

# POLITICAL AFFAIRS

*A magazine devoted*

*to the theory and practice of Marxism - Leninism*

## EDITORIAL BOARD

EUGENE DENNIS, *Editor*; V. J. JEROME, *Associate Editor*

ALEXANDER BITTELMAN; MAX WEISS; HENRY WINSTON

---

VOLUME XXV, NO. 5

## *Contents*

MAY, 1946

May Day, 1946—Frontispiece	<i>Hugo Gellert</i>	386
The First Postwar May Day	<i>Editorial</i>	387
Exploding the Iranian Myth	<i>Frederick V. Field</i>	395
The Face of a Social-Democrat—Walter P. Reuther	<i>Carl Winter</i>	407
Wages and Profits Under Monopoly Capitalism	<i>Alexander Bittelman</i>	423
The Status of the Negro People in the Black Belt and How to Fight for the Right of Self-Determination	<i>Francis Franklin</i>	438
Toward Clarity on the Negro Question	<i>Max Weiss</i>	457

---

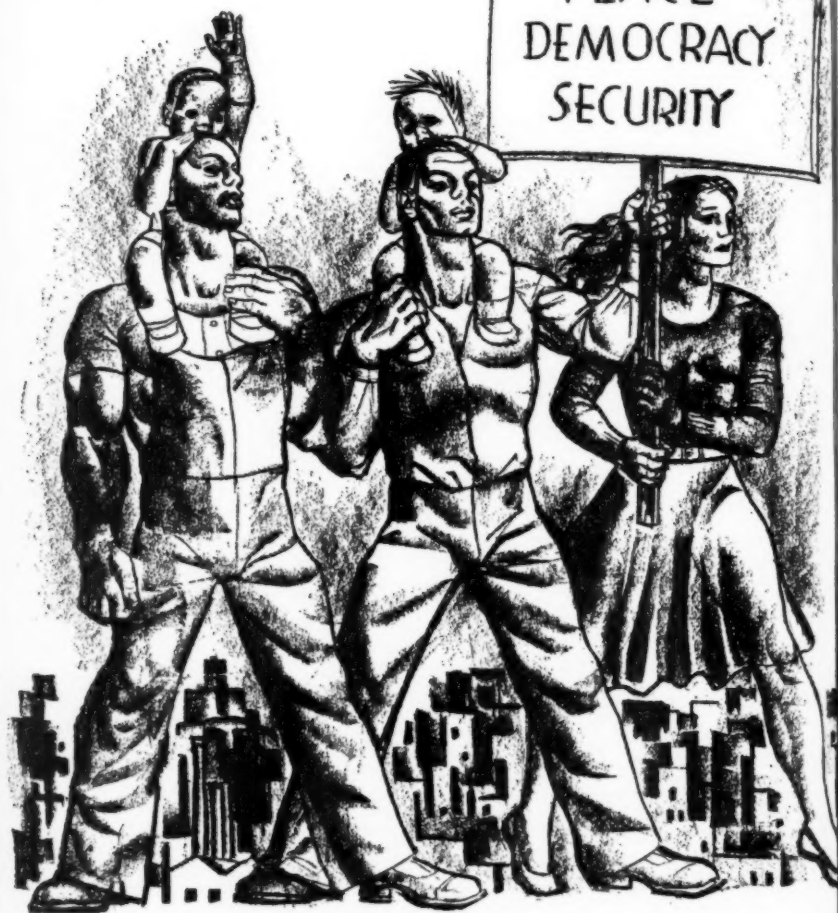
*Re-entered as second class matter January 4, 1945, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. POLITICAL AFFAIRS is published monthly by New Century Publishers, Inc., at 832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y., to whom subscriptions, payments and correspondence should be sent. Subscription rate: \$2.50 a year; \$1.25 for six months; foreign and Canada, \$3.00 a year. Single copies 25 cents.*

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

 209

WEEKLY  
GALLERY

PEACE  
DEMOCRACY  
SECURITY



**MAY DAY 1946**

On  
grea  
achi  
man  
ism,  
Stat  
grea  
T  
from  
ing  
eme  
stros  
othe  
by t  
tion  
pow  
is p  
nati  
ing  
over  
and  
men  
imp  
mor  
whic  
and  
of t  
also  
a n  
anti  
is d  
fyin  
reac  
Yalt  
in t  
the

# THE FIRST POSTWAR MAY DAY

## AN EDITORIAL

ON THIS first May Day since the great coalition of anti-Axis powers achieved military victory over German and Japanese fascist imperialism, the working class of the United States faces what is undoubtedly the greatest responsibility in its history.

This great responsibility arises from the following facts. The ruling class of the United States, having emerged from the war relatively stronger than the imperialists of any other capitalist country, and frightened by the consequences of the destruction of the military and industrial power of the former fascist states, is pursuing its drive for world domination by encouraging and supporting the reactionary circles the world over against the rising democracies and the peoples' liberation movements in Europe and Asia. This imperialist policy of the powerful monopolies in the United States, which is more and more influencing and determining the foreign policy of the Truman Administration, is also being expressed in the form of a most widespread and persistent anti-Soviet campaign. This campaign is directed concretely toward nullifying all the major agreements reached by the Big Three at Moscow, Yalta, and Potsdam. It is expressed in the reluctance to carry through the denazification of Germany, in the

bolstering up of the old imperial rule in Japan, and in the attempt to undermine the foundation for the building of the United Nations as a force for the maintenance of peace—the unity of the Big Three on the basis of the principle of unanimity on all major issues. Thus, it can be seen that the working class of the United States has the greatest responsibility to the people of our own country as well as to the peoples and the labor movement of the world for the maintenance of peace, which is so burningly desired by all peoples.

This great responsibility of the working class of the United States also arises from the fact that on this May Day, the day of demonstration of international working-class solidarity, the organized labor movement of our country is stronger than ever before in its history. Sixty years ago, when the workers of this country organized the world's first nationwide strike struggle for the eight-hour workday, the organized trade union movement counted no more than 300,000 members. The bulk of these were in the Knights of Labor, with less than 100,000 organized in the newly-formed American Federation of Labor. Today the organized trade union movement has 14 million members and the country's basic industries have been organized by the

C.I.O. unions. This very strength of the labor movement places upon it a great responsibility, which it dare not fail to meet if it is to remain true to the interests of the working class of our own country and of the world. This great strength of the trade union movement of our country, the leadership that the working class has achieved among our people in the war against fascism, also places upon it a new responsibility for the future of our nation and its role in world affairs.

#### THE MEANING OF MAY DAY

May Day is the day of international demonstration of solidarity of the working class of the world. It is the day of review by the workers in each land of their strength and weaknesses, of their achievements in the light of their goals. It is the day of resolution to carry forward the struggle until ultimate victory. May Day was born in the United States out of the struggle for the eight-hour day, and is therefore an American, no less than an international, day. May Day is one of the greatest of American traditions and, at the same time, marks the great advance of the working class of the United States toward an understanding of working-class internationalism. May Day, which began with the great strikes in this country in 1886, was made an international working-class holiday by action of the international labor movement in 1889.

To the class-conscious workers who

understand that only Marxism, the science which explains the laws of social development, class relations, and the ultimate, Socialist, outcome of the class struggle in modern capitalist society, May Day has always been a day of measuring the progress made by the working-class movement toward achieving its final goal. This progress is measured, in the first place, by the growth and influence of the Marxist party of the working class—in our time the Communist Party. But this does not in the least separate the Communist Party from the great mass of the workers who have not yet achieved the necessary understanding of the true nature of the class struggle and have not yet inscribed on their battle-banners the slogan of socialism. On the contrary, the Communists, precisely because of their ultimate objectives and their understanding of Marxism, have always understood the relation of the immediate struggle to the final goal. True Marxists have always fought both against opportunism, which reflects the policy of class collaboration, and against barren sectarianism, which tends to separate the most advanced sections of the workers from the great mass who learn, as Lenin said, by experience and not from books. That is why the Communists, while never hiding their socialist aims, always join with the great mass of the workers in the fight for immediate objectives, while at the same time striving to make clear to the masses the relationship of the im-

medi  
aims  
WH  
FA  
On  
of th  
comm  
class  
great  
Unio  
tenan  
peria  
direct  
again  
State  
natio  
high  
main  
demo  
work  
recen  
lists  
world  
forts  
the w  
stroy  
The  
wage  
millic  
substa  
though  
price  
talists  
tion.  
all, b  
work  
which  
are to  
on thi  
seriou

mediate objectives to the ultimate aims.

#### WHAT AMERICAN LABOR FACES THIS MAY DAY

On this May Day the working class of the United States is fighting in common cause with the working class of the world organized into the great World Federation of Trade Unions. It is fighting for the maintenance of peace and against the imperialist drive for a new world war, directing this fight in the first place against the imperialists of the United States and demonstrating its determination to carry forward the fight for higher living standards, for the maintenance and extension of its democratic rights and liberties. The workers of our land have seen in the recent months that the same monopolists who threaten the peace of the world are also bending all their efforts to lower the living standards of the workers and to weaken and destroy the trade unions.

The recent strike struggles and wage movements which embraced millions of workers, resulted in a substantial victory for labor, even though it was partially offset by the price concessions granted to the capitalists by the Truman Administration. This victory was won, above all, because of the ability of the workers to defend their unions, which, as a result of these struggles, are today stronger than ever. But on this May Day it would be a most serious error not to point out to the

workers that the capitalists are continuing their drive against the wages and working conditions of labor, are continuing their efforts to undermine and smash the basic unions of the workers, even though they are resorting to different methods to achieve this objective.

The attack on the rights of labor and the people by the monopolists and their political spokesmen in Congress, in the Truman Administration, in the various state and municipal legislative bodies, is being carried forward with even greater viciousness against the Negro people. This attack, which is part of monopoly's effort to weaken the organizations of the workers, and of the people, aims to disrupt the growing unity of labor and the people, to disrupt the ever-growing alliance of labor and the Negro people, and to weaken the labor and people's organizations from within through Hitler's weapon of anti-Communism. It is also being expressed through the growing boldness of the more openly fascist organizations, in their attacks upon labor and the Negro people, in their dissemination of anti-Semitism, and in their Red-baiting.

Of special concern to the labor movement on this May Day must be the influence and role of the reactionary circles of Social-Democracy who carry on the work of disruption within labor's ranks on the basis of the policies of American imperialism. The chief weapons of disruption employed by the Dubinskys, Lewises,

and Wolls within the A. F. of L., and their counterpart in the C.I.O., the Reuthers and Careys, are anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism. They oppose labor unity at home and international labor unity. Some of these elements resort to extensive demagoguery to cover up their open support of the war plans of imperialism because of the growing opposition of their membership to their policies. But, on every concrete measure, the substance of their action is fully in line with that of the most reactionary circles of monopoly capital. On the domestic issues they disrupt the unity of the workers fighting for wage increases, for social legislation and for the rights of the Negro people. With all sorts of schemes they try to hinder the growing movement of labor and the people for an independent policy with regard to the Truman Administration, which constantly retreats before the offensive of monopoly capital. They strive to prevent the crystallization of a broad people's coalition led by labor for the 1946 elections, a coalition with the perspective of a people's anti-fascist party in time to be a major factor in the 1948 elections.

On this May Day one of the central tasks that faces the working class of the United States, and especially the trade union movement and the Communist Party, is to draw the key lesson from the victory of fascism in Germany. That victory was basically the result of the division in the ranks of the labor movement and the

inability of the working class to defeat the policies of Social-Democracy in its ranks, which is possible only to the degree that unity is established on the basis of a correct Marxist policy of united working-class struggle in alliance with the mass of the common people against monopoly capital.

Notwithstanding the differences in the historical development of Germany and the United States, and the differences in democratic traditions, it would be a mistake to underestimate the danger of the rise of fascism in this country. Here, too, we witness an imperialist drive for world domination. Here, too, we are confronted with a powerfully entrenched social-reformist leadership which is keeping the working-class movement divided. Nor should we underestimate the increasing activity of the open fascist organizations and the reactionary feudal elements in the South which provide an additional base of support for the policies of monopoly capital. Their influence has already been reflected in Congress itself in the form of a coalition between the poll-tax Congressmen and Senators and the reactionary Republicans. The constant retreat of the Truman Administration before this coalition is a further indication of the growth of the menace of reaction and fascism at home, which is part and parcel of the imperialist provocation of, and preparations for, a new world war for world domination.

LABOR

Wh  
respec  
the la  
ing to  
anti-S  
tration  
cies of  
comin  
the ba  
occup  
Rather  
fects  
spirit  
of the  
ence o  
moted  
ranks  
The  
to be  
ternati  
penden  
of mo  
manife  
matur  
is, as  
ing of  
and fo  
ize tha  
ernme  
only th  
the eco  
rights  
This  
ing cla  
not rea  
lacking  
fective  
fight.  
the w

## LABOR AND FOREIGN POLICY

What is most disturbing, in this respect, is the slowness with which the labor movement has been reacting to the anti-United Nations and anti-Soviet policies of the Administration, reflecting as they do the policies of monopoly capital. This shortcoming cannot be explained only on the basis of the labor movement's preoccupation with domestic affairs. Rather must it be said that it reflects an insufficiently developed spirit of internationalism on the part of the labor movement and the influence of elements of chauvinism, promoted by the imperialists within the ranks of labor.

The failure of the labor movement to be on the alert, to react to all international events with its own independent policy, as against the policy of monopoly capital, is one of the manifestations of the political immaturity of the working class. There is, as yet, an insufficient understanding of the relationship of domestic and foreign policy, a failure to realize that the foreign policy of the government will inevitably affect, not only the peace of the world, but also the economic standards and political rights of the workers.

This does not mean that the working class does not desire peace and is not ready to fight for peace. What is lacking is leadership which will effectively guide and organize this fight. What is necessary is to imbue the working class with an under-

standing that it is its duty to intervene in determining the foreign policy of the government, no less than its wage and price policy. Beyond question, many workers feel that the issues presented are too difficult for them to grasp and should be left to those who are experts in the field of foreign affairs. In this connection it is interesting and profitable to observe that as early as 1864, in his Inaugural Address to the First International, Karl Marx called to the attention of the working classes that they have

. . . the duty to master themselves the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective governments; to counteract them, if necessary, by all means in their power; when unable to prevent, to combine in simultaneous denunciations, and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations.

The fight for such a foreign policy forms part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes.\*

No thoughtful worker can fail to see in these stirring words of the founder of scientific Socialism a guide to the actions that must be undertaken by the working class today if it is to defend its class interests and the true interests of the nation, and to fulfill its international duties.

\* Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, International Publishers, New York, Vol. II, pp. 441-2.

The lack of understanding of working-class internationalism is sharply expressed, not only in the weakness of the movement within the A. F. of L. against the efforts of the Wolls and Dubinskys to disrupt the newly-formed World Federation of Trade Unions, but also in the failure of most of the C.I.O. unions, including the most progressive ones, to bring the work of the W.F.T.U. before their membership and to make it a living reality in the struggle of the American workers. Clearly, one of the major tasks of the trade unions on this international day of working-class demonstration is not only to popularize the work and objectives of the W.F.T.U., but to resolve to make it part of their everyday work. This is especially necessary in the struggle for a durable peace, for the defeat of the war-makers, and for the defeat of the enemies of U.S.-Soviet collaboration. This is essential for the maintenance of the United Nations as an instrument for peace, and to prevent its enemies from converting it into an instrument for intrigues against the peace of the world, into an anti-democratic people's and anti-Soviet agency for Anglo-American imperialist world domination.

#### THE PARTY'S RESPONSIBILITY

The Communist Party, even more than the labor movement as a whole of which it is a part, must assume its full responsibility in this present crucial moment in the life of our

country and the world. Browderism weakened the Party organizationally and ideologically to the point where revisionism replaced Marxism-Leninism as its basic policy, and actual liquidation was rapidly taking place at a time which called for the greatest emphasis upon the building of a real Marxist, working-class party. Today the Communist Party is making strenuous efforts to rebuild itself upon the solid foundations of Marxist-Leninist policy under the leadership of Comrade Foster, whose opposition to the revisionist and liquidatory policies has made a lasting contribution to our Party, and to the working class.

Armed with a correct policy, not only on the general, but on the concrete, immediate issues facing the American people—in the struggle to win the peace, for maintaining and improving the living standards of the masses, for strengthening the trade unions both organizationally and ideologically, for safeguarding the democratic liberties, and for forging a broad people's coalition led by labor against the offensive of monopoly capital—the Communists must now, more than ever, carry their message to the people, help to organize and lead their struggles, and thus become even more integrated with the labor and people's movement.

In the course of these struggles, in which they must always be in the forefront, the Communists have the duty of proving to the working class that 'only Marxism-Leninism pro-



vides the answers to the numerous and complex questions confronting it. Only a labor movement that stands on the platform of Marxism-Leninism can establish positive guarantees against sliding backwards and can cope with and defeat all the attacks of its enemies.

It is in this sense that we Communists must understand and bring to the more advanced workers the meaning and importance of the present efforts of the Party to recruit tens of thousands of additional members, particularly from among the workers in the basic industries. The Party Building Campaign is not a routine matter, nor is it being conducted for any narrow partisan interest. It is a most vital political campaign, essential to the Party's fulfillment of its duties to the labor movement, to the American people. Its success will also be a measure of the understanding on the part of the members of the Communist Party and the Party organizations of the present moment in history and of the manner in which our tasks must be met.

### THE KEY QUESTION

On this May Day, the first since the end of the war, the working class the world over will have much for which to rejoice. Despite the fact that reaction and fascism are once more raising their heads, and are being encouraged and supported by powerful forces in the United States and Great Britain, they are today

weakened by the military defeat of the Axis powers. On the other hand, the Socialist Soviet Union, the democratic forces in Europe, and the forces of national liberation in Asia and other parts of the world are stronger than ever before. In the United States, as in Great Britain, the labor and people's forces, the forces of democracy, are also stronger than at any other time. The conditions for the victory of the forces of peace over the forces of war and reaction are most favorable. The very strength of the labor movement in our country attests to this.

The only question that remains is whether the democratic forces everywhere, and especially in our own country, can be organized and united in time on the basis of correct policies and exert their full influence in determining the future course of events. If we emphasize the basic weaknesses of the labor movement of our country, it is only because we realize the necessity of overcoming them quickly. We must not take a one-sided view of the situation. We must see the dangers ahead, but we must also see the favorable conditions for success in the struggle. When we point to the immaturity of the labor movement, we Communists do not absolve ourselves of responsibility. Our Party bears, not only a great responsibility for the weaknesses of the labor movement, but itself still reflects some of these very weaknesses, including an insufficiently strong spirit of internationalism, which is

particularly to be noticed in the work of many Communists in the trade unions.

