
I

The Communists in the People's Front

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOUNDATIONS OF OLD TWO-PARTY SYSTEM SHATTERED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE PATH OF STRUGGLE BEFORE US

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* International Publishers, New York.—Ed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Comrade Dimitroff thus summarizes this task:

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

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

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

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

SUSTAINED ATTENTION TO DEVELOPING THE UNITED FRONT

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

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

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

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

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

2. THE TRADE UNION QUESTION AND THE FIGHT FOR UNITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With the Executive Council carrying through its splitting

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

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

3. LET US BROADEN THE ORGANIZED STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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