradation of agriculture itself can make it possible for even the top stratum of farmers to insulate themselves against the ravages of the crisis. Varga says:

The degradation process in agriculture is manifested in various forms in the several countries: reduced use of artificial fertilizers, inadequate replacement of agricultural machinery and implements, reduction in livestock inventory and deterioration in its quality, poorer land cultivation and smaller crop yields, the decay and neglect of the peasant farm in general.\*

Even in the severe pre-war phase of the second agricultural crisis, the degradation of agriculture was symbolized by the mass migration of farm families, by the glutting of highways with families carrying in their jalopies or in their hands all of their worldly possessions, and by the use of women to pull plows, in lieu of the horses or mules which had been confiscated by creditors. Between the period 1921-1936, there were 2,561,000 farm foreclosures and forced sales in this country, and though many of these farms doubtless changed hands more than once, this ratio of 5 farm failures out of every 12 farms in operation is nevertheless staggering.

With the further development of capitalism in agriculture, not only

do the specific crises tend to become more acute but the process of degradation also becomes more intensive. As the march of capitalism proceeds in agriculture, the organic composition of capital is raised, the gulf between small and large producers widens, farm prices chronically remain below costs of production on the smaller farms, and the pauperization and proletarianization of the smaller farmers is accelerated.

#### FARM MECHANIZATION DURING WORLD WAR II

World War I saw some increase in the mechanization of American agriculture, notably the introduction of the tractor on the western wheat fields. In the two decades following the First World War, mechanization continued to spread, although at a relatively slow pace, and wheat stood out as the only crop whose commercial production had been generally mechanized. In World War II, however, the mechanization of our agriculture advanced at a far more rapid rate, and it affected most of our major crops as well as many of the minor ones. Despite the myth propagated during the war that the farmers were "producing more and more with less and less of everything," the sober figures show that, between 1940 and 1945, tractors on farms increased 55%, grain combines increased 74%, corn pickers 53%, milking machines 117%, and motor trucks on farms 39%. Moreover, the number of farms with electricity in-

\* E. Varga, *The Great Crisis*, International Publishers, 1935, p. 55.

creased 40% between 1940 and 1945. The use of fertilizer advanced 166% between 1939 and 1944, while the use of lime on farms showed a jump of 263%. All of this points to the marked and highly significant change in the organic composition of capital in our agriculture, the use of less variable capital and more constant capital.

Today our agriculture is producing for the market one-third more than before the war. It is doing this with 10 per cent fewer workers (family and hired workers) and with only a slight increase in the total acreage used for crops and pasture.

During the war years, 1940 to 1945, more than 5 million people left the farms, thus reducing the population on farms from 30 million to 25 million. Despite this amazing migration of manpower from the farms, agricultural production increased.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture has made no attempt to determine the relative increase in productivity on larger farms as compared with smaller ones. From the partial returns already available from the Census of 1945, however, it is apparent that the lion's share of this increase has taken place on the large-scale farms, those most highly developed capitalistically. Moreover, in spite of the 55% increase in tractors during the war, it is glaringly apparent that two-thirds of all the census-listed farms, nearly 4 million, possess no tractor, and, of these, 1½

million (one-fourth of the total) do not even possess a horse or a mule. Certainly this group of low-income farmers did not buy many of the combines, corn pickers, forage harvesters, and other machines which accounted for the major part of the increase in wartime production.

#### PROLETARIANIZATION IN AGRICULTURE

Despite wartime ballyhoo to the contrary, the cold, hard figures now becoming available (at long last!) plainly show that the major increases in wartime productivity occurred on the big farms. Even though the Bureau of Agricultural Economics has closed its eyes to this development, and drawn a thick veil over all the necessary, relevant data, preliminary returns already being released from the 1945 Census of Agriculture reveal that, during the war years from 1939 through 1944, the small and middle groups of farmers not only lost out relatively to the big farms but that the rate of decline in their share of the total commercial market was even more rapid than over previous census periods. This change for the worse in their relative position has, however, been obscured, not only by the official veil of secrecy, but, even more importantly, by the unlimited market available to them during the latter part of the war—that is, by the high prices and by all of the glamor of wartime prosperity, illusory as well as real.