On this May Day, hundreds of thousands of workers in the United States will join with their brothers in other lands in parades, demonstrations, and mass rallies. They will be marching and demonstrating for peace, for greater economic security, for democracy and civil liberties, for the rights of the Negro people, for the defeat of the growing menace of fascism, and for curbing the monopolies who breed fascism, reaction, and new wars. A heightened spirit of international solidarity will be manifested, which must be developed into a greater understanding and sensitivity throughout the year.

May Day this year will be a day of rejoicing over victories achieved and a day of resolution to carry forward the fight under the new conditions which exist today. The class-conscious workers and, in the first place, the Communists, will be marching with all other militant workers, fully conscious of the inevitable final triumph of their cause, which is in the interests of all the people. They will march on the path of progress which leads to Socialism, which alone will fully guarantee peace, plenty, and freedom for mankind. Only under Socialism will man attain his full stature and dignity. Only under Socialism will the dream of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness be truly realized.

EX  
IR  
  
As t  
final  
cesso  
ifesti  
to th  
Leag  
of pe  
ican  
from  
sourc  
by it  
tion  
force  
ness  
A  
so-ca  
hand  
cil d  
and e  
the m  
elève  
the  
main  
ity. I  
the  
Amer  
form  
with  
obtai  
Iran  
by th  
perial  
ing a

# EXPLODING THE IRANIAN MYTH

By FREDERICK V. FIELD

As THE League of Nations was being finally interred in Geneva, its successor, the United Nations, was manifesting dangerous symptoms similar to those which had rendered the old League ineffective as an instrument of peace. Ironically, it was the American government, whose absence from the League had been a major source of that body's failure, which by its presence in the new organization was giving leadership to the forces seeking to destroy the usefulness of the United Nations.

A concentrated examination of the so-called Iranian issue as it was handled by the U.N. Security Council during the latter part of March and early April provides insight into the motivations and methods of those eleven nations which today compose the highest tribunal charged with maintaining world peace and security. It is a mistake to oversimplify the picture which emerges. The American and British governments formed a powerful imperialist bloc within the Security Council which obtained an ample majority in the Iranian question. They were bound by the common denominator of imperialist aggression and the overriding anti-democratic strategy of im-

perialist policies. This bloc was sharply opposed by the Soviet Union and Poland, who championed a system of international relations based upon the equality of nations and people.

In this sense the debate at Hunter College in the Bronx presented a clear-cut and relatively simple picture. But only in this sense was it simple. Behind the surface the pattern was as complicated as is the relationship of forces in the capitalist-colonial sectors of the world. Neither Secretary of States Byrnes nor Sir Alexander Cadogan was speaking in the interests of the American or British people. Their views reflected only the predatory ambitions of the monopolists. The great masses of the United States and Britain were not represented at the Security Council table. Only in the labor and progressive press, in the critical analyses of certain radio commentators, and in the resolutions of protest voiced by progressive organizations throughout the nation was the true interest of the United States reflected. The positive foreign policy of Big Three unity and colonial emancipation put forward at the great Win-the-Peace Conference in Washington on the weekend of April 5, 6, and 7 represented the real needs and aspirations of the American people. In its declaration of principles, the Conference stressed the central issue when it stated:

A democratic American foreign policy can stop a third World War.

The friendship and unity of all the

United Nations is the guarantee of peace.

The unity of the Big Three is paramount, and must be restored on the basis of the Yalta, Potsdam and Moscow agreements. Friendship with both the Soviet Union and Great Britain is vital to the American interests and indispensable to the effective working of the United Nations Organization.

The decisive votes taken during the Iranian dispute at the Security Council were regularly eight or nine in favor of the imperialist bloc. Yet the unity apparent in such an overwhelming majority did not in fact exist. Both the Australian and French delegates tried to effect a compromise between the imperialist leader Byrnes and Soviet delegate Gromyko, and on one occasion Colonel Hodgson of Australia abstained from voting with the Anglo-American bloc. He vitiated the effectiveness of his position, however, by refusing to associate himself with the policies of the Soviet Union and Poland which alone carried the burden of peace and democracy in this debate. The role of the French delegate, Henri Bonnet, must have been nearly as embarrassing to himself as it doubtless was to the French people. His performance at Hunter College in no wise conformed to the political scene in France. It showed, for one thing, the conservative influence of the French Foreign Office which unlike the other ministries remains a stronghold of the Right. For another thing, M. Bonnet's activities were obviously the result of blackmail on the part of

the Truman Administration. Leon Blum, the Right-wing Socialist, had arrived in Washington just as the Security Council sessions were to get under way, for the purpose of securing large American credits for his country. The question of these credits, vital to France, hung as a sword of Damocles over the head of Henri Bonnet at the Security Council. It was only after April 15, when the action of Iran in withdrawing its complaint removed the last semblance of reality from the case, that M. Bonnet took a firm stand in favor of removing Iran from the agenda.

The weak and confused chairing of the session by the Chinese delegate, Quo Tai-chi, temporary President of the Council, was notable only for its precision and decisiveness when Byrnes cracked the whip. On one occasion, for instance, when the Iranian Ambassador Hussein Ala was exploiting his presence at the Council table to argue the substance of the Iranian "case," Ambassador Lange of Poland passed a note to the chair suggesting that Ala be requested to confine himself to the procedural aspects of the situation. The suggestion was ignored by the President. A few moments later the identical suggestion was made by Byrnes, whereupon Dr. Quo promptly admonished Hussein Ala. In other respects, too, Quo Tai-chi in no sense represented the people of China. In his capacity as a Kuomintang hack he slavishly followed the lead of Byrnes and Cadogan. Not once did the observer get the slightest indica-

tion from his behavior that the Chinese people last winter had forced upon Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary dictatorship a pledge of unity and coalition government.

The role played by the remaining delegates—from Egypt, Mexico, Brazil, and the Netherlands—revealed similar internal and international contradictions. The reactionary Dutch monarchy, wholly subservient to British troops and American arms for the reconquest of Indonesia, made no pretense at Hunter College to do other than echo the voices of Byrnes and Cadogan. The Egyptian delegate no more reflected the aspirations of the Egyptian people to rid themselves of British arms and imperialism than did the Mexican, Castillo Najera, similar desires on the part of his people regarding American interference. The Egyptian did, however, while supporting the Anglo-American bloc on Iran, lay the basis for a possible future appeal to the Security Council against British military intervention in the affairs of his country. About all that can be said of the Brazilian delegate is that his country might just as well have been represented by an attaché of the American State Department. In truth it was!

This carefully manipulated Security Council in its dominant composition (last January, for instance, the Americans and British had insisted on Netherlands membership in the body against the Soviet nomination of Norway) thus played into the hands of the imperialist bloc. Not,

however, without certain misgivings, as in the case of Australia and France, not without self-evident fawning as in the case of Brazil and China, and not without exposing the completely unrepresentative character of the particular delegates who in no sense reflected the real interests of their nations. Thus the difficulties latent in the Anglo-American bloc, the contradictions evident just beneath the surface of the voting, are factors which indicate that the imperialists will not always have such smooth going as they did over Iran.

#### THE MYTH OF THE IRANIAN "DISPUTE"

The so-called Iranian issue before the Security Council was a fraud. By March 26, when the Council began discussing it, no dispute existed. The myth of a "dispute" was systematically fabricated by the American and British governments in a deliberate attempt to embarrass the Soviet Union. In perpetrating this fraud the imperialists had several interconnected motives. Because it bore the major burden in defeating Hitlerism during the war and because in the months following the war it greatly enhanced its prestige throughout the world by championing the equality of nations and peoples and the rights of freedom and self-determination, the Soviet Union had become the undisputed center of the world democratic movements. In contrast, the governments in Britain and the United States had moved sharply to the Right after the mili-

tary victory, had reverted to a policy of undisguised imperialism, and, especially in the United States, had swerved sharply from the domestic liberalism which had marked the war years. In consequence of their military, economic and political intervention on behalf of reaction and against the democratic movements in all parts of the world, to which these governments had access, the American and British governments were becoming feared instead of respected by the great masses of the earth.

The myth of the Iranian dispute was invented partly in order to divert world attention from these imperialist policies. It was concocted as part of the entire policy of U.S.-British imperialism to leave unfulfilled the agreements reached at Moscow, Yalta, and Potsdam, to effect a full break in the Anglo-Soviet-American Coalition, and to undermine the peace structure of the United Nations. It was perpetrated partly with the design of placing the Soviet Union in an unfavorable light in the hope of undermining its rapidly growing prestige. It was also designed to block the rapid pace of democratization and emancipation on the part of the majority of the world's population which is enchained by feudalism and colonialism. The Anglo-American combination wanted not merely to preserve the status quo but to extend its domination at the expense of the heroic peoples who had joined them in winning the war. The imperialists, in

other words, strove to betray the war by imposing upon the world a peace for the sole benefit of the monopolists.

For these purposes a world-wide campaign of slander and falsification was carried on by American and British officials throughout February and March. The notorious speech of Winston Churchill, sponsored and applauded by President Truman, as well as the get-tough-with-Russia policy adopted by Byrnes, Vandenberg and the other spokesmen for reaction, punctuated this infamous campaign.

It was no accident that the impoverished Iranian nation was chosen as the focus of this anti-Soviet campaign. Many of its government leaders, including the majority of the landlord-ridden Majlis (parliament), were virtual puppets of British imperialism, with the United States playing an increasingly influential role. The democratic movement of Iran, expressed in the chief progressive party, the Tudeh, and in the revolt of the province of Azerbaijan against the centralized feudal authority of Teheran, faced the typical twin obstacles of all semi-colonial peoples: feudal impoverishment and imperialist domination. The progress of these democratic movements was rapid during the war and especially in recent months. As in China, the role of imperialism was threatened by democracy.

Iran, moreover, is a major source of oil and a link in the gigantic chain of Middle East concessions owned by

Bri  
nop  
por  
inst  
pai  
cate  
T  
bee  
In  
ven  
bee  
troo  
and  
cam  
imp  
ony  
port  
The  
men  
The  
day  
Iran  
thro  
perr  
It  
asse  
as it  
Cou  
a fra  
the  
mor  
imp  
spea  
ple  
the  
ing  
last  
EVE  
19  
U.S.  
19

British, Dutch, and American monopolies. And of very particular importance, Iran was selected as the instrument of this anti-Soviet campaign because it is strategically located on the border of the U.S.S.R.

This is not the first time Iran has been selected for this imperialist role. In the counter-revolution and intervention period of 1918-20, Iran had been the base from which British troops attacked the new Soviet power and from which General Denikin campaigned. It was British power imposed upon this supine semi-colony that permitted Denikin to transport his forces across the Caspian. The British and American governments strive to repeat this history. The strength of the Soviet Union today, the new democratic forces in Iran, and the strength of democracy throughout the world will no longer permit it.

It is important to document the assertion that the Iranian "dispute," as it was brought before the Security Council by Byrnes and Cadogan, was a fraud. We need to be armed with the facts of this case in order the more effectively to combat the next imperialist maneuver. The evidence speaks for itself so clearly that a simple chronology, touching only upon the historical highlights and recording in some detail the events of the last weeks, will suffice.

#### EVENTS IN IRAN: 1918-1946

1918-20—British attack upon the U.S.S.R. from Iran.

1921—Soviet Union renounces all

Czarist concessions and special privileges in Iran on condition that Iran refrain from turning over these concessions "to the supervision, disposal or use of any third state or its citizens." The U.S.S.R. reserves the right to bring its troops into Iran if the territory of the latter is in danger of being transformed into a base for military attack upon the U.S.S.R.

1921—Iranian government grants oil concession on Soviet border to American Standard Oil Company in contravention of treaty. Soviet protests force annulment of this concession in 1922.

1923—In second violation of 1921 treaty, Iran grants oil concession to American Sinclair Oil Company. Concession never materializes because large loan on which it was premised was not obtained.

1933—Iran grants Anglo-Iranian Oil Company new concessions in southern Iran (original concessions date from early in the century).

1937—Third violation occurs when Iran grants similar concession to another American company called Delaver. As a result of Soviet protests this is nullified in 1938.

1939—In fourth violation of 1921 treaty Iranian government grants oil concession on Soviet border to Dutch firm, Elgemeine Exploratsie Machapai. This is nullified only in 1944 after persistent Soviet objection.

1941—Soviet and British armies move into Iran as war measure, Soviet troops operating under 1921 treaty.

1942—Anglo-Soviet-Iranian treaty

pledges mutual respect for Iran's sovereignty and pledges evacuation of all troops six months after Germany's defeat.

1943—In Declaration of Teheran Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt re-affirm pledge to respect Iranian sovereignty.

1944—Soviet Union officially asks Iranian government for an oil concession in northern Iran. Government officials flatly reject request and landlord-controlled Majlis passes special law forbidding negotiations on this matter.

1944—At the same time Iranian government carries on negotiations with American and British firms for new concessions which are agreed to in principle.

1945—In preparation for evacuating their own troops, British arm southern Iranian tribes to strengthen central government's drive against democratic forces, especially those in Azerbaijan province on Soviet border.

1946: January—Under British instigation Iranian question comes before Security Council meeting in London. Vishinsky points out that issue is baseless. Security Council refuses British desire for an investigation and instead recommends settlement of outstanding differences by direct negotiation between U.S.S.R. and Iran. Security Council reserves the right to request reports from both countries on progress of negotiations.

February-March — Anglo-American campaign of slander against So-

viet Union. Creation of the Iranian myth.

February 19—Prime Minister Ghavam of Iran goes to Moscow for negotiations. Remains 16 days.

March 1 — Official communique from Moscow states that on February 25 Prime Minister Ghavam "was notified of the Soviet Government's decision to the effect that, starting from 2 March the withdrawal of part of the Soviet troops would be begun from the districts of Iran where the situation is relatively quiet, namely, from Meshed, Sharoud, and Semnan districts in the eastern part of Iran. As to the Soviet forces in the other areas of Iran, they will remain in Iran until the situation has been elucidated."

March 2—This date, the terminal point for foreign troops to remain in Iran according to the Anglo-Soviet-Iranian treaty of 1942, passes with Soviet forces remaining in some areas where according to the 1921 treaty the Soviet Union had the right to leave them until the threat to the security of the U.S.S.R. had been eliminated.

March 7—Moscow communique states that the incomplete negotiations begun in Moscow would be continued in Teheran as soon as the new Soviet Ambassador arrived there.

March 18—Hussein Ala, Iranian Ambassador to the United States, officially "brings to the attention of the Security Council a dispute between Iran and the U.S.S.R., the continuance of which is likely to endanger



the maintenance of international peace and security." The letter makes no mention of the negotiations which have taken place in Moscow, or those which are about to be resumed in Teheran, or of the official Soviet communiques referred to above.

March 19—The new Soviet Ambassador arrives in Teheran to carry forward the negotiations begun in Moscow.

March 19—Soviet Ambassador Gromyko requests the Security Council to postpone its meeting scheduled for March 25 to April 10, first, because the request from Hussein Ala is "unexpected, since the negotiations between the Iranian Government and the Government of the U.S.S.R. are being conducted at the present time," and, secondly, because the Soviet Government needs time in which to prepare for such a discussion before the Security Council.

March 20—Hussein Ala again addresses the Security Council, this time opposing the Soviet request for postponement.

March 20—Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., American delegate to the Security Council, requests (1) that the Iranian question be placed at the head of the agenda, and (2) that the U.S.S.R. and Iran be asked to report upon the negotiations "which may have taken place between them."

March 21—In reply to a statement made to the United Press by Winston Churchill, Generalissimo Stalin makes the following statement through the same agency: "The

statements by Mr. Churchill do not appear to be convincing as regards the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran. This question, as is known, has already received a positive solution under the terms of an understanding concluded between the Governments of the Soviet Union and Iran." This constituted the first official announcement that an agreement had been reached between the two nations regarding the major item in dispute, namely, the evacuation of Soviet troops.

March 22—Prime Minister Ghamam of Iran announces that it is a matter of indifference to him whether the Security Council examines the Iranian question on March 25 or a fortnight later. This is one of several occasions during the subsequent weeks when either the Iranian Prime Minister or his spokesman, Prince Firouz, virtually repudiates the actions of Ambassador Hussein Ala before the Security Council.

#### IRAN AT HUNTER COLLEGE

We come now to the opening of the debate on Iran in the Security Council on March 26. Officially the discussion never passed beyond the procedural stage. Officially, that is, the substance of the Iranian question never came before the Council. The entire debate, from March 26 on, was, first, on whether or not the issue should appear on the agenda, second, on postponing discussion of it until April 10, and, third, on removing it from the agenda.

The Soviet Ambassador, Andrei Gromyko, opened the discussion on March 26 by giving the reasons why the Iranian subject should not be placed upon the Security Council agenda. After reminding his colleagues of the Soviet government's deep interest in the U.N., he pointed out that negotiations had taken place between the U.S.S.R. and Iran and that these had already resulted in a positive understanding respecting the principal point at issue, namely, the evacuation of Soviet troops. Gromyko at this point officially informed the Security Council on behalf of his government that such an understanding had been reached and that, in accordance with it troop withdrawals were already under way. "How, therefore," he concluded, "can we justify a demand to include the so-called question of Iran on the agenda of the Security Council now?" He formally proposed that the question of Iran be dropped.

Secretary of State Byrnes, who displaced the regular U.S. delegate during these discussions, promptly opposed the Soviet motion. In doing so, he strongly implied that he did not accept the official word of the U.S.S.R. regarding the conclusion of an understanding on troop evacuation. He stated that he had no knowledge of such an understanding. In retrospect one must conclude that the American Ambassador and his large staff in Teheran were so busy trying to prevent a solution of the difficulty that they had no time to keep Wash-

ington informed of the realities of the situation.

Following Byrnes' stubborn refusal to accept the facts of the matter and his dogged insistence that a dispute be created where one did not in reality exist, all the nations present except Poland lined up with the Anglo-American bloc. The discussion need not be dwelt upon at length. No logic in favor of placing the non-existent Iranian question on the agenda was employed. It could not have been, for the facts belied the position taken by Byrnes. Nor, as it turned out, was logic necessary. The puppets of Byrnes and Cadogan simply did as they were told.

On this first day of debate, as well as on several later occasions, the Security Council had before it a proposal which, had they genuinely wanted a solution of the Iranian difficulty, could have been readily accepted. Ambassador Oscar Lange of Poland, a man of extraordinary clarity and force, offered a compromise motion whereby the facts of the matter could be ascertained without placing the Iranian question on the active agenda of the Council. He suggested either that the Security Council itself obtain official information from the Iranian government regarding its version of the status of negotiations or that any one or more of the eleven nations represented at the Council table solicit such information through their own diplomatic channels. The question of whether Iran should be placed upon the agenda

could then be taken up on the basis of the information thus obtained. No more reasonable solution could have been put forward. And, in fact, this was substantially the formula introduced by Byrnes three days later and accepted by the Council. Yet on March 26 Byrnes flatly rejected it.

The reason for the rejection of the Lange motion is perfectly plain. The purpose of the imperialists was to make as much noise as possible in order to isolate the Soviet Union and cover up their own aggressive activities in Greece, Indonesia, China and elsewhere. To do this, the facts had to be disregarded and suppressed. Adoption of the Polish motion would have brought the facts to light. It was because of this attitude on the part of Byrnes and Cadogan that many days later both Gromyko and Lange felt obliged to question the motives of the American and British governments. Instead of trying to facilitate a solution, the imperialists were deliberately attempting to aggravate a situation already substantially solved.

A similar situation came up on the afternoon of March 26. The Soviet request for dropping the question of Iran had been defeated by a vote of two to nine and the motion to adopt the agenda with Iran on it passed nine to two. The Soviet delegate thereupon requested that discussion of the Iranian issue be postponed until April 10. At this point the Australian representative offered a compromise which won the sup-

port of Dr. Lange to the effect that a written communication be sought from the Iranian government regarding the status of negotiations. Here again, for the obvious purpose of avoiding facts in order to continue to inflate the non-existent issue, Byrnes and Cadogan petulantly opposed the idea.

As noted above, the Iranian Prime Minister himself had on March 22 stated that it was a matter of indifference to him whether the Security Council took up the Iranian matter at the opening of its Hunter College sessions or later. The Council was therefore faced with a situation in which the complainant, Iran, had agreed to the postponement now requested by the Soviet Union. But in spite of these plain facts the motion for postponement was defeated by the usual score of two to nine. The Soviet delegation then absented itself from the further discussions on Iran, and the Iranian Ambassador, Hussein Ala, who had been virtually discredited by his own government, was invited to come to the Council table and add his voice to the anti-Soviet chorus.

Interrupting the chronology for a moment, it is enlightening to record a few of the most glaring inconsistencies (to use a polite word) in this phase of the discussion. Secretary Byrnes on March 27 stated that he had direct information from his diplomatic representatives in Teheran "that there has been no settlement of the dispute between the two gov-

ernments." This statement was made five days after Soviet troops had begun their withdrawal in accordance with the understanding which the Soviet Government had reached with the Iranian government; Hussein Ala, whose information on Iran apparently came from the American State Department rather than from his own government, continued to assert that there was no agreement as late as April 3. No wonder that Ambassador Gromyko charged Byrnes with being "more Iranian than the Iranians."

This shameful business was dragged on into the third week of April. As soon as events shattered one flimsy pretext, another was invented. On March 29 the Council had instructed the Secretary General to ascertain the status of negotiations from Moscow and Teheran. Reports from both governments were presented to the Security Council on April 3. The Soviet note merely reaffirmed what Gromyko had officially reported on March 26. The message from Iran admitted that negotiations had taken place but alleged that no agreements whatsoever had been reached. Yet on the very next day Hussein Ala used the following words: "A solution having been found on the question of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops . . ." What had meanwhile happened to alter his testimony? He referred to no new information received from his government. What had happened, however, was most revealing. The Ameri-

can Secretary of State, no longer able to maintain the myth that no negotiations or agreement had been reached, had introduced a resolution deferring further proceedings on the Iranian question until May 6, the terminal date for Soviet troop evacuation. As usual the Iranian Ambassador took his cue from the American government.

From then on the so-called dispute blew right up in the faces of Byrnes, Cadogan, and their puppets. In complete confirmation of what Ambassador Gromyko had been saying all along, an agreement on all outstanding issues, including the withdrawal of troops, the matter of Azerbaijan, and a joint Soviet-Iranian oil company, was announced on April 4. On the 6th, Ambassador Gromyko addressed a letter to the Security Council requesting the removal of the Iranian matter from the agenda. On the 9th, Hussein Ala, in total disregard of the new circumstances and apparently on his own initiative, wrote the Council requesting that the matter be left on the agenda until May 6.

The Council did not again take up the Iranian question until April 15. It then had before it a new communication from Teheran formally withdrawing its complaint. The instruction to Hussein Ala—which the Iranian government had taken the precaution to publicize in advance—read in part: "It is necessary that you immediately inform the Security Council that the Iranian Government

has complete confidence in the word and pledge of the Soviet Government and for this reason withdraws its complaint from the Security Council." As the session opened Ambassador Gromyko moved that the matter be immediately dropped.

Plainly there was nothing left of the so-called Iranian dispute. Not only had the successful negotiations now been confirmed by the Iranian government but the latter had officially withdrawn its complaint. If the United States had not already given ample evidence of its insincerity in this entire affair, the demand by Stettinius, who had now replaced Byrnes as the American spokesman, that Iran be left on the agenda would have caused more astonishment than it did. The principal argument advanced by the Americans and British in the earlier sessions had been that in view of Iran's refusal to confirm the positive results of the negotiations attested to by the Soviet Union the Council could not accept the Soviet word. Now that argument was completely removed. This, of course, made no difference to Mr. Stettinius, to whom logic and legality are ideals to be honored only in the breach. This spokesman for American monopoly conveniently reversed himself and claimed that Iran's withdrawal of its complaint made no difference in the status of the question. This utterly fantastic "argument" was quickly seconded by Cadogan, the Netherlands, Mexico, Brazil, China, Australia and Egypt. The French

delegate, Henri Bonnet, however, broke ranks and stood with the Soviet Union and Poland for immediate dropping of the Iran case.

The Anglo-American bloc thus had the votes necessary to carry their shameful point. Until a new bomb exploded in their faces at the opening of the April 16 session. To their consternation, the U.N. Secretary General, Trygve Lie, introduced a skillfully drafted memorandum indicating that now that Iran had withdrawn its complaint the procedure supported by the imperialists was illegal.

The broad conclusions to be drawn from the Iranian episode in the Security Council have already been indicated in the opening sections of this article. The United States and Britain are plainly attempting to turn the U.N. into its opposite. They are striving to use a mechanism created to preserve world peace and security to cover and justify imperialist aggression and the continuance of colonialism and feudalism. They are seeking to employ the Security Council to isolate the Soviet Union and its far-reaching influence upon the democratic masses of the world. They would turn an instrument of peace and security into an instrument of war and enslavement. The Iranian case thoroughly exposes these motives and the unprincipled methods to which the imperialists will resort to effect them.

The United States is the leader of

this imperialist bloc. Responsibility for the success or failure of the U.N. rests, therefore, primarily upon the American people. As long as they countenance policies and personalities such as those exhibited at Hunter College they will be permitting the monopolists to drive the world headlong into another war. The situation can be changed only through the organized efforts of the vast majority of the American people, with the working class in the forefront, who genuinely want peace, security and democracy. The policies of Byrnes, Stettinius, Vandenberg and the other reactionaries must be repudiated. They can be repudiated only by forcing upon the Truman Administration those policies which support Big Three unity and especially American-Soviet cooperation, which work for colonial emancipation, and which check the mad drive of the imperialists for plunder and war.

What has happened demonstrates how correct and far-sighted was the insistence of the Soviet Union on the maintenance of the veto power as the basis of Big Three unanimity which the Anglo-American imperialist bloc is now trying to cancel out. What is involved basically is the effectiveness, the very existence, of the United Nations' peace structure. Shall we have a repetition of the spurious League of Nations which proved itself impotent to halt aggression and whose policies were directed to advancing the interests of the dominant imperialist powers? Or shall we have a

United Nations worthy of the name, an inter-peoples' organization for world peace based on the program arrived at by the victorious Anglo-Soviet-American Coalition at Moscow, Yalta, and Potsdam? The answer to this depends on the resoluteness of the people in compelling the restoration of Big Three unity which has been ruptured by the Anglo-American imperialist bloc.

The most decisive factor in guaranteeing this unity vital to the peace of the world is the struggle of the labor movement, rallying around it all sections of the democratic and peace-loving people. Unfortunately, it must be stated, the organized labor movement in the United States, notwithstanding its great advances in organization and militant strike struggles, has to date not yet come forward in consonance with its great tasks in the struggle for peace. American labor, represented through its advanced trade union center, the C.I.O., in the World Federation of Trade Unions, is committed to a policy of making American labor, in conjunction with the labor movement of all lands, an articulate and effective force for realizing the purposes of the United Nations' war—to rid the world of every vestige of fascism and to build a firm basis for a durable peace. It is imperative that the American labor movement rouse itself to meet its historic political responsibilities which devolve upon it in the interests of the American people and of the world.

# THE FACE OF A SOCIAL-DEMOCRAT— WALTER P. REUTHER

By CARL WINTER

RARELY, IF EVER, has such open support by all the agencies of capitalist propaganda been given to a candidate for union office as was given to Walter P. Reuther's campaign for the presidency of the United Automobile Workers of America—C.I.O. For months before the union elections, as well as during the recent international union convention in Atlantic City, the press and radio energetically promoted Reuther for the post held by President R. J. Thomas for the past seven years. And when Reuther was finally elected by a narrow margin of 124 votes out of 8,800, the spokesmen for Big Business scarcely attempted to conceal their joy.

Of course, what was at issue was something much more important and far-reaching than the personal ambitions, or even the popularity, of the much-publicized "young man with a plan"—Walter Reuther. What was involved was nothing less than the future course and fate of the largest and one of the most influential progressive unions in the entire American labor movement. The real issue behind the contest for the lead-

ing office in the U.A.W. was whether this powerful union would continue to advance and to lend its strength to support of the policies of the C.I.O., as represented by Philip Murray, or whether it would fall under the sway of forces working for the very destruction of the C.I.O.

Certainly, a large part of the membership of this union, which grew and matured in the sharpest struggles against monopoly capital, still remembers the treachery of its first president, Homer Martin, and would not readily or knowingly turn over the leadership to recognizable reactionaries. That is why the anti-C.I.O. elements, both within the U.A.W. and elsewhere in the labor movement, were in need of a Walter Reuther to give a militant and seemingly progressive, even mildly socialist, front to to their conspiracy of disruption. And that is why, following the U.A.W. convention's enthusiastic reception of Philip Murray's fighting speech in defense of C.I.O. policies, Reuther's promoters attempted to link his name with that of Murray.

Despite the fact that the convention elected R. J. Thomas as first vice-president and George Addes as secretary-treasurer, and placed the majority of the executive board in the hands of known champions of the C.I.O. program, the damaging consequences of Reuther's election to the presidency must not be underestimated. Behind the presidential mantle of Walter Reuther, there lurk the forces of David Dubinsky, Matthew Woll and John L. Lewis of

the A. F. of L., as well as Reuther's Social-Democratic cronies in the C.I.O., the Rieves and Wolchoks. Through the election of Reuther, these forces have made dangerous inroads into the top circles of the C.I.O. From their newly-gained vantage point, they threaten the unity and the fighting capacity of the entire American labor movement. But the fact that their most recent gain in the U.A.W. was made with the aid of subterfuge and the obscuring of their true political aims, emphasizes the need of unmasking the true role of Reuther and the forces he represents.

#### DUBIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

When a pseudo-liberal U. S. Congressman warns the General Motors Corporation that it had better cooperate with U.A.W.'s Walter P. Reuther to guard against the "danger of Communism" and when an imperialist-chauvinist publisher assures the U.A.W. that Reuther is its most resourceful general in the battle against monopoly, it is high time for labor to get a close look at the face of this favorite of capitalism in its leading ranks.

At the very outset of the G.M. strike, Henry ("American Century") Luce's magazines—*Fortune*, *Time*, and *Life*—each devoted special articles to glamorizing Walter P. Reuther, the head of the G.M. division of the U.A.W. *Time* wrote on December 3, 1945: "If it came to a strike, the union wanted it run by Walter Reu-

ther. With the possible exception of John L. Lewis, he is the most resourceful labor leader on the U. S. scene."

On the 109th day of the strike, Representative Charles M. LaFollette of Indiana arose in Congress to demand that the Un-American Activities Committee investigate General Motors' refusal to settle the strike with Reuther.

"This is a deliberate attempt to spread Communism by G.M.," LaFollette declared, explaining this fantastic charge by the observation that Reuther is "the American Communists' pet hate" and "the ablest leader the union has." Therefore, pleads the Congressman in substance, let us all get behind Reuther to combat the radicalization of American labor.

And then, to complete the circle, Victor Riesel, labor reporter and columnist of the *New York Post* and former managing editor of the Social-Democratic *New Leader*, announced joyfully in his *Post* column, two weeks before the International Convention, that Reuther (whom he describes as a moderate socialist) "definitely has decided to run for the presidency of the Auto Workers Union."

#### CAPITAL'S LIEUTENANTS

What is there about Reuther that makes him the darling of capitalist apologists at the same time that they describe him as a sort of Peck's bad boy? Certainly, the American labor movement has many men in its lead-



ership who are open champions and defenders of the capitalist system; and it has many more who have not yet thought seriously about the nature of capitalism and who, therefore, are even unaware of any working-class aims above the trade union level. But modern capitalism is in need of more effective labor lieutenants than these.

A capitalist system which has twice forced world war upon a single generation, and which is once again threatening deterioration of living standards and postwar mass unemployment, cannot depend upon its *open* champions alone in the ranks of labor, although they continue to perform their appointed task. The Mathew Wolls and the Bill Hutchsons have proved the insufficiency of outright support for capitalism in labor's ranks to prevent the growth of powerful progressive unions. From the experience of a growing, fighting trade union movement, there has arisen a greater receptivity to the political advice and leadership offered by the Communists, and a questioning of fundamental class relations. The tremendous achievements of the Soviet Union, in war as in peace, have shaken the belief of millions in capitalism as "the best of all systems" or, at least, as an eternal system.

#### THE CORE OF OPPORTUNISM

The older capitalist states, such as Great Britain and pre-war Germany, have given a classical demonstration

of how the ruling class meets the growth of class consciousness and political independence on the part of labor. Where mass socialist movements, closely bound up with the trade unions, had developed in these and other western European countries, they were corrupted and betrayed from within by the blandishments of a powerful, imperialist ruling class. Favors to a numerically small upper layer of the working class and the petty-bourgeoisie, based on sharing crumbs of the power of the exploiting class over the masses of the people in the homeland and in the colonies, spread the disease of opportunism throughout the leadership of the socialist and labor movement. It was in opposition to such betrayal that Lenin rallied the honest socialist forces for the establishment of the international Communist movement, with the warning that "the core of opportunism is the idea of class collaboration." Social-Democratism, a system of ideas of collaboration with the capitalist class under the guise of socialist motives, has thus, historically, been a special instrument for fastening capitalist ideology upon the working class.

Within the United States, we have had our Hillquits and Bergers, not to speak of the Norman Thomases. But the absence, for historical reasons, of a mass Social-Democratic party in our country has deprived the American bourgeoisie of a sufficiently fertile field for recruitment of Social-Democratic agents having

a broad popular base and appeal. This shortage is making itself felt, especially today, when American labor, threatened with the denial of the promised fruits of victory of an anti-fascist war, is demonstrating a growing militancy. Hence, the bourgeoisie resorts to methods of hot-house cultivation and forced growth to produce the needed crop of Social-Democratic spokesmen who may assume leadership on its behalf within labor's ranks. Walter Reuther is one of the products of this process.

#### "SOCIALIST" PRETENSIONS

Featured in magazine and newspaper stories from coast to coast, the personality and exploits of Reuther are presented to the American workers as qualifications for leadership in its organization and struggles. Here is a ready-made union leader, only awaiting sufficiently widespread recognition of his talents in order to take over complete leadership of the nation's biggest union. And lest anyone doubt his talents or qualifications, the full machinery of capitalist publicity is busy advertising his selling points. It is literally a fact that for more than two months before the G.M. strike, one of the daily newspapers in Detroit made it a point to start at least one news story each day on its front page with the words: "Walter P. Reuther, International Vice-President of U.A.W. . . .", even when the text of the news item dealt chiefly with other personalities or matters in the auto industry.

It should be clear that Reuther's value to the employers grows directly out of his "socialist" coloration and the consequent possibility of presenting him as a militant champion in keeping with the present fighting mood of the workers and their mistrust of reactionary monopoly. Thus, *Time* approvingly describes him as "a middle-of-the-roader in union politics, one-time socialist." His "radical" pedigree is further supported by a lengthy extract from the transcript of negotiations with the G.M. Corporation in which we read:

*Reuther*: ". . . unless we get a more realistic distribution of America's wealth, we won't get enough to keep this machine going."

*Coen* [G.M.'s director of labor relations]: "There it is again. You can't talk about this thing without exposing your socialistic desires."

*Reuther*: "If fighting for a more equal and equitable distribution of the wealth of this country is socialistic, I stand guilty of being a socialist."

But just how "guilty of being a socialist" Reuther really is can be seen from another portion of the transcript of these same negotiations. "Nothing could be more asinine," said Reuther, "than to destroy G.M. and destroy the job opportunities with G.M. We want G.M. to be the most prosperous company in this industry." And so evaporate not only Reuther's pretensions (when occasion suits) to any aims of socialist reorganization, but also his claim of fighting for even a

"more equal and equitable distribution of the wealth of the country."

### SAVING CAPITALISM

Writing in the *New Republic* for January 14, 1946, Reuther gives us another version of what he is fighting for. In an article titled "G.M. vs. the Rest of Us," he writes: "We feel that our demands and our support of them by this strike, constitute an attempt to save American industry and free enterprise from committing suicide . . . The grim fact is that if free enterprise in America is to survive, it has got to work; it must demonstrate more than an ability to create earnings for investors; it must master the techniques for providing full employment at a high standard of living, rising year by year to keep pace with the annual increase in technological efficiency." And further: "The fight of the G.M. workers is a fight to save truly-free enterprise from death at the hands of its self-appointed champions." So, for all his blustering and strutting as the militant champion of labor, Reuther reveals himself to be engaged in an effort to save capitalism from committing suicide. He appeals in substance to the "intelligence" and "self-interest" of the monopolistic owners of American economy to grant labor an increased wage.

### FEAR OF CLASS STRUGGLE

The most fundamental contribution of scientific Socialism to the cause of social progress is its elabora-

tion of the theory of class struggle and the historic role of the working class. Marxism reveals the struggle between the working class and the capitalists as a motive force leading, not only to modifications in their relative strength under capitalism, but to the ultimate elimination of the capitalist system and its replacement by socialism. Social-Democracy, on the other hand, sees the class struggle merely as one of the evils of capitalism, to be curbed and modified in the interests of establishing an "equilibrium" which will not threaten the continuance of the system. Therefore, when the Social-Democrats criticize the operations of capitalism or profess to voice the protest of labor against its injustices and exploitation, they do so only to raise the alarm against "excesses" and to warn the capitalists that failure to reform will place their system in danger. They are the advisors of capitalism, in the guise of spokesmen for labor.