Complete census returns have now

been released for only two agricultural regions of the United States, the New England and Middle Atlantic sections. In both cases, the figures, when tabulated and graphed, show that the small and middle groups of farms accounted for a smaller share of the total gross value of farm production in 1944 than in 1939.\* Moreover, a preliminary study made by the Bureau of the Census, and based upon a sample of some 700,000 farms, shows that for the country as a whole the small and middle groups lost out relatively to the big producers. At the time that Lenin made his study of American agriculture, based largely upon the census of 1899, the lowest fourth of the farms accounted for about 6% of the gross value of farm product; by 1939 their share had fallen to 4%, a drop of one-third in 4 decades; and now, according to this preliminary census tabulation, they are producing less than 2½ per cent of the total, a drop of 38% in the last five years. Similarly, at the lower end of the income pyramid, two-thirds of the farmers accounted for 30% of the gross value of farm production in 1899; by 1939 their share had fallen to approximately 25%; and by 1944 their share was down to 20%. Thus, the wartime decline during the 5-year period covered by the latest census (even allowing for

statistical errors) appears to be about as great and perhaps greater than over the preceding 40 years. At the apex of the pyramid, we find that the top third of the farms accounted for about 72% of the gross value of products in 1899; by 1939 they accounted for 78% of the total; and by 1944 we find that they are taking over 80% of the total.\*

#### WAR DID NOT DISPEL CHRONIC FARM CRISIS

During World War II and even afterwards, the American farmers had the satisfaction of being able once again to market all that they produced and of receiving, with only occasional exceptions, relatively favorable prices for their crops. After the long, lean years of stagnation, with their depressed prices, scissors, surpluses, and reduction programs, this sudden flush of prosperity came as a most welcome interlude to most farmers, and despite the usual grumbling in the countryside, most farmers frankly admitted that it outran their most optimistic pre-war expectations. Most of them never expected to see a return even to such levels of prosperity. It may well be asked then: "Did not this era of war prosperity put an end to the second chronic crisis of agriculture?" The answer is: "No."

\* Though the U. S. Department of Agriculture has not done this and insists that its meager budget of over half a billion dollars a year is not sufficient to make such a study, Farm Research, a small organization which publishes *Facts For Farmers*, has carried out this investigation. Its tables and charts, which space does not permit us to reprint here, support the above conclusions.

\* Since the various censuses do not use uniform class intervals, these comparisons are made by fitting Lorenz curves to the data and then reading the figures off the chart. More refined methods could be used, and perhaps greater accuracy would thereby be obtained, but these comparisons afford a reasonably accurate interpolation of the census figures.



In the first place, it must be borne in mind that American farms, as compared with capitalist agriculture in other parts of the world, were in a particularly favorable position. Being far removed from the scenes of strife, our farms escaped the direct effects of battle and were able to fill the vacuums created by the devastation of vast areas of farmland in other parts of the world. Even in the post-war period, our farms are continuing to supply produce to countries whose agricultural producers have not yet restored their farms to pre-war levels of production. Since the second chronic crisis of agriculture must be viewed as affecting the capitalist world as a whole, we must not take the more fortunate conditions of American agriculture as a measure of agricultural conditions on an international scale. Just as America's industry is today producing 60 per cent of the total output coming from the capitalist world, as compared with 40 per cent before the war, so our agriculture is, albeit to a much lesser extent, and on a more temporary basis, enjoying some measure of advantage which merely represents a corresponding disadvantage to war-stricken producers in other parts of the world. It may be said that the war itself accelerated what Varga calls the "degradation" of agriculture, although the wartime character of this process differed greatly in its pattern and method of expression from the peacetime counterpart. Nevertheless, the wholesale slaughter of livestock,

the piles of rubble that were once farm buildings or equipment, and the shell-torn fields are graphic illustrations of the forcible "degradation" of agriculture.

In the second place, we have already noticed that even in our country, the relative share of the market available to the various classes of farmers has become more inequitable, with the disparity actually growing at a more rapid pace during the war. Moreover, we find that our agriculture has expanded its wartime production with more machinery but with considerably fewer farm workers, with fewer family workers, and with fewer farms. Thus, at the end of the war our farmers were producing a third more products for the market than they did before the war, and yet 14% fewer farm workers were hired in 1944 as compared with 1940 and 4% fewer family workers, an estimated total saving of 3 billion man-hours annually. Approximately 220,000 farms dropped out of production altogether, nearly half of them in the South, and 250,000 farm operators were added to the group of farmers who work 250 days or more per year off their farms, thus bringing the total in this category to more than 800,000 by 1944. Even in prosperous wartime America, we are told by the latest census that one-fourth of our farm families got an annual income from agriculture of less than \$600 in 1944; a more fortunate 42% got less than \$2,500 for the year; and only the top third got \$2,500 or over.

(To be continued)

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