True to this special function of Social-Democracy, Reuther has to his credit a great number of "plans" which, over the years, he has propounded for the purpose of advising capitalists on how to make their system work. One of these is the so-called plan for postwar reconstruction which he projected in an interview with *PM*, published November 22, 1943. One of the features of this postwar plan was a proposal for the establishment of labor-industry councils in each industry. But most

interesting and revealing is Reuther's insistence that such councils should include consumer representatives on the grounds that this would "prevent any industry-labor coalition at the expense of other sections of the people." Instead of appealing for public support of labor's demands upon the employers, Reuther here tries merely to allay in advance any fears that his collaboration with the employers will go too far.

#### CONCERN FOR PROFITS

How far the theory of class collaboration, as the basis for winning labor's economic demands, really goes, is clearly illustrated in the strike negotiations between Reuther and G.M. on the eve of the strike in the fall of 1945. In a proposal sent to the corporation by Reuther on November 19 for setting up a board of arbitration to act on the union's 30 per cent wage demand, it was suggested that advisory recommendations for price reductions might be made by the board only in the event that it found that the corporation, after paying the demanded increase, still earned "*profits after taxes in excess of such profits in its best profit year during the past ten.*"

There has been much discussion about Reuther's public stand for a wage increase without increases in the price of cars. Certainly, labor has a great interest in preventing further increases in the cost of living. The C.I.O. has already taken the lead in a national campaign to extend the

life of O.P.A. and its price control powers. It is mobilizing all trade unions and the rest of the people against the monopolies' drive for higher prices. It is necessary to expose the tremendous wartime profits piled up by the corporations and to show that they have already received the benefits of more than adequate "price relief." But, above all, it is necessary to show the need for higher earnings by the workers due to their living requirements, without special concern for maintaining the corporations' profit level. In substance, Reuther's much publicized campaign for wage increases without price increases is really an offer to protect monopoly profits through assuring greater output on the part of the workers, and an offer to scale down the wage demand if proved necessary by the company's records. "If the corporation can show," wrote Reuther on November 20, "that it is impossible to pay 30 per cent higher wage rates without increasing prices, and at the same time to continue to pay substantial profits to its stockholders, we will scale down our demands to the point the arithmetic of the case requires."

#### PARTNERSHIP THROUGH SPEED-UP

Further, in the *Detroit News* of November 24, Blair Moody, Washington correspondent, reported: "Walter P. Reuther, U.A.W.-C.I.O. vice-president and G.M. strike leader, has accepted the pay-as-you-earn

formula, linking wage increases to productivity, as a basis for compromise discussions to end the strike." Moody reports Reuther's comment on the plan advanced by Senator William F. Knowland of California to make wages dependent upon productivity, as follows: "The basic approach of this proposal is sound. It links wages to prices and profits. We accept this principle. The union is willing to negotiate with the company on that basis and discuss this proposal."

In the *New Republic* for January 14, 1946, Reuther wrote: "Labor is not fighting for a larger slice of the national pie. Labor is fighting for a larger pie." This sentiment is endorsed by one of Reuther's active supporters in the U.A.W. Paul Weber, a leader of the reactionary-clerical Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, who goes on to explain, in his column in the A.C.T.U. organ, *The Wage Earner*, for February 8, what he understands Reuther to mean. "Labor is quite sincere," writes Weber, "when it declares it is interested in greater worker output, higher volume, increased sales and lower manufacturing costs." It is significant that in a 7-point list of "Principles of Economic Democracy" carried as a constant feature in the *Wage Earner*, we read the following: "The true aim of organized labor should be to recover its position as an equal partner with capital. . . . The first step in this direction is to establish in each major industry a

joint 'industry council' composed of representatives of organized workers and organized owners in that industry, together with a government or other public representative. This industry council should undertake the planning and organization of its industry for the common welfare." Since Reuther envisions that "common welfare" being served by a post-war volume of production "at least 50 per cent above pre-war" as the basis of "cut unit costs and . . . higher wages, higher profits and lower prices," it is clear why there is a growing organizational affinity within the U.A.W. between the Social-Democrat Reuther and the clerical-fascist leadership of the A.C.T.U.

#### CURBING MILITANCY

The price line can be held against attacks by monopoly only through the broadest organization of struggle on the part of all labor and the people for the curbing of the trusts. But it is precisely struggle that Reuther, like all Social-Democrats, fears most. The very length of the General Motors strike, which lasted needlessly over four months, is proof of this. True, Reuther attempted to use the unprecedented strength and solidity of the strike as support for his adopted pose of militancy. Actually, the credit must go to the striking workers and their families, to the Negroes and war veterans, in the auto industry, who have given a brilliant demonstration of unity and labor's capacity for sacrifice, as well as

determination to fight for their just demands. But, because of Reuther's leadership, the strike was hampered and limited by all the characteristics of a reluctant struggle. This reluctance to mobilize the full fighting capacity of the organized auto workers manifested itself throughout the strike, as well as during the preparatory period.

From the outset, Reuther attempted to confine the auto workers' wage demands to what he called the "arithmetic of the case." He himself described in the January 12 issue of the *Nation* how he mustered statistics and arguments for the fight against G.M. But nowhere is a single word said about the national wage and strike struggle already then being taken up by the electrical workers, steel and packinghouse workers and the rest of the labor movement against the concerted national attack upon labor's living standards by Big Business. Instead of presenting the strike of the G.M. workers as a struggle merging with the national economic struggles of American labor, instead of appealing to the higher mathematics of concerted struggle against monopoly which the monopolists can best understand, he confined himself even at that late date to the "arithmetical" argument for a bigger pie and bigger share.

#### SNIPING FROM WITHIN

Not only did the coordination of the G.M. struggle with the strikes of the rest of labor play no part in

Reuther's original plans, but he resorted in the latter weeks of the G.M. strike to open attacks upon the leadership of the C.I.O. steel workers and electrical workers. Despite the fact that the nationwide strike of three quarters of a million steel workers finally helped to break the resistance of the trusts to wage increases, and to establish a pattern for substantial raises which also benefited other strikers as well as the Ford and Chrysler divisions of the auto industry, Reuther irresponsibly denounced these wage settlements.

Reuther thus demonstrates one of the chief features of Social-Democratic misleadership, closely linked with its basic principles of class collaboration, that is, the spreading of disunity in the ranks of the working class. Only what amounts to a fear of the unity of the workers can account for both the stubborn refusal to coordinate the timing and strategy of the G.M. strike with the strike of the other big C.I.O. unions, and the arbitrary limitation of the development of the G.M. strike itself. Even after every appeal to the corporation's "reasonableness" and to governmental and public intervention had failed, the G.M. strikers in the fourth month of struggle were still discouraged by their top leadership from spreading the strike and making it 100 per cent effective against General Motors. Even at that late date, Reuther persisted in refusing to organize white collar workers, in permitting free entry into the struck plants by

office, supervisory and technical staffs, and in opposing the shutting down of company power plants and stoppage of work on auto tools as well as dies, while urging the strictest, passive submission to vicious court injunctions.

#### MEAGER REWARDS

If the question should be asked, why did not the corporation reward this type of useful leadership with a more favorable settlement of the strike, clues to the answer are not absent. The corporation has little to fear from a leadership that fears to mobilize the masses for struggle. "One-at-a-time" strategy, which started out on the unfounded assumption that this corporation would be the first to settle, finally created a situation in which monopoly was able to whittle away at sections of the trade union movement, one at a time. General Motors thus tried to exhaust the strikers, wear down their resistance, and undermine their union before it finally agreed upon the terms of settlement. This, and not rewards even to favorites, is the main consequence of a policy that fails to mobilize the united strength of labor against its most powerful enemies. Small gains at great cost are the best that Social-Democratic leadership has ever been able to win.

A third characteristic feature of Social-Democratism is the unprincipledness and factionalism which it promotes in the labor movement. Many examples could be given of

the unprincipled combinations made by Reuther during the time he has been in the leadership of the U.A.W. for the chief purpose of retaining and advancing factional control over the organization. But the most glaring was the announcement, two weeks before the 1946 International Convention, in the most critical period of the G.M. strike, of Reuther's candidacy for the post of international union president. Aside from the inner-union confusion and dissension which was engendered, what is most significant is the list of 17 local union presidents in whose names the movement for Reuther-for-president was supposedly launched. Among these were: Joseph McCusker, an A.C.T.U. leader of Ford Local 600, the majority of whose delegation to the convention voted consistently against Reuther; William Jenkins, one-time Socialist Party candidate for public office; Matt Hammond, chairman of the Michigan Commonwealth Federation, having close ties with Dubinsky's Liberal Party and the Social-Democratic Commonwealth Federation of Canada; Pat Zombo, fresh from defeat in the Packard local elections by an anti-Reuther candidate for local president; and Brandon Sexton, a Trotskyite henchman in the Willow Run Bomber "blue-sky" local which was deprived of its jurisdiction by the International Convention.

#### CONSPIRING AGAINST THE C.I.O.

What did Reuther have to say

about this conglomeration of "Socialists," Trotskyites, A.C.T.U.'s and have-beens, who, without consulting their locals or membership, announced that they spoke for 235,000 unionists in favor of replacing R. J. Thomas by Walter Reuther? Reuther declared in the *Detroit Times* of March 10: "I appreciate the support expressed by this representative group. It is a heartening vote of confidence for the principles and program I have represented and which we have shared and advanced together." No greater self-condemnation is needed than this effort to elevate to the status of a representative group bound together by high principle such a disruptionist combination, which was united solely by factional power considerations.

Of course, there is method to this seeming madness. The ability to stomach this *potpourri* is no less than what was required of Reuther's counterparts elsewhere in the C.I.O., such as James Carey, Emil Rieve, and Sam Wolchok, who formed a team with the A. F. of L.'s Social-Democratic Dubinsky, Randolph, and Zaritsky, supposedly "to rally the full support of organized labor" behind the G.M. strike. To swallow this, one would have to believe that there was no national C.I.O. leadership or progressive A. F. of L. support possible, except through the channels of an anti-Murray and anti-Thomas clique. Actually, this was but one manifestation of the unfolding of a conspiracy in certain C.I.O. circles, and parti-

cularly in the U.A.W. with Reuther as a central figure, aimed at undermining the progressive policies and leadership of the C.I.O. in favor of a Dubinsky-Lewis-Reuther-axis.

#### FANCY WORDS; SHODDY DEEDS

Closely related to such unprincipledness is the high-sounding demagoguery which of necessity characterizes the efforts of Social-Democracy to gain a mass following. Especially when labor is in a militant mood and masses are demonstrating a Leftward trend, will the Social-Democrats dress up in their "Leftist" finery. This is where the Reuthers are at their best. "Plans" and fine phrases pour forth in great profusion. If press reporters remind Reuther that the workers have been on strike at General Motors for two months and want to know the future prospects he declares: "We have fought for two months and we can fight for two more." Or else, he can announce with complete abandon that the strike may go on indefinitely, declaring grandiloquently, as he does at the end of his article in the *Nation* of January 12: "Until that day the strike of the G.M. workers is the fight of all Americans who want a lasting peace of full production, full consumption, and full employment, year in and year out, spreading beyond the United States, by example, not by conquest, to the rest of this fevered and unhappy world."

In the day-to-day practice of the



union, however, experience has demonstrated that these high-flown declarations have more than an ornamental purpose. It is their special function to help put over, when needed, a reactionary course of conduct which would not be accepted unless garnished with suitable demagogic avowals of principled justification. For lack of space, let one example suffice:

At the recent international convention of the U.A.W. the demand was once again raised by progressive delegates—as it had been raised at a previous convention—to guarantee, by constitutional amendment, the inclusion of at least one Negro in the incoming Executive Board. But this demand was defeated with the aid of social-demagogy. The “theory” behind much of the argumentation against this proposal was developed and presented by Reuther himself as far back as the 1943 convention. It must be said, however, that this very necessary and urgent proposal to assure participation in the union’s top leadership by Negro spokesmen was not fully understood or championed by the Thomas-Addes leadership in the recent convention. Instead, they allowed themselves to be disoriented by the false claims for “equal treatment” as previously developed by Reuther, and thus failed to mobilize the convention against one of the most sinister and divisive features of the Social-Democratic program. The task of fighting on this issue in the 1946 convention was undertaken

almost exclusively, therefore, by the Communists, who, despite lack of strength to carry the constitutional change, did make serious efforts to arouse the delegates to an understanding of the need of struggle for equal rights and complete integration of the Negroes in the U.A.W.

Laying the basis for maintaining the status quo, which was insufficiently challenged and exposed in the intervening time since then, Reuther, at the 1943 convention, declared that his opposition to the inclusion of a Negro Board member was a “principled matter,” a matter of “making no distinctions of color.” He even professed readiness for martyrdom on this “principle,” so much so that his Social-Democratic shibboleth of “equality” helped guarantee that the largest union with the largest Negro membership continued to be without a single Negro in its leadership!

It might be added that Reuther’s claim of principled devotion to “complete equality” has never caused him to utter a word of criticism against his faithful supporter, Richard Gosser, U.A.W. Regional Director in Toledo, who openly flaunts his rule of terror against Negro union members in his area. And when the latter announced his candidacy for the post of international vice-president, as well as his support of Reuther for president, Reuther did not find that this required a principled stand on his part. After all, Gosser delivered the 299 convention votes of his closely-controlled Local 12 for Reu-

ther, more than twice the margin by which Reuther was elected U.A.W. president!

#### RED-BAITING DIVERSIONS

Of course, the features of a Social-Democrat are never fully described unless we include the most common feature that binds this whole group together, and that is the practice of Red-baiting. Aside from being bound up with the most vicious Red-baiters and anti-Sovieteers in the union, and permitting the capitalist press to boost his stock periodically by referring to him as an anti-Communist, Reuther has frequently made direct use of this instrument to avoid taking a forthright stand on other fundamental issues. Most notable was the instance of his behaviour during the contest within the U.A.W. over its wartime no-strike pledge at the beginning of 1945. Having been decisively defeated in the convention the previous year in his efforts to scrap or at least hamstring this pledge, Reuther no longer dared to take a clear-cut stand when the issue was referred to a referendum of the membership. Instead, he resorted to the sniper's tactic of Red-baiting.

Refusing to join a U.A.W. national committee for retention of the no-strike pledge, which included three international officers and 12 regional directors, Reuther explained: "I cannot work with Communists on the committee." Thus he proceeded both to combat the pledge of uninterrupted war production and to spread

the Hitlerite anti-Communist phobia, at the same time that he gave lip-service to the aims of an anti-fascist war. Four years earlier, in the 1940 convention, Reuther resorted to similar tactics, making the charge—in an effort to discredit his political opponents—that "there has been a deal between Stalin and Hitler." Now, after a short period of cautious silence during the election campaign, in which Reuther left Red-baiting to his capitalist press supporters and inner-union promoters, he is resorting more vigorously than ever, to his original behavior.

Almost the first press interview given by Reuther following his election to the presidency of the U.A.W. was the one in which he announced his intention of carrying on a campaign against his opponents in the union under the guise of "combating communism." Only because Red-baiting and anti-Communist purges have come to be recognized by the auto workers and progressives everywhere as devices of reaction and fascism, Reuther was compelled to speak obliquely and even to declare that there will be no "witch-hunt." "But," said he, "we are interested in breaking up the 10 per cent minority working in the union." By coupling this 10 per cent figure with vague references to "left-wing domination" of local unions, Reuther follows the classic weapon of Red-baiting to obscure the fact that he gained power only by a narrow margin, and attempts to browbeat a safer majority

into support of his administration.

The very slogan of "unity" in the hands of Reuther, so long as he does not repudiate and combat the anti-C.I.O. forces which helped promote him to leadership, will be transformed into a dangerous weapon against the unity of the U.A.W. and the C.I.O. Under the guise of struggle against a so-called 10 per cent, Reuther is preparing to ignore the 49 per cent which fought against him and his policies in the recent convention, as well as the overwhelming majority of the membership.

Neither the U.A.W. nor the rest of the labor movement can afford to entertain any illusions that the Reuther forces which spearheaded the anti-C.I.O. drive over a period of months and years will settle down to loyal or even passive support of C.I.O. policy, now that Reuther has been elected president of the U.A.W.

How Reuther proposes to "unify" the U.A.W. and the C.I.O. was revealed by him in a speech to the union's national G.M. council in Detroit when ratification of the G.M. contract was being debated. There, Reuther completely evaded all responsibility for the inadequacies of the proposed contract resulting from his disastrous "one-at-a-time" strike strategy. Instead, he tried to fasten blame upon the steel and electrical workers' unions of the C.I.O. who struck at a later date and won substantial gains much more quickly than did the G.M. workers. Boastfully, Reuther promised the council

that he would see to it that, after settlement of the G.M. strike, the United Electrical and Radio Workers Union of the C.I.O. would be driven out of G.M. plants. The inference that, if it were possible, he would challenge the leadership of the steel workers' union as well, was hardly concealed. These threats cannot be charged to bravado or the necessity of getting out of a tight spot in having to put over an unsatisfactory G.M. contract. They must be understood as part of the logical course flowing from Social-Democratic fear of workers' unity and struggle. That this type of splitting activity is a deliberately included part of Reuther's program was further indicated by his post-election announcement that the U.A.W., under his leadership, would invade the farm equipment field in which another progressive C.I.O. union is already established and operating.

Within the U.A.W. itself, the G.M. contract, recently concluded, stands as a monument to Reuther's divisive policies and should serve as a warning against ever permitting Reuther once again to confront the union with accomplished facts which place the whole organization in danger. The present G.M. contract is the first adopted by the U.A.W. which runs for a period of two years. Thereby, the Ford and Chrysler sections of the union have been served advance notice by Reuther that, in their future struggles in the auto industry, these workers may not count upon the par-

icipation of the G.M. workers, since the latter will still be tied up by this long-term agreement.

Finally, in the political field, Social-Democracy is now counting upon a Reuther-controlled U.A.W. to carry through its secret plans to paralyze the effectiveness of independent progressive political action on the part of labor. At the very time when the influential C.I.O.-P.A.C. is asserting its growing independence of the two capitalist party machines, and is preparing to elect labor and progressive candidates to Congress and state offices this year by rallying a popular democratic coalition to its side, the Social-Democrats are undermining these efforts. This is the meaning of the conference held in Chicago on April 6 and 7, supposedly to organize a "third party," upon the instigation of the Socialist Party and a number of union officials of the Reuther type. Reuther's erstwhile candidate for U.A.W. international board member, Matt Hammond of Detroit, who is chairman of the Michigan Commonwealth Federation, as well as Victor Reuther, Walter's brother and political spokesman, took an active part in this gathering designed to undermine the C.I.O.-P.A.C. This incident alone should reveal what Reuther had in mind when, in his first speech as president-elect at the U.A.W. convention, he said: "I want to take my place at the side of Philip Murray and help carry part of the burden which he has to carry as the president of our great C.I.O.; and I

can assure you we are going to have the greatest kind of cooperation and teamwork between your union and the C.I.O. organization." Clearly, this was but a bid on Reuther's part to supplant R. J. Thomas, not only as president of the U.A.W., but also as one of the vice-presidents of the national C.I.O. Reuther seeks to come closer to Phil Murray only in order the better to undermine Murray's policies and, within the councils of that important body, to serve the Social-Democratic aims of the Dubinsky forces in the A. F. of L., with whom he is allied politically.

In this connection, it is important to note that the same convention of the U.A.W. which elected Reuther president, provided the union with certain safeguards against its being completely taken over by the forces of Social-Democracy, and against a weakening of its progressive role within the national C.I.O. These safeguards may be found in the anti-Reuther majority which was elected to the international board and in the leadership of that majority which was placed in the hands of Vice-President Thomas and Secretary-Treasurer Addes. This board, provided that it consolidates and preserves the progressive coalition as a substantial majority, can further uphold C.I.O. President Philip Murray through retaining R. J. Thomas as the U.A.W.'s member on the C.I.O. national board. Similarly, continued support to Thomas as one of American labor's leading represen-

tatives in the World Federation of Trade Unions—which he helped organize—will enable the U.A.W. to continue and increase its efforts on a world scale against the divisive and war-inciting manipulations of world Social-Democracy.

However, these possibilities, inherent in the relation of forces within the U.A.W. after its convention, can be made into realities only by the fullest mobilization of the rank-and-file membership to demand and guarantee that the international union continue to work for unity in accordance with progressive C.I.O. policies. Unity must be built in the respective plants and locals of this great union. It must be a unity to advance the C.I.O. program of independent political action and a genuine labor-people's coalition for the 1946 congressional and the 1948 presidential elections, and not a false unity with the self-appointed "third party" diversionists. Unity must be developed, starting with the lower ranks of this union and reaching all the way to the top, for strict enforcement of union conditions and against company plans for speed-up or undermining of union security. Unity must be built out of the joint struggles and mutual defense of the white and Negro workers, veterans and women. This unity must be made an instrument against the imperialist plans for breaking up the Big Three coalition, and for defeating the drive of American and British imperialism toward a new world war. In the daily

struggle for unity on these issues, the meaning of Social-Democracy in the labor movement can be made increasingly clear to the bulk of the workers, and thus arm them against the capitalist enemy who operates within labor's ranks under the most insidious disguises.

#### THE NEED FOR COMMUNIST THEORY AND ACTION

The creeping paralysis of Social-Democratism continues to threaten the vitality of growing sections of the American labor movement. Many honest trade unionists, and some leaders among them, will continue to fall under its spell so long as the capitalist influences, which make and propel the Reuthers, are not fully exposed.

Herein lies one of the special duties and functions of the Communist Party. In the course of its daily work in the building and strengthening of labor's economic and political organizations, in combatting the open capitalist enemy at every turn, the Communists have the task of exposing and helping defeat the special agency of capitalism in labor's ranks—Social-Democracy. In undertaking this exposure and struggle, the Communist Party serves the urgent need of the working class for greater unity and effectiveness in all its efforts. It helps, however, to clear away the rubbish of capitalist ideology (and its pseudo-socialist forms) which hampers labor's grasp and use of Marxist social

science for its ultimate emancipation. The seizure of leadership in the C.I.O.'s great United Auto Workers Union by one of the most skillful agents of Social-Democracy—Walter Reuther—places an urgent obligation upon the Communists in the auto industry to speed and improve their work in the building of Communist

organization in every plant, and the bringing of effective leadership to the rank-and-file progressive auto workers. The virulence of Social-Democratism emphasizes, for all American labor, the pressing need for a larger and stronger Communist Party, rooted among the workers of our country.

# WAGES AND PRICES UNDER MONOPOLY CAPITALISM

By ALEXANDER BITTELMAN

WHEN THE SPOKESMEN of the big corporations say that they are fighting for "principles" and not merely for larger profits, this must be understood to mean that they are fighting for the principle of monopoly dictation. Having grown fatter, richer and more arrogant during the war years, the monopolists have made an attempt in the postwar period to re-establish and reinforce their power to dictate prices, wages and profits; to assert generally their claim to a controlling position in the economy and politics of the nation; and, most particularly, to deliver a mortal blow at the trade unions. The over-all strategy of the monopolies in their present offensive against labor and the people is to consolidate the imperialist-reactionary coalition under their leadership at home in order to proceed more energetically with their drive for world domination.

In a sense, these are principles, of course—"principles" of tyranny, exploitation, oppression and reaction. And, since these are the things the monopolies are fighting for in their conflict with labor on the issue of

wages, it was inevitable for the strike struggles and wage movements of labor to begin to assume the characteristics of a people's fight against the abuses of monopoly exploitation and domination. The fight against the monopolies will go on until they are curbed and their offensive is defeated. Hence, a labor victory in the present wage struggles will be a victory, not only for labor and the trade unions, but for the American people as a whole, for the well-being and progress of the nation.

## THE ECONOMICS OF THE WAGE STRUGGLES

Several important economic questions have come to the foreground in the course of the present wage struggles. These questions were precipitated primarily by the tactics of the monopolists—in General Motors and in the steel industry—in combatting the wage demands of the unions.

The first move of the monopolists in General Motors was to the effect that the corporation is unable to grant the union's demand for a 30 per cent wage increase. They were thus trying to make a stand on the proposition of "ability to pay." But this first move was very quickly superseded by another, which declared that "ability to pay" was *not* an issue, that the issue was the economic unsoundness and unreasonableness of the union's wage demands whose effect would be, according to the assertions of the monopolists, to force a rise in prices, opening the way to inflation.

In this second move of the monopolists, two things are noteworthy. Here prices are directly linked to wages (wage rises must be followed by price rises) and, in addition, the point is raised that there exists some sort of an economically sound and reasonable limit beyond which wages must not rise. But here, too, we still have the implication of "ability to pay," even though it has been declared irrelevant by the spokesmen of General Motors. For if "ability to pay" was altogether irrelevant, why should the monopolists insist that wage rises must be "compensated" by price rises?

This position of the monopolies is stated quite clearly in the January 29 statement of Irving S. Olds, chairman of the board of directors of the United States Steel Corporation. The first proposition of that statement is that "A general wage increase by United States Steel is not possible without increases in OPA ceiling prices for steel products." Next, a so-called estimate is presented to bolster up the contention that "a wage increase of 15 cents an hour or one of 18½ cents an hour will require a very much larger steel price increase than the \$4 a ton price increase previously mentioned." (Rumor at that time had it that the steel magnates demanded a price rise of \$7 a ton. Actually, they received a price rise of \$5 a ton.) The last point is the following:

The fundamental question arises as to whether it is wise and in the public

interest artificially to force up price levels for a basic product such as steel for the purpose of paying a wage increase to steel workers beyond the point for which there is a sound justification. (*New York Times*, Jan. 30, 1945.)

In the evolution of their tactics against labor's wage demands, the monopolists have raised at least three important economic questions. One is the relation between wages and prices. Is it true that wage increases must be "compensated" by price increases? Second is the question of "ability" to pay. In what sense can one speak of the ability or inability of a capitalist to grant wage increases? And third is the the question of whether there really exists an economically sound and reasonable limit to wage increases.

The basic answer to these questions is given in the economic teachings of Marxism. More specifically and concretely Marx himself analyzed and answered these questions in his famous address on "Value, Price and Profit" delivered before the General Council of the First International on June 20 and 27, 1865. Here Marx discusses precisely the questions with which we are now concerned, namely: Do Wages Determine Prices? What Is the Relation Between Wages and Profits? Are There Objective Limits to the Minimum and Maximum of Wages? We shall therefore try to present in brief outline Marx's findings that are fundamental to the questions under discussion.



Naturally, the monopoly stage of capitalism has introduced certain new elements bearing directly and indirectly on these questions. These new elements of monopoly capitalism are producing definite *modifications* in the effects which result from the operation of the fundamental laws of capitalist development, but they do not abolish the laws themselves. Hence, we must first follow Marx in the examination of the basic laws of the economics of capitalism as they relate to the questions under discussion. On this basis we shall next examine the effects of the modifications resulting from the monopolies, as foreseen and indicated by Marx himself and as fully analyzed and developed for our time by Lenin and, subsequently, Stalin.

As to the relation between wages and prices, must a change in wage rates necessarily affect the price of commodities? No, it must not, unless a change simultaneously takes place in the productivity of labor, or in the amount of capital and labor employed, or in the value of money. If no change occurs in any one of these three factors, then a change in wage rates would affect prices only if it were followed by a change in the supply and demand of the commodity involved, and not otherwise.

Now, a general rise in wages will increase the purchasing power of labor, raising the demand for goods and, hence, their prices; and this will certainly result in a temporary disturbance of market prices, espe-

cially of the necessities of life. But these price changes will not be permanent, since the price of commodities is determined by their value, around which prices fluctuate due to the law of supply and demand, and since the value of commodities is itself determined, not by wages, but by the amount of socially necessary labor incorporated in them. This conception rests upon Marx's theory that labor is the creator of all value.

If this is so, why then do the monopolists insist that a rise in wage rates must be followed by a rise in prices? Why do they speak of price rises being necessary to "compensate" them for wage increases? Because a general rise in the rate of wages decreases the rate of profit, and for this the monopolists want "compensation" through a rise in prices.

Perhaps it should be noted that a general rise in wage rates will result in a general fall of the *rate* of profit, not of the *amount* of profit of any given period. The importance of noting this fact lies in this: General Motors, U.S. Steel and the other corporations could grant the unions' wage demands and make larger profits in 1946 than in 1945. This is based upon the general assumption that labor productivity will rise very substantially in 1946 and that market conditions will justify maximum production. When to this is added the consideration that the repeal of the excess profits tax adds to the income of the corporations, almost auto-

matically, about 10 per cent of their gross earnings, that the partial elimination of so-called wartime incentive premiums to labor adds another 9.5 per cent, and that 4.5 per cent is added by reduction of wartime overtime pay (all according to calculations of the government's Reconversion Advisory Board), then it becomes fairly obvious that the amount of profits in 1946 can be as high as in 1945, and even higher, despite the fall in the rate of profit which will result from a general rise in wage rates.

In other words, a lower profit margin, to use the language of business for a lower rate of profit, can mean a rise in the amount of annual profits for 1946, if the monopolies could orientate themselves toward maximum, instead of restricted, production which is their natural economic philosophy; and if they could freely develop the productivity of labor through the application of technical inventions, instead of merely increasing the intensity of labor exploitation by sheer speed-up. It was partly on the basis of such considerations that the economists of the government's Reconversion Advisory Board presented their conclusion last October that wages could be raised 24 per cent without raising prices and without a reduction in profits.

Price is the monetary expression of the value of a commodity. The value of a commodity is determined by the amount of socially necessary la-

bor embodied in it. "In calculating the exchangeable value of a commodity," Marx states in *Value, Price and Profit*, "we must add to the quantity of labor last employed the quantity of labor previously worked up in the raw materials of the commodity, and the labor bestowed on the implements, tools, machinery, and buildings, with which labor is assisted." The added value created by the labor last employed is the only fund out of which both wages and profits are derived.

Hence, if wages rise, profits will fall; and if wages fall, profits will rise. In each of these instances there will have taken place a change in the relative portions of value going respectively to wages and profits taken from the value created by the labor last employed. Obviously, these changes in themselves cannot affect the total value contained in the commodity. Certainly, no change takes place in the value of the *past* labor contained in the commodity, that is, the value of the raw material and other means of production. As to the value added by the *last* labor, assuming it amounts to sixteen dollars, out of which both wages and profits are derived, if the worker gets eight dollars out of it, the employer, too, gets eight dollars and the rate of surplus value, which is the source of profit, will be 100 per cent. Assuming that a wage rise takes place and the worker gets ten dollars, this now leaves only six dollars for the employer, which means that the

rate of the source of profit drops to 60 per cent. In other words, a general rise of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of profit, *but no change would occur in the value of the commodity*. Consequently, no permanent price change would take place unless changes simultaneously take place in the productivity of labor, or in the amount of capital and labor employed, or in the value of money. Temporary price changes will take place, as already shown, due to the fluctuations of supply and demand, but in the long run prices will become equalized at their true value.

This is how Marx summarizes the question:

... the price of the pound of yarn is regulated by the *total amount of labor worked up in it*, and not by the *proportional division of that total amount into paid [wages] and unpaid [profit] labor*. The fact I have before mentioned that high-priced labor may produce cheap, and low-priced labor may produce dear commodities, loses, therefore, its paradoxical appearance. It is only the expression of the general law that the value of a commodity is regulated by the quantity of labor worked up in it, but that the quantity of labor worked up in it depends altogether upon the productive powers of the labor employed, and will, therefore, vary with every variation in the productivity of labor. (*Value, Price and Profit*, Karl Marx, International Publishers, page 50.)

To the capitalist, labor is not the creator of all values but a mere item

in "the cost of production." This is a convenient way of projecting demands for price increases "to compensate" for so-called increases in "the cost of production" due allegedly to wage rises. It has also proved a convenient way of hiding the very nature of capitalist exploitation—of hiding the fact that *profit is unpaid labor*.

It is, therefore, clear that wage rises do not have to be followed by permanent price rises because prices are not regulated by wages. It is also clear that the contention of the monopolists and their spokesmen that wage increases must be compensated by price increases is totally baseless from an economic standpoint. Socially and politically, the monopoly attack on prices is an absolutely dangerous one.

From the foregoing, it is possible to see in what sense, if any, one can speak of the ability or inability of a capitalist to grant a wage increase. As long as it is profitable for the capitalist to employ the worker, the capitalist is able to grant wage increases. In this case the question of "ability to pay" cannot arise because the employed worker continually produces, not only his wages, but also the capitalist's profits. Both come out of the one fund of value added by the labor last employed to the value of the raw material and other means of production embodied in the commodity.

What does come into question is the *magnitude* of the wage rise. But

this sort of question is generally answered on the basis of the very concrete circumstances in which it arises. The factors to be considered here are, among others, the rate of profit prevailing in the industry at the given time, as compared with the general rate of profit, the relative economic position of the industry in the national economy, the relative "bargaining positions" or fighting strength of the workers and employers, etc., etc. These are practical questions and they have to be decided on the basis of specific conditions. But—to repeat—as long as the employer finds it profitable to employ the worker, the question of "ability to pay" cannot arise in connection with wage demands; only the magnitude of these demands can be reasonably discussed by organized labor as a practical question in formulating its demands upon the employers.

In the present wage conflict, the monopolies are doing a sort of juggling act with the question of "ability to pay." When the unions present convincing statistical and other evidence showing that the corporations are amply able to grant the wage demands, the monopolists insist that ability to pay "is not involved." At this point, they pretend to be very much concerned with the public good and with "sound" economic policy, even if it should hurt them. When, however, these same monopolists get down to brass tacks, to the question of how much of a

wage rise they are actually going to grant, they immediately raise the question of price increases—a roundabout way of raising the question of "ability to pay."

In the given case, it has already been demonstrated fully that the monopolies are completely able to grant the specific wage demands of the workers. But still another question is involved here, whether there really exists an "economically sound and reasonable" limit to wage increases, and, if there is such an objective limit, how it is found.

It will be recalled that Mr. Olds of U.S. Steel wanted to be sure that wage increases to steel workers would not go "beyond the point for which there is sound justification." What Olds and Co. mean by that is no secret. It is that wages, being the price of labor power, must be treated the same as the price of any other commodity, namely, by determining the value of the worker's labor power, which means to determine the value of the necessities of life absolutely necessary for the worker's maintenance and reproduction. Capital always seeks to drive wages down to this physical limit, that is, to the absolute minimum needed by the worker to live and reproduce himself.

Under capitalism, where the means of production are monopolized by one class, labor power is indeed a commodity, sold by the worker and bought by the capitalist

for a certain price—wages. But, says Marx:

... there are some peculiar features which distinguish the *value of the laboring power, or the value of labor*, from the values of all other commodities. The value of the laboring power is formed by two elements—the one merely physical, the other historical or social. Its *ultimate limit* is determined by the *physical* element, that is to say, to maintain and reproduce itself, to perpetuate its physical existence, the working class must receive the necessities absolutely indispensable for living and multiplying. The *value* of those indispensable necessities forms, therefore, the ultimate limit of the *value of labor*. (*Ibid.*, page 57.)

Viewed from the standpoint of a historical generalization, Marx reaches the conclusion that, as with all other commodities, so also with labor:

... its *market price* [wages] will, in the long run, adapt itself to its *value*; that, therefore, despite all the ups and downs, and do what he may, the working man will on the average receive the value of his labor, which resolves into the value of his laboring power, which is determined by the value of the necessities required for its maintenance and reproduction, which value of necessities finally is regulated by the quantity of labor wanted to produce them. (*Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.)

But the value of labor, as distinct from other commodities, is made up of a historical or social element in addition to the mere physical element. Says Marx:

... the value of labor is in every country determined by a *traditional standard of life*. It is not mere physical life, but it is the satisfaction of certain wants springing from the social conditions in which people are placed and reared up. (*Ibid.*, p. 57.)

This is how we should understand the nature of what is called the American standard of living, which is higher than the standard of any other capitalist country, a fact originating from the peculiarities in the historical development and traditions of our country. This standard of living enters as one of the elements (the other being the physical element) determining the value of labor power and its market price, wages. This standard of living can be *raised*, as American labor and its allies knew very well, from the experiences of struggle for continually higher standards of living. This is the direction in which the working class and all exploited *must continuously fight* because otherwise the standards will be lowered by the continual attacks upon them by the monopolists and all exploiters.

This is the true nature of the current wage struggles. The monopolies seek to perpetuate a cut in labor's income in order to reduce its standard of living, as well as to weaken the unions and promote general reaction and imperialist aggrandizement. Labor and the people fight back in defense of their living standards, for their democratic rights, for their progressive organ-

izations, and against imperialist reaction and monopoly abuses.

The capitalists have always sought and will continue to seek to reduce wages to the mere physical minimum required for maintenance and reproduction. It is this minimum which the monopolies have in mind when they (Olds and Co.) speak of "a sound justification" for a wage increase or a point beyond which wages must not go. Furthermore, the pressure of the capitalists to reduce and hold wages to the mere physical minimum means nothing else but constant capitalist pressure to raise and hold profits at a maximum.

The maximum of profit has its limitations, just as the minimum of wages has its. The maximum of profit is limited, according to Marx, "by the physical minimum of wages and by the physical maximum of the working day" (*Ibid.*, p. 58), since the length of the workday determines the amount of value created by labor (all other things remaining the same) and the minimum of wages determines the portion of value that goes to profits. "... between the two limits of this maximum rate of profit," says Marx further, "an immense scale of variations is possible" (*Ibid.*) — variations in the length of the workday combined with variations in the physical minimum of wages. The question is how the actual maximum rate of profit is determined at any given time. To this Marx answers:

The fixation of its actual degree [of maximum rate of profit] is only settled by the continuous struggle between capital and labor, the capitalist constantly tending to reduce wages to their physical minimum, and to extend the working day to its physical maximum, while the working man constantly presses in the opposite direction.

The question resolves itself into a question of the respective powers of the combatants. (*Ibid.*)

Marx always inspired labor to build its strength and to fight for its economic as well as its political demands. He thereby helped the working class at the same time to grasp the historic limitations facing the everyday struggles for partial demands, urging an understanding of the need of abolishing capitalism altogether and of establishing Socialism.

Here is Marx's summary of the nature of wage struggles:

I think I have shown that their [the workers'] struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labor and that the necessity of debating their price [wages] with the capitalist is inherent to their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement. (*Ibid.*, p. 61.)

American labor is not giving way but is fighting the pay cut and is

passing over to the offensive against the monopolies. That is why American labor is also becoming the vanguard of a broad people's movement—a movement larger than the wage struggles alone—against monopoly exploitation and imperialist reaction. That is why the Communist Party concentrates everything on helping to win the strike struggles by continuously helping labor to raise these struggles to a higher level—to the level of the people's fight against the abuses of monopoly domination.

Here is Marx's concluding advice to labor on this question:

. . . the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerrilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes in the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economic reconstruction of society. (*Ibid.*, p. 61.)

Capitalism creates the conditions necessary for its own abolition, for the abolition of the wages system, for the establishment of Socialism. Under the socialist system, in the

Soviet Union, the value created by labor above wages goes, not to enrich exploiting classes, but to promote the well-being of the whole of society. The present stage of capitalism, the monopoly stage, demonstrates the approach of a new system. It also introduces certain modifications into the effects resulting from the operation of the fundamental economic laws of capitalist development.

#### PRICES AND FREE COMPETITION UNDER MONOPOLY DOMINATION

In the same historic work of Marx on the effects of the fundamental economic laws of capitalism, in the era of free competition, on value, price and profit, we read the following reference to monopolies and prices:

. . . so that apart from the effect of monopolies and some other modifications I must now pass by, all descriptions of commodities are, on the average, sold at their respective *values* or natural prices. (*Ibid.*, p. 36.)

Marx clearly intimates here that monopolies would affect prices in such a way that they would not always, on the average, correspond to their values, thus modifying the effect of the operation of the economic laws of capitalism on the course of prices for certain phases of the cycle and in certain branches of the national economy. This reference to the effect of monopoly on prices is, of course, not accidental. Marx

showed "by a theoretical and historical analysis of capitalism . . . that free competition gives rise to the concentration of production, which, in turn, at a certain stage of development, leads to monopoly." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, International Publishers, Vol. XIX, p. 96.)

As is well known, it was Lenin who analyzed monopoly capitalism as a new stage in capitalist development, the highest and last stage, the stage that opens the transition to the socialist revolution. It was on the basis of his analysis of imperialism, incorporated in the famous work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* that Lenin formulated a new theory of the socialist revolution which demonstrates "that the simultaneous victory of Socialism in all countries is *impossible*, while the victory of Socialism in one capitalist country, taken singly, is possible." (*History of the C.P.S.U.*, p. 170.)

The question of what exactly monopoly does to prices hinges primarily on the question of what monopoly does to free competition, because it is here that the first modifications appear. Here, Lenin's analysis states two fundamental propositions. One is that monopoly, the direct opposite of free competition which, in its turn, is a basic characteristic of capitalism and of commodity production in general—rises from and is produced by the operation of this very same free competi-

tion. The second is that monopoly, rising from free competition, does not remove this free competition, but exists over it and alongside it, *thus creating a whole series of particularly acute contradictions, frictions and conflicts.*

In these two propositions we find the key to what monopoly is doing in the sphere of prices. We find, first, that monopoly creates a *new series of contradictions* in the sphere of prices, while sharpening all the old ones. Monopoly gives rise to acute contradictions between prices of monopolized industries and of those operating under free competition. These contradictions include, of course, the one between the prices set by trusts and cartels and those of industries not trustified. There are also most acute price contradictions between monopolies and groups of monopolies themselves. There is, finally, the very outstanding and old contradiction, made particularly acute by monopoly capitalism, between agricultural and industrial prices.

Monopoly means *high* prices for the products controlled by the monopolies and *low* prices for the products of the industries or raw material producers which serve the monopolies, that is, there is a constant struggle—price struggle—between the monopolies and these others. Monopolies wage continuous price wars to eliminate competitors completely from their fields, to prevent new ones from coming in,



to invade new fields and extend their domination. In the course of these struggles, monopolies will also resort to drastic price cutting; but this generally lasts for brief moments since an effective threat of this kind usually brings competitors to terms. But monopolies always "compensate" themselves very liberally by unusually high prices when the competitor has been eliminated or incorporated. The tendency of monopolies is to dictate prices to the consumers as well as to their servicing industries and competitors. Their methods are those of *domination and oppression*, not only in their relations with labor and the people, but also in the field of prices and competition.

This is why commodities of monopolies, in the stage of monopoly capitalism, do not always sell, on the average, at their respective values or natural prices. Commodities of monopolized industries sell as a rule *above* their values, maintaining these high levels for considerable stretches of time, not only during the revival and prosperity phases of the economic cycle, but quite often during the depression and crisis phases, although in the latter phases many monopoly prices begin to give way. This price rigidity is accomplished at the expense of the consumers, at the expense of agriculture and other raw material producers, and at the expense of the non-monopoly industries. In the final analysis, maintenance of high

monopoly prices is accomplished at the expense of the producers of value and of surplus value—the workers.

A major feature of monopoly in the field of prices is the international cartels, through which monopoly prices are set up and maintained for certain lengths of time by trusts and monopolies of various countries. While such agreements last, they maintain a high degree of monopoly in various branches of capitalist economy and, hence, high monopoly prices, usually accompanied with restricted production. But even within these cartels, a major source of reaction and fascism, there goes on an uninterrupted struggle between various "national" monopolies for domination over the world market and economic resources, creating a constant threat of imperialist war.

It is true, of course, that high monopoly prices cannot always be maintained for long periods of time. We must always remember Lenin's proposition that monopolies do not eliminate free competition but continue to exist above and alongside it. Hence, what is relatively permanent or constant is not the high monopoly prices by themselves but the *contradictions, frictions and conflicts* between monopoly and non-monopoly and competition also in the sphere of prices. This deepens all other capitalist contradictions, at the same time setting up forces, economic and political, which tend to drive down monopoly prices. But as long as high monopoly prices last,

at one time or another, in one branch of economy or another, they are a source of extra oppression and exploitation, modifying the course of prices in the sense that *monopoly prices are above their commodity values*, resisting the operations of supply and demand which tend to keep general, average prices around the values of their commodities, and setting up particularly acute contradictions in the field of price relations.

The foregoing will explain the fact that under monopoly capitalism the fight against monopoly prices and against high prices in general has become a major feature in the economic and political struggles of the masses in the capitalist countries. And during certain periods, the struggle of the masses against the high cost of living, caused invariably by the refusal of the monopolies to adjust their own prices to a lower level of general prices, becomes an outstanding phase of the people's fight against the abuses of monopoly domination.

It is especially in times of economic depression, or on the eve of the crisis phase of the cycle, that the so-called rigidity of monopoly prices, in the face of a general fall in prices in the areas of free competition, creates wide price disparities and contradictions, thus prolonging and deepening the crisis and depression phases of the cycle and retarding the transition to economic revival. Strangely enough, certain liberal

capitalist economists, even though somewhat critical of monopolies, think that they see in this "rigidity" of monopoly prices on the eve of a crisis a "stabilizing" influence. This is the opinion of J. R. Hicks (*Value and Capital*, N. Y., 1939, p. 265), quoted sympathetically by Alvin H. Hansen in his study of price flexibility and the cycle (*Fiscal Policy and Business Cycles*, p. 322). However, the experience of our own country during 1929-33 should have convinced these economists that it was precisely the "rigidity" of monopoly prices in the last part of the depression phase of the cycle that gave to the course of that economic catastrophe its deep and painful character. One must also note in passing that times of economic depression and crisis generally afford the most favorable opportunities for the monopolies to squeeze their weaker rivals out of business and to extend their domination over new economic fields.

We have thus found that, under monopoly capitalism, commodities of monopolized industries sell, for certain lengths of time and in certain branches of economy, at prices above their values, obstructing the long-run equalization of average prices around their values and setting up acute contradictions and conflicts with prices in the areas of free competition, and thus deepening further all the fundamental contradictions of capitalism in its monopoly stage. Hence, the fight

against monopoly prices, against monopoly *dictation* of prices, has become a major element in the general struggle for the well-being of the American people and its working class, for raising our standards of living, against the abuses of monopoly domination and against imperialist reaction. It is part of the present historic struggle for full employment, economic security, democracy and peace—for curbing the monopolies and defeating their reactionary drive for imperialist world domination. It is part of the struggle of the developing labor-democratic coalition headed by labor. It is thus a major task of the Communist Party.

#### PRIMARILY A POLITICAL STRUGGLE

It is necessary now to emphasize two additional points. One is that we must guard against the danger of the issue of high monopoly prices becoming obscured by the question of the dangers of inflation. A very deliberate effort has been on foot for some time to use the very real inflation dangers in order to hide the dangers of rising high monopoly prices and of the special role played by the monopolies themselves in *accentuating* the dangers of a general price inflation.

It must therefore be said that *the first and major danger* in the field of prices is the offensive of the monopolies to effect an extraor-

dinary high rise in monopoly prices. This is bound to widen existing disparities and contradictions between monopoly and free competition prices, thus creating serious market disturbances which will hamper the present growth and unfoldment of the revival phase of the new economic cycle. It will hasten the crisis phase because the rise in monopoly prices will tend to encourage the monopolists *to restrict production instead of expanding it*; and restricted production means a shorter prosperity phase, stagnation, and a quicker transition to crisis.

Certain dangers of an inflationary rise of general prices will continue to exist as long as present acute scarcities in many branches of economy are not resolved, although the long-range trend in most commodities will be for these scarcities to decrease. Hence, the fight for effective price control is absolutely imperative. But this fight will become infinitely more difficult if the monopolies succeed in their dictation of higher prices, because the free competition industries will exert terrific pressure for appropriate "compensation" with regard to their prices, as will also the farmers. Consequently, the general fight for effective *and democratic* price controls requires *major concentration on the fight against high monopoly prices*.

The second point to be stressed in connection with the fight against high monopoly prices is that *this is primarily a political fight* and not

merely a trade union fight to be conducted by the methods and procedures of collective bargaining in one industry or another. The attempt of Reuther to handle the fight against an increase in automobile prices by General Motors as a trade union fight in the process of collective bargaining, instead of a political fight of the people against high monopoly prices, has done harm to the fight against high monopoly prices without in any way helping the striking auto workers to win their economic fight for higher wages and for the rights of their union.

The fight against high monopoly prices is primarily a political fight for these reasons: First, this fight is in the *direct* interests, not only of one union or one industry, but of the entirety of labor, of the farmers, of the city middle classes and of many of the business rivals and victims of the monopolies. It is a people's fight, to be headed by labor, not just an economic trade union fight. Hence, it is a political fight.

Secondly, the fight against high monopoly prices is a *major phase* of the fight of the democratic forces of the people against the abuses of monopoly domination. High monopoly prices are no accident under monopoly capitalism but part of the very nature of monopoly — high prices and restricted production. To win even a partial victory in this sort of fight requires the united effort of the American people and the

working class, not just the efforts of one union or even of several unions. This sort of fight is by its very nature political and not merely an economic trade union fight to be conducted within the limitations of collective bargaining procedure, as Reuther tried.

Thirdly, to enforce a reduction of high monopoly prices, or to prevent a rise, *requires action by the government*. It requires decisions by the OPA, by the President, by Congress, and enforcement of such decisions by various government agencies. The democratic organizations of the people, among them the trade unions, have to play a decisive role, not only in compelling the government to act against monopoly prices, but also in seeing to it that the government enforces its own decisions. *But all this is political action*. And that is what it has to be. Any further efforts by Reuther and similar-minded people to switch the fight against high monopoly prices from the political field, where it belongs, into the confines of collective bargaining procedure of a union will hurt the fight for higher wages and will obstruct the fight against high monopoly prices and inflation.

In other words, the workers in General Motors, like all workers and the people as a whole, are vitally interested in winning their wage demands and in combating the high monopoly prices. To win this fight, the workers in General Motors have waged a strike, an economic strike,

under the leadership of the United Automobile Workers, their union, and are carrying on collective bargaining. In addition, the workers in General Motors and their union are fighting together with the other striking unions (Steel, Electrical and Radio, and others), and with the C.I.O. as a whole, on the political arena and with political means *to reinforce their economic fight* for higher wages, for their specific economic demands upon G.M. as well as *in support of their political demand* against high monopoly prices. This political demand is not directed at G.M. alone, nor by the G.M. strikers alone, as Reuther has tried

to do. It is directed by the G.M. workers to the government *against all monopolies* and as part of the *general political struggle* of the whole of labor and of the people.

This is how the economic fight for higher wages has to be *connected with* the political fight of all democratic forces against high monopoly prices. This is how the fight is carried on in the steel industry and in the C.I.O. as a whole. This is how the fight is conducted by the United Electrical Workers, by the United Automobile Workers, and by the other unions of the C.I.O. as well as by the progressive forces of the A. F. of L.

# THE STATUS OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE IN THE BLACK BELT AND HOW TO FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION

(A DISCUSSION ARTICLE)

By FRANCIS FRANKLIN

In order to eliminate from both our theory and practice all the remnants of opportunism and revisionism, a deep, penetrating, and critical analysis of all our work in the past is absolutely necessary. The fact that our whole Party from top to bottom has been guilty of opportunism and revisionism indicates that the roots of these errors were to be found in our Party long before they manifested themselves in complete liquidationism. In rejecting Browder's revisionist theories in reference to the Negro question, it would certainly be a mistake merely to reassert the program we formulated in 1930 without the most critical analysis of that program itself, in order to determine whether errors existed in the 1930 formulation and in our subsequent presentation of that program. This is certainly necessary as a preliminary toward the most serious and collective efforts at arriving at the most adequate formulation of a program for the present.

In my opinion, the revisionist er-

rors foisted upon our Party by Browder in reference to the Negro question were twofold.

1. Browder's general program of long-range class collaboration, his general bourgeois-liberal conception of continuous postwar reforms under capitalism, foisted upon the Party the illusion that the complete liberation of the Negro people can be achieved under capitalism without militant struggles. Browder's whole opportunist perspective constituted a negation of the revolutionary character of the fight for Negro rights. This bourgeois-liberalism we must reject completely. It is obvious to anyone who has the slightest knowledge of Bourbon reaction and Ku Klux terror in the South that the Negro people cannot secure equality in the South, the realization of the program for full bourgeois-democracy, without a radical revolutionary change in the whole existing economic, political, and social conditions in the Southern states—a revolutionary change which reaction

in the South will inevitably resist with violence. We must restore to our program, therefore, the recognition that complete Negro liberation in the South must involve the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution for the Negro people in the Southern States. The completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution for the Negro people in the South cannot be consummated without the redivision of the land in the plantation areas, *ie.*, an agrarian revolution.

As is true of all bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movements today, in the epoch of imperialism, the bourgeois-democratic revolution still to be completed in the South, whether it occurs prior to or during the establishment of Socialism, can be conceived only as a part of the general proletarian revolutionary movement. As Stalin declared in the "Foundations of Leninism."

The national question is part and parcel of the general question of the proletarian revolution and of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. (*Leninism*, International Publishers, New York, Vol. I, p. 66.)

2. Browder's statement that the Negro people had "already exercised" their right of self-determination was obviously ridiculous, and constituted a complete distortion of the obvious facts.

Holding in mind that the Negro people cannot secure their complete liberation without the abolition of the

present semi-feudal ruling class in the South, which is united by thousands of ties with monopoly capitalism in the U. S., and that the right of self-determination has certainly not been exercised by the Negro people in the South, the task that now confronts us is to determine (1) whether we were correct in 1930 in declaring the status of the Negro people in the Black Belt to be that of an oppressed nation and whether, if this was correct in 1930, it is still correct; (2) whether, if this was and still is correct, we raised properly the program for the right of self-determination for the oppressed Negro nation in the past; and (3) exactly how we should formulate today our basic program, both maximum and minimum, for Negro liberation.

#### THE CONTRADICTIONARY STATUS OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE IN THE BLACK BELT

In answer to the first question, we were, in my opinion, absolutely correct in recognizing that the Negro people of the Black Belt possess all the characteristics of an oppressed nation and are, therefore, not to be confused with a national minority. However, in my opinion, upon arriving at this correct conclusion, we committed the error of *not proceeding with our analysis, of not making a sufficiently concrete and detailed analysis of the specific characteristics of the Negro nation in the South as determined by definite historical conditions in their development.*

To be precise, we failed to qualify our recognition of the national character of the Negro people's movement in the Black Belt by recognizing that *the Negro people of the Black Belt not only have all the characteristics of an oppressed nation, but also simultaneously are an oppressed part of the American nation as a whole*. To be sure, we never denied this, and we implied it in all our practical activity, as we still do. By overlooking in our theoretical presentation, however, what must be recognized as a fact by anyone who really analyzes the status of the Negro people in the Black Belt, we failed to do what Stalin always declared to be an absolute prerequisite for arriving at a correct solution to the national question. *We failed to analyze sufficiently the specifically unique features of the oppressed Negro nation in the South.*

According to Stalin:

... the solution of the national problem can be arrived at only if due consideration is paid to historical conditions in their development.

The economic, political and cultural conditions of a given nation constitute the only key to the question of *how* a particular nation ought to arrange its life and *what forms* its future constitution ought to take. *It is possible that a specific solution of the problem will be required for each nation.* [My italics—F.F.] If, indeed, a dialectical approach to a question is required anywhere it is required here, in the national question. (*Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, International Publishers, p. 21.)

Stalin specifically warned against thinking that what may be a correct program for an oppressed nation in one country is necessarily correct for other oppressed nations in other countries.

In view of this [the statements made in the quotation given above] we must declare our decided opposition to a certain very widespread, but very summary manner of "solving" the national problem, which owes its inception to the Bund. We have in mind the easy method of referring to the Austrian and South-Slavic Social-Democratic parties, which supposedly have already solved the national problem and whose solution the Russian Social-Democrats\* should simply borrow. It is assumed that whatever, say, is right for Austria is also right for Russia. The most important and decisive factor is lost sight of here, namely, the concrete historical conditions in Russia as a whole and in the life of each of the nations inhabiting Russia in particular. (*Ibid.*, pp. 21-2.)

And again:

... only pedants who "solve" the national problem without reference to space and time can think of taking an example from Austria or of borrowing programmes. . . .

Once again, the concrete historical conditions as the starting point, the dialectical presentation of the problem as the only correct way of presenting it—such is the key to the national problem. (*Ibid.*, pp. 25-6.)

\* Before its change of name, at Lenin's initiative in 1917, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was called the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party.



This, of course, means that what was a correct program for oppressed nations in Russia is of course not necessarily correct for the oppressed Negro nation in America. Yet our procedure in the past was to assume that the moment we had recognized that the Negro people in the Black Belt possessed all the characteristics of an oppressed nation, this was sufficient to justify us in advancing a program for their liberation in exactly the same form as that advanced by the Russian Party for the oppressed nations under Tzarism. Unfortunately, the problem is not so simple.

The Negro people of the Black Belt in the United States are an *oppressed part of the American nation* in the fullest sense of the word. It is not merely that they possess on paper the legal rights of citizens of the American Republic. They share in common with the American people all the characteristics of the American nation — territory, economy, history, language, culture — in a manner which was not true of any of the oppressed nations in the territory of the Tzarist Empire. Let anyone dare to tell any Negro in the Black Belt that he is not an American, and he will get his answer soon enough. At the same time, the Negro people have acquired in more or less rudimentary forms *all the characteristics of an oppressed nation*. In a word, they are in a *contradictory, ambiguous position* — halfway in the American nation, halfway out. *Belonging to one na-*

*tion, they have simultaneously developed separate national characteristics of their own.* Only people addicted to metaphysical modes of thinking (people who believe in hard, fast, impassable boundaries in nature and society) can deny the possibility of what we actually see before our eyes.

We cannot understand this peculiar dual character of the Negro people in the Black Belt of the South without a study of the *concrete historical development of the Negro people in that area of the U. S.*

Prior to the Civil War, the enslaved Negro people of the Black Belt were neither a part of the American nation nor a separate nation. Excluded from incorporation into the American nation, they were unable, while in slavery, to acquire all the characteristics of an oppressed nation. They acquired some (common language, history, culture, psychological make-up), but not all. According to the principles of historical materialism, it is the capitalist mode of production that is the basic, determining factor in the emergence of modern nations. As Stalin declares:

A nation is not merely a historical category but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of elimination of feudalism and development of capitalism was at the same time a process of amalgamation of people into nations. (*Ibid.*, p. 13.)

Obviously, it was not until after the Civil War that capitalism began to develop among the Negro people.

We can be even more precise concerning the exact period during which the Negro people of the Black Belt began to develop separate national characteristics of their own. It was not during, but for the most part *after* Reconstruction. During Reconstruction, the program of the Radical Republicans (who needed an alliance with the Negro people of the South as a mass, revolutionary, pro-Union force with which to break the backbone of the slaveholder rebellion) not only granted citizenship rights to the Negro people, but their Left-wing group advanced the program of incorporating the Negro people fully as equals into the American nation by confiscating the plantations and dividing the land among the Negro people. This program, which would have assured the Negro people an economic base for maintaining social and political equality, was passionately supported by the Negro people. It was part of a program for full incorporation of the Negro people as equals into the American nation. The realization of that program would have converted Negro Americans into equal participants in the American nation with a status similar to that of German Americans or Irish Americans. During Reconstruction, a Negro middle class and even some Negro capitalists began to emerge, but they launched no program for the development of a separate Negro capitalism, of a separate Negro nation. Their aim was to produce for the whole of the American market,

to become an integral part of American capitalism and thus of the American nation as a whole. *There was no program for separate Negro national development.*

The reason for this is obvious. The Negro people secured their emancipation and equal citizenship through a revolutionary alliance with all the revolutionary classes of America during a powerful bourgeois-democratic revolution. During the Reconstruction phase of that revolution, American democracy reached the highest development it ever achieved either before or since. The Negro people passionately desired to become an integral part of this new democratic America.

The program of the Negro people for democratic incorporation into America as equals was brutally defeated by the counter-revolution consummated by the Hayes-Tilden Compromise in 1877. The Negro people of the Black Belt, partially incorporated into the American nation during Reconstruction, were thereafter excluded from any movement toward further integration into the nation. Jim Crow oppression forced upon them separate national development of their own. Never have the Negro people been thrown completely out of the American nation, but neither have they been permitted to participate as equals in the national development of the United States as a whole. Segregation laws and practices have prevented Negro small producers and the very few and rela-

tively poor Negro capitalists from access to the whole American market. Forced to produce for a separate Negro market, there has thus developed a slight Negro capitalism. It is this separate Negro capitalism which has formed the economic base for the emergence among the Negro people of the Black Belt of separate national characteristics of their own.

One of the errors in our theoretical presentation of the Negro question as a national question in the past was, in my opinion, failure to make quite clear what constitutes the common economy of the Negro nation. From what has been said on the basis of Stalin's very specific declaration about nations being the products of rising capitalism, it is obvious that it is not the semi-feudal plantation economy, as many comrades formerly believed, which constitutes that common economy. Share-cropping stands in the way of and obstructs capitalist, and thus, any kind of national development among the Negro people. It is the slight development of a separate interdependent capitalist economy among the Negro people of the Black Belt that forms their common economy.

While the exact boundaries of the area of Negro majority have shifted and have undoubtedly been slightly reduced in recent years, this does not in itself indicate a decline in separate national development among the Negro people. Neither, of course, does the decrease in the number of sharecroppers and increase in Negro

migration to Southern cities indicate the disappearance of separate national characteristics. The latter process would definitely indicate a growth in the extent of the separate Negro home market. The statistics indicating a growth of Negro business would seem definitely to indicate that further national development among the Negro people has been occurring in recent years.

Separate national development among the Negro people, however, has not reached the point where it has become impossible economically to secure very rapidly the *reversal* of the present line of development, which is *toward* further national development. It is fully possible to move *away from* the present growth of the Negro nation *toward* the full integration of the Negro people of the Black Belt within the American economy as a whole. This *can* occur provided that the struggles of the Negro people in alliance with labor and the toiling farmers break down Jim Crow and semi-feudal barriers, which stand in the way of such integration, through a revolutionary change in the economic, political and social institutions of the Southern states. The Negro people in the Black Belt are, thus, in a *transitional state of flux* in which *development in either direction—either toward further separate national development or toward complete voluntary amalgamation within the American nation on the basis of equality—is still quite possible.*

The question for us to determine

is which course is *desirable* from the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat as a whole and which course is desired by and is in the interest of the Negro people.

This leads us to the second question, whether in the past we raised correctly our general program for the right of self-determination for the Negro people of the Black Belt.

#### THE GENERAL MEANING OF THE RIGHT TO SELF- DETERMINATION

The moment we recognize that the Negro people of the Black Belt, even though remaining an oppressed part of the American nation as a whole, have developed the characteristics of an oppressed nation, it follows that the program of the Party must recognize the right of self-determination for the Negro people of that area, provided this does not conflict with the interests of the proletariat as a whole.

*The mere recognition of this general right to self-determination, however, does not solve all problems, as Stalin clearly indicates in his "The Presentation of the Problem," Ch. III of Marxism and the National Question. To quote:*

A nation has the right freely to determine its own destiny. It has the right to arrange its life as it sees fit, without, of course, stamping on the rights of other nations. That is beyond dispute.

But *how* exactly should it arrange its own life, *what forms* should its future

constitution take, if the interests of the majority of the nation and, above all, of the proletariat, are to be borne in mind?

A nation has the right to arrange its life on autonomous lines. It even has the right to secede. But this does not mean that it should do so under all circumstances, that autonomy, or separation, will everywhere and always be advantageous for a nation, *i.e.*, for the majority of its population, *i.e.*, for the toiling strata. The Transcaucasian Tatars as a nation may assemble, let us say, in their Diet and, succumbing to the influence of their beys and mullahs, decide to restore the old order of things and to secede from the state. According to the meaning of the clause on self-determination they are fully entitled to do so. But will this be in the interest of the toiling strata of the Tatar nation? Can Social-Democrats remain indifferent when the beys and mullahs take the lead of the masses in the solution of the national problem? Should not Social-Democrats interfere in the matter and influence the will of the nation in a definite way? Should they not come forward with a definite plan for the solution of the problem which would be most advantageous to the Tatar masses?

But what solution would be most compatible with the interests of the toiling masses? Autonomy, federation or separation?

*All these are problems the solution to which will depend on the concrete historical conditions in which the given nation finds itself. [My italics—F.F.]*

Nay, more. Conditions, like everything else, change, and a decision which is correct at one particular time

may prove to be entirely unsuitable at another. (*Ibid.*, pp. 20-1.)

All this goes to show that it is not sufficient for the Party to place in its program on the Negro question the *general* right to self-determination as it applies to all nations at all times. There is no general specific blueprint that will enable us, without careful analysis of the specific characteristics of the Negro people at each given historical period in the Black Belt of the U. S. in particular, to determine which form of self-determination for the Negro people of that area at the given time will be most advantageous to the toiling strata of that area, to the Negro proletarians and sharecroppers. We cannot copy or borrow a program from any other nation. There is no escaping the hard task of *thinking through* this problem as a *specific* problem.

In my opinion, we made grave errors in the past by oversimplifying and vulgarizing our presentation of the right to self-determination for the Negro people of the Black Belt. We forgot Stalin's statement that the right of self-determination means the right of a nation "freely to determine its own destiny," "to arrange its life as it sees fit, without, of course, stamping on the rights of other nations." We presented the right to self-determination as if it could be reduced to only two possible forms—secession or territorial autonomy (*i.e.*, a separate federated state). We forgot not only that Stalin did not

limit the general right of self-determination to any particular number of forms, but that, on the contrary, he stated very definitely that

It is possible that a specific solution of the problem will be required for each nation. (*Ibid.*, p. 21.)

Moreover, we forgot that he declared very definitely that Communists cannot remain indifferent to the form of self-determination which an oppressed nation may choose, but that, as the vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist Party must give leadership, through its members belonging to the oppressed nation (*i.e.*, through Negro Communists in the Black Belt), to that oppressed nation by seeking to influence it to choose that particular form of self-determination most advantageous to the toiling strata of the given oppressed nation.

On page 53 of the work already quoted, Stalin emphasizes that nations are composed of many classes and that, therefore:

... the rights of nations may express the interests of any class—bourgeoisie, aristocracy, clergy, etc.—depending on the strength and influence of these classes [*i.e.*, whichever class gets the upper hand in the national movement.—F.F.]

Elsewhere on the same page, Stalin declare:

... it is the duty of Social-Democrats to conduct such agitation and to endeavor to influence the will of nations

so that the nations may arrange their affairs in the way that will best suit the interests of the proletariat.

In speaking of the relation between the general program of the Party and the particular program of the Party on the rights of nations, Stalin declares on the page:

The former sets forth the *duties* of Marxists, the latter the *rights* of nations, which are made up of various classes. The rights of nations and the principles of Social-Democracy may or may not be "contrary" to each other. . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 53.)

In analyzing our presentation of the right of self-determination for the Negro people of the Black Belt in the past, I think we shall find many errors. Two errors have already been indicated: (1) We failed to analyze with sufficient concreteness the specifically unique features of the oppressed Negro nation as historically determined; (2) We presented the right of self-determination as though it were limited to only two possible forms—secession or territorial autonomy (separate statehood)—thus implying that it was impossible for the Negro people to choose some other form if they so desired. In addition, we presented these two forms as though, on the one hand, it were impossible to determine today in what direction the Negro people's movement is actually moving, and, on the other, as though it were a matter of indifference to us or as though it were impossible to deter-

mine what form of self-determination it will be most advantageous under present conditions for the Negro people to choose. This is in definite violation of the Stalinist "presentation of the problem," which definitely poses the problem as to *which form* of self-determination is most advantageous for the given nation. In actual practice, many comrades have vulgarized our program by presenting self-determination as *synonymous* with secession, without clearly indicating that the right of self-determination, which always includes the *right* of secession, also includes the right of a nation to determine its destiny in *any other way* that it may decide, provided it does not thereby oppress other nations. That self-determination is synonymous with secession or separate statehood is the impression that most non-Party Negroes have received of our program. In fact, many comrades have assumed that we actually prefer secession, that, even if the desire for secession does not now exist among the Negro people, it is the duty of Communists to seek to arouse among the Negro people such a desire and to mobilize them in the direction of secession. This attitude was openly voiced in an article during the pre-convention discussion period by a comrade who quite mechanically compared the Negro people of the Black Belt to the Czech nation in Europe, whose general status of course is quite different. Such attitudes have frequently been voiced in classes on the Negro people

and in both public and private discussions.

It is such misinterpretations of the general meaning of the right of self-determination and such distortions of a Marxist-Leninist formulation of that right in reference to the Negro people in particular that must, in my opinion, be definitely eliminated from our Party. If persisted in, such distortions can, as they have already done in the past, cause incalculable damage to the effectiveness of our mobilization of the Negro people.

It must never be forgotten why Communists fight for national liberation. We must never forget our ultimate objective. As Stalin declares:

But the workers are interested in the complete amalgamation of all their comrades into a single international army, in their speedy and final emancipation from intellectual subjection to the bourgeoisie, and in the full and free development of the intellectual forces of their brothers, whatever the nation to which they belong. (*Ibid.*, p. 18.)

Stalin emphasizes that this is *why* the proletariat must fight with all its energies against every form of national oppression.

In fighting for the right of nations to self-determination, the aim of the Social-Democrats is to put an end to the policy of national oppression, to render it impossible, and thereby to remove the grounds of hostility between nations, to take the edge off that hostility and reduce it to a minimum.

This is what essentially distinguishes

the policy of the class-conscious proletariat from the policy of the bourgeoisie, which attempts to aggravate and fan the national struggle and to prolong and sharpen the national movement.

And this is why the class-conscious proletariat cannot rally under the "national" flag of the bourgeoisie. (*Ibid.*, p. 19.)

The ultimate aim of communism is of course to secure the voluntary amalgamation of nations into a single classless world society. Communists are internationalists, not nationalists. If we fight for the liberation of all nations, it is because the voluntary amalgamation of nations cannot be secured until *imperialism*, which seeks the forcible subjugation of nations, is overthrown, until the *right* of separation is first achieved. It is for this reason that we fight for the right of secession for oppressed nations, in order, as Lenin put it, to proceed, where necessary, "through disunity to unity." It is not our aim to proceed through disunity where this is *not* necessary.

We must never forget that the oppressed Negro people, as long as they retain the characteristics of a nation, retain the *right* of secession, and, as Lenin put it, the socialist member of an imperialist nation who ever forgets this for a moment is "an imperialist and a scoundrel." However, does this mean that we necessarily agitate for and seek to organize a movement *for* secession? Certainly not. We must retain that *right* with-

in our program for the simple reason that, without it, the right of self-determination is meaningless and, furthermore, because the situation may conceivably arise in which secession may possibly be advantageous both to the proletariat as a whole and the toiling majority of the Negro people. But would a movement for secession as its ultimate objective today be advantageous? It is certainly obvious to anyone who analyzes the real relations of the Negro people to the maturing labor movement in the United States today that the very opposite is the case, nor does it seem likely, on the basis of present developments, that such a situation will arise unless labor and the people suffer a disastrous defeat, which it is our intention to prevent.

#### WHAT THE NEGRO PEOPLE THEMSELVES WANT—THE PROGRAM FOR WHICH OUR PARTY MUST FIGHT

It is necessary for us to determine accurately what the actual desires of the Negro people are. Is it necessary to wait for a formal vote to ascertain in what form the Negro people would prefer to exercise their "right freely to determine their own destiny" if given that right? Anyone who is at all familiar with the Negro people and whose judgment is not distorted by a mechanically-held preconceived theory knows that there are a thousand and one ways of telling now. *The Negro people definitely do not*

*want even to hear of any kind of separation from America either through secession or through the formation of any form of separate Negro state.* This can readily be ascertained by a study of the whole history of the Negro people's movement. It is clearly indicated by the programs and activities of almost all Negro organizations, by the expressed desires and actions of almost all individual Negroes.

The reason for this opposition by the Negro people to any separatist movement is obvious. The whole character of the particular form of national oppression under which they have suffered in the U. S. has been determined by Jim Crow oppression. Any variety of separation is immediately identified by the Negro masses with Jim Crow. Separation in any form is identified by them with Bilbo's program and that of the rankest Southern reactionaries. The Negro people know that the highest freedom they ever enjoyed (and it was the broadest democracy ever enjoyed by the white masses, too) was during Reconstruction when they were most fully incorporated into the American nation. *To the extent that they have been partially excluded from the nation and that separate national development has been forced upon them, to that extent they have suffered hideous oppression. That is why the Negro people do not even want to hear of any proposal for separate national development.* The Negro people take great pride in their heroic



struggles, their contributions to America as a whole. But they take no pride in their nationhood as such. They do not want to be a separate nation. To them, their separate nationality is the sign of their oppression, was forced upon them as a result of Jim Crow oppression. Therefore, they want to throw it off, to become integral parts of America as a whole on the basis of equality. *Voluntary amalgamation with the American nation on the basis of absolute equality is the passionate desire of the Negro people.* Negro Americans have fought in every American war, hoping thereby to win equality within the nation of their choice. They saved the Union during the Civil War and Reconstruction. The program they cherished during Reconstruction, in spite of their subsequent separate national development, which they did not desire, has never died.

There have been programs among the Negro people for separate national development, such as the Garveyite and 49th state movements. But never have they embraced more than a minority. During the only period when a rather large minority (though a very definite minority even then) followed Garveyism, this was for the masses in that movement an expression of despair over the possibility of achieving their fundamental desire; and that movement today, of course, embraces only an insignificant minority. But what is the class origin of such separatist movements among

the Negro people? Our Party always correctly recognized that such movements are manifestations of *bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalism*, fostered by Negro businessmen anxious to obtain a monopoly on the Negro market and also aided by white reactionaries anxious to deepen the division between Negro and white.

Can our Party consider it unfortunate in any way that the Negro people resent so bitterly any proposal for any form of separatism and that they desire voluntary amalgamation on the basis of equality within the American nation? Can this desire of the Negro people be considered disadvantageous to the interests of either the working class or the Negro people? On the contrary. It is highly advantageous.

The Negro people have indicated by their struggles throughout their history that they do not desire and have no need to proceed to separation first, to disunity, in order to arrive at unity. Their desire is to proceed *directly* to unity with the American people—if only the white masses will stretch out the hand of brotherhood. Certainly Communists, internationalists, should be the last people in the world to seek to impose any obstacles to this actually existing, deep-seated and well-known desire cherished by the Negro people. We must facilitate the realization of that desire by mobilizing the white masses to stretch out the hand of brotherhood by fighting militantly for Negro rights.

The voluntary amalgamation of the Negro people on the basis of absolute equality within the American nation can be secured only through alliance with the labor movement, in which the leadership must be exercised by the working class, both Negro and white, in joint struggles. Victory in such a struggle cannot be secured without abolishing the rule of the Southern landlords and capitalists and achieving the defeat of monopoly capital, indissolubly connected with the Southern ruling class, through either the consolidation of a militant farmer-labor majority in the government, as a possible step on the path toward Socialism, or through socialist revolution itself. Obviously such a victory would mean the most radical democratization of the whole country and is most advantageous for all the toiling classes of America as a whole, both Negro and white.

Would the consummation of the desire of the Negro people for voluntary amalgamation with the American nation on the basis of equality constitute the realization of the right of self-determination of the oppressed Negro nation? Of course it would. If some comrades do not recognize the *right of an oppressed nation voluntarily to choose amalgamation with the dominant nation, if it so desires*, as a right included under the general right of nations to self-determination, it is because, in my opinion, a non-Leninist oversimplification of the national question has been

prevalent in our Party for a long time.

If, in the face of an actually existing historical movement of the Negro people, of long duration, for voluntary amalgamation with the American nation on the basis of equality, our comrades have often raised, in opposition to this actually existing movement, contrary slogans calling for either secession or statehood (and no other alternatives), has this not fostered deviations from Leninism in the direction of petty-bourgeois Negro nationalism? I think it has.

In our effort to rid our Party now of the *imperialist chauvinist nationalism* which Browder sponsored, must we not also guard against the other deviation, which a critical analysis will, I feel, reveal to be of long duration in our Party, *viz.*, the deviation in the direction of *petty-bourgeois Negro nationalism*. The fight for a correct Leninist position on the national question is always a fight on two fronts, against both types of deviation. To allow *either* deviation to develop always fosters the other. There can be no question that *chauvinism is the greatest danger in our country as a whole and also in our Party*, that against it we must mobilize all our forces, that petty-bourgeois Negro nationalism has only the slightest grip on the Negro masses. But, for these very reasons, we must not shut our eyes to this deviation which has been present *in our Party* for a long time,

against the danger that our comrades may actually foster petty-bourgeois nationalism among the Negro masses. In the words of Stalin:

What does a deviation toward nationalism mean — irrespective of whether it is a deviation towards Great-Russian nationalism or towards local nationalism? The deviation towards nationalism is the adaptation of the internationalist policy of the working class to the nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie. . . . The source of these deviations is, as you see, a common one. It is a *departure* from Leninist internationalism. If you want to keep both these deviations under fire, then aim primarily against this source, against those who depart from internationalism—irrespective of whether the deviation is towards local nationalism or towards Great-Russian nationalism. (*Ibid.*, p. 267.)

Anyone who has worked among the Negro people (especially in the South) knows that we have ample experiences for a critical analysis of the effect of our previous presentation of the right to self-determination among the Negro people. Our Party aroused passionate enthusiasm among the Negro people through its immediate program and practical daily activity against Jim Crow, for Negro and white unity, against lynching, the poll tax, and discrimination in all its forms, its campaign for the Scottsboro boys, its heroic organizational activity among sharecroppers, its demand for absolute social, political and economic equality for the Negro people. But can it be said that our pres-

entation of the right to self-determination contributed to this enthusiasm? On the contrary. To the extent that we aroused enthusiasm among the Negro people, it was largely in spite of, not because of our oversimplified presentation of the right of self-determination. Anyone who has worked in the South must realize that our presentation of this right for the most part had only the effect of puzzling and confusing the Negro people who followed our movement. They generally listened politely to our exposition of this right, but treated it as some strange idiosyncrasy to which we were addicted, but which could be forgiven in friends. The most damning thing of all was that those Negroes who took the trouble to ascertain exactly what we were driving at generally voiced very decided opposition. Undoubtedly thousands of Negroes have been prevented from joining our Party primarily because of their decided opposition to our oversimplified presentation of the right of self-determination. It is on this one issue as on nothing else that the enemy press has been partially successful in alienating many Negroes from our Party. Many Negroes, friendly to our Party and approving wholeheartedly of our daily practical activity, have often reproached us for manifesting *disunity between our theory and practice*. They have pointed out that, while in our practical activity we fight constantly for the fullest *unity* between Negro and white, our perspective of either se-

cession or separate statehood for the Black Belt constitutes a perspective of disunity. This criticism is very grave for Marxists, who believe in unity between theory and practice. I think we have to recognize that the Negro people who make this criticism are right. If the Negro people in their majority actually desired secession or separate statehood, then it *might* prove necessary to go through disunity to secure ultimate unity, though even then sufficient mobilization of the *white* masses to fight for Negro rights might still succeed in *changing* such a desire for separation. However, the very fact that the vast majority of Negroes make this criticism when they hear of secession or separate statehood indicates that they definitely do not want any form of separate national existence.

All of these facts definitely indicate that something must have been wrong with our presentation. Some comrades have concluded from these reactions of the Negro people that our whole analysis of the Negro question as a national question was wrong. This, in my opinion, would be a totally incorrect interpretation. *Our recognition of the national character of the Negro people's movement has had the most profound practical and beneficent effects upon our whole approach to the Negro question.* It is only our recognition of the national characteristics of the Negro people of the Black Belt that has enabled us to see that the Negro question is not just a class question,

that the *whole* Negro people, *all classes*, including the small number of Negro capitalists, are *natural allies of the working class*. It is only our recognition of the national character of the Negro people's movement that gives us a theoretical explanation of the actual fact that there is a developing alliance between the American working class and the *whole* Negro people. *It would be a great mistake to discard our characterization of the Negro people's movement as a national movement.*

*It would be an equally great mistake, in my opinion, to overlook the criticisms made by the Negro people themselves of our previous presentation of the right of self-determination. We cannot conclude, as some comrades have been tempted to do, that the Negro people reject the right of self-determination.* That is impossible, for this right means simply the right of an oppressed nation "freely to determine its own destiny," and, for that right, every oppressed people of course longs with passionate intensity. *What the Negro people have rejected is our incorrect presentation of the right of self-determination. They have rejected the two specific forms to which we have incorrectly restricted it, i.e., secession or separate statehood. They have not and cannot reject the right itself, but they desire to exercise that right through a form of their own choosing, through voluntary amalgamation with the American nation on the basis of complete equality.*

It is a part of Leninist self-criticism that a Communist Party not only criticize itself through collective evaluation of the criticisms of its work by its own members, but also that it listen to and carefully evaluate the criticisms made of it by the non-Party masses. *The reaction of the Negro people to our presentation of the right of self-determination for the Negro people of the Black Belt has definitely constituted a criticism of this part of our program by the Negro people themselves. It would be disastrous for us to ignore this criticism.* I think we have to recognize that on this question, in rejecting secession and separate statehood and in selecting voluntary democratic amalgamation with the American nation as the form of self-determination which they prefer, the Negro people have shown keener judgment than have we. We have been blinded as a result of ignoring Stalin's warning against "borrowing" programs on the national question from other nations, by failing to analyze the specific characteristics, needs and desires of the Negro nation itself. The Negro people with their own memories of Reconstruction, their long suffering under segregation (*forcible separation*) have known their own interests in this respect better than have we, who sought mechanically to apply to them programs correct for other oppressed nations, but wrong for them. It is time for us to recognize that such mechanical "borrowing" of programs is not the *scientific*

Leninist method. It is necessary for us to listen to the Negro people themselves, to remember Stalin's words that Communists find their strength by being close to the workers and toiling masses, by learning from them and voicing clearly their innermost aspirations—just as Antaeus found his strength when close to his Mother Earth.

Some comrades claim that since Browder declared that the Negro people desire democratic integration with the American nation, it is Browderism if we continue to say the same thing now. But obviously this is no argument. Browderism cannot be reduced to this proposition. Browderism is class-collaborationism and imperialists; Browderism is the negation of the socialist revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat; Browderism is social-imperialism; Browderism is liquidationism of the Communist Party. Browderism in the Negro question is the negation of the revolutionary character of the fight for Negro rights, it is reliance upon collaboration with the bourgeoisie to secure mere reforms for the Negro people, it is reformism. Browderism amounts to the liquidation of a militant fight for Negro rights. Browderism led to the complete liquidation of any resemblance even of any Marxist organization in the South. It is, of course, childish nonsense to say that every statement Browder ever made is false, that every statement Browder ever made must be automati-

cally rejected merely because Browder said it. If every statement made by Browder during the course of his revisionism had been false, none of us would have been so stupid as to fall victim to any of his theories. Obviously he made many true statements which made his revisionism more palatable. Our Party swallowed the false with the true. It would of course be unutterably stupid in us were we now, in rejecting his revisionism, to reject also the one true statement he made on the Negro question. To fly from one deviation into an opposite deviation is a danger against which we must definitely be on guard.

### CONCLUSION

Serious criticism of our previous errors in presenting the right to self-determination for the Negro people of the Black Belt, together with serious analysis of present trends among the Negro people in relation to the general developments within America as a whole and throughout the world afford the only sure means for arriving at a correct collective answer to the third question posed at the beginning of this article, *viz.*, how we should now formulate our program.

It is not my purpose in this article to formulate a detailed immediate program, but merely to propose, along the lines already indicated, a more adequate—and, I believe, more Leninist—formulation of our general characterization of the national char-

acter of the Negro people's movement and of our presentation of the right to self-determination.

To summarize, I believe we should definitely recognize in our program the specific features of the Negro community in the Black Belt to consist in its simultaneously possessing all the characteristics of an oppressed nation and also comprising an oppressed part of the American nation as a whole. We should not give a merely static description of this contradictory status, but should present it historically in its development and *movement*, emphasizing that the Negro community in the Black Belt is now in a *transitional* state, able to move in either direction (either toward further separate national development, which will occur for as long as Jim Crow remains, or toward democratic voluntary amalgamation within America, which can occur if Jim Crow and semi-feudal oppression is overthrown). Because of this dual character of the Negro community throughout the Black Belt, I think we should refrain from speaking of that community as a nation in an *unqualified* sense, but should always in presenting its national characteristics give simultaneous recognition to its partial inclusion within the American nation. It would, however, be a mistake to call the Negro people of the Black Belt simply a national minority, for that would obscure the national characteristics of this community, which it is absolutely necessary to recognize.

Having presented historically the development of the dual character of the Negro community of people in the Black Belt, I think we should then immediately indicate that the Negro people want to clear up this ambiguity caused by their dual position. This ambiguity leads Negro Americans frequently to ask, "Are we or are we not Americans?"—a question to which it is impossible to answer absolutely either "yes" or "no"; for in a sense they are and in a sense they are not, since the Negro people under their peculiar form of oppression stand half-way in and half-way outside the nation. Our program should then recognize, in my opinion, that it is our conviction, on the basis of our study of the history and the actions of the Negro people, that the Negro people want to clear up this ambiguity definitely by becoming full-fledged Americans with absolutely equal rights, that they definitely want to put an end to any form of separation from their fellow-Americans. Instead of making an abstract presentation of their general right to self-determination, our program should state definitely that our Party, after careful study, has recognized that the Negro people desire voluntary amalgamation with the American nation as a whole on the basis of absolute equality, that we recognize this to be the specific way in which the Negro people of the Black Belt desire to exercise their right to self-determination, a right which they have acquired as a result

of their separate national development under forcible segregation. Our program should declare that our Party considers it *fortunate for all America* that the Negro people desire such a democratic amalgamation with America. It should emphasize how the realization of this aim of the Negro people cannot be secured without the fullest unity in struggle between labor and the farming masses and the Negro people and how such unity in struggle *will bring to all the American people the broadest democracy they have ever known, enabling them thereby to move in the quickest, surest, and most direct route toward the defeat and overthrow of monopoly capital, toward the establishment of Socialism.*

We should pledge every ounce of our energy to the mobilization of the whole American working class and the whole American people to fight for this specific form of self-determination which the Negro people themselves desire. Our program should declare that the realization of this program of complete Negro liberation will necessarily involve a revolutionary change in the Southern states:

1. The total reorganization of Southern county and state governments in such forms as to guarantee majority representation to Negroes in all departments of government, including police and militia, in all areas of Negro majority, a reorganization which will require redrawing of electoral and county lines, etc.;

2. A redivision of property relations in the South, involving the nationalization of land in the plantation areas without remuneration to plantation owners, and its redistribution free of charge among tenants and sharecroppers;

3. Abolition of all forms of Jim Crow, complete economic, political and social equality;

4. Suppression of all anti-Negro organizations and the death penalty by law for all guilty of inciting hatred, discrimination, or animosity toward the Negro people.

Socialism must be presented as the final guarantee for the freedom of the Negro people, as of all the exploited. Our immediate program should follow.

In this way, I believe we shall completely unify our theory and practice on the Negro question. The clarity that such a program will bring to the Negro people and the white masses will, I believe, arouse such a burst of enthusiasm among the Negro people and unleash such energies as our Party has never seen.



# TOWARD CLARITY ON THE NEGRO QUESTION

(A DISCUSSION ARTICLE)

By MAX WEISS

OUR PARTY is now engaged in making a serious study of all aspects of the Negro question. This involves, in the first place, an examination of our basic theoretical approach to the Negro question as a national question.

This study is a continuation and deepening of our struggle against Browder's revision of Marxist principles. The ruthless elimination of all remnants of the influence of Browderism from our analysis is a prerequisite for full clarity and for a correct theoretical and political formulation of our program on the Negro question. It is clear that such a program must also eliminate certain abstract and sectarian tendencies which characterized the program originally developed some fifteen years ago.

Comrade Franklin's article represents a serious attempt to grapple with these questions. Its starting point, correctly, is a rejection of Browderism. But the central weakness of the article, a weakness that vitiates its analysis, is a rejection of Browderism in general without a correct analysis of the specific content of Browder's revision of Marxism on the Negro question. As a result, Comrade Franklin unwittingly leaves the door open to certain influences which stem from Browder's specific revision of Marxism on the Negro question.

The struggle against Browder's revisionism demands that we tear away the glittering surface plausibility of his sophistries and penetrate to the hard core of revisionism concealed beneath.

Comrade Franklin, however, succeeds only in peeling off Browder's most obvious surface errors on the Negro question without isolating their hard revisionist core. In fact, he offers up this core of Browder's revision of Marxism on the Negro question as a golden kernel of truth which was somehow mixed up with these surface errors.

Thus, he writes:

Some comrades claim that since Browder declared that the Negro people desire democratic integration with the American nation, it is Browderism if we continue to say the same thing now. . . .

It would, of course, be utterly stupid in us were we now, in rejecting his revisionism, to reject also the one true statement he made on the Negro question.

## BROWDER'S REVISIONIST SOPHISTRY

Actually, what Comrade Franklin alleges to have been Browder's "one true statement" was a typical piece of Browderite sophistry.

In its popular usage, the assertion that the Negro people want to be fully integrated into all phases of American life means that the Negro people want full social, economic and political equality. It means that they want economic equality—on the job, in hiring, in wages, working conditions, union membership, etc.; it means that they want political equality—in the right to vote both in primaries and elections, to be elected, to hold office, to serve on juries, etc.; it means that they want social equality—in unrestricted freedom of movement, in choice of residential areas, in housing, in the right of inter-marriage, in admission to schools and colleges, in entry and service in restaurants, hotels, movies, etc.

This desire of the Negro people for democratic integration is not an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of nations. An outstanding example of another nation characterized by such a desire for integration is the Scottish nation. For many generations the Scottish people have expressed such a desire for full democratic integration into all phases of British life. The fact is that they have been largely integrated into the life of Great Britain—with all the limitations necessarily imposed on the exercise of any democratic right under capitalism. So far has this process of integration proceeded that, for example, a Scotchman—Ramsey MacDonald—was Prime Minister of Britain. This integration of the Scottish nation within Great Britain has in

no way resulted in the disintegration of the Scottish nation.

Integration may or may not be accompanied by a demand for self-government, depending on whether a nation or a nationality group is involved. In the case of the Scottish nation, its desire for integration, manifested by its attitude to the actual course of events for 250 years, is accompanied by a demand for self-government—not for separation, which the Scottish masses oppose, but for self-government based on a federal relationship to England through the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. The Communist Party of Great Britain supports this demand for Scottish self-government.

In the case of the nationality groups in the United States, on the other hand, the desire for integration is not accompanied by any demand for any form of self-government. The integration of the nationality groups in the United States definitely excludes any perspective for self-government and is accompanied by the actual disintegration of these communities.

Browder's sophistry consisted in his assertion that the Negro people in the Black Belt want integration with the clear implication that this is to be understood by popular analogy with the nationality groups in the United States. Therefore, his "one true statement" was, in reality, a judgment that the right of self-determination for the Negro people in the Black Belt must be understood in a sense which comprises the disintegration,

the atomization, of the Negro nation and which definitely excludes any perspective for self-government of the Negro people in the area of Negro majority in the Black Belt.

But this interpretation of the right of self-determination which, on the ground that the Negro people do not want to secede from the United States, denies the continued existence of the Negro nation in the future and excludes the concept of self-government altogether, constitutes a fundamental revision of Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question.

In discussing what he considers to be Browder's revision of Marxism-Leninism on the Negro question, Comrade Franklin discusses everything but this. He declares that Browder's revisionism on the Negro question expressed itself in two ways: first, class collaboration and reformism in relation to the struggle for Negro rights; and second, the assertion that the Negro people had already exercised the right of self-determination. But Comrade Franklin does not analyse why it is a revision of Marxism to say that the Negro people have already exercised the right of self-determination. He merely calls it "ridiculous." Thus, Comrade Franklin does not touch the essence of Browder's revisionism on the Negro question.

#### WHAT DOES THE RIGHT OF VOLUNTARY DEMOCRATIC AMALGAMATION MEAN?

Comrade Franklin writes:

If some comrades do not recognize the *right of an oppressed nation voluntarily to choose amalgamation with the dominant nation, if it so desires*, as a right included under the general right of nations to self-determination, it is because, in my opinion, a non-Leninist oversimplification of the national question has been prevalent in our Party for a long time.

Clearly, Comrade Franklin cannot mean by "the right of an oppressed nation voluntarily to choose amalgamation" merely the right of a nation to remain within the frontiers of the state in which it now finds itself. This is simply another way of saying that a nation does not wish to secede. This desire of a nation was fully taken into account by Stalin, for example, when he examined precisely such a possibility:

Further. What must be our attitude toward nations which for one reason or another will prefer to remain within the general framework?

We have seen that national cultural autonomy is unsuitable. . . .

What is the way out?

The only real solution is *regional autonomy*. . . . (*Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, International Publishers, pp. 56-57.)

In this sense (of remaining within the State frontiers), all comrades have long recognized the right to choose amalgamation as a right included in the general right of self-determination.

Clearly, Comrade Franklin cannot mean amalgamation in the sense in

which Engels proposed the amalgamation of the English, Scotch and Welsh in a united federal state with self-government for each nation. In this sense as well, all comrades have long recognized the right to choose amalgamation as a right included under the general right of nations to self-determination.

Nor can Comrade Franklin mean amalgamation in the sense in which the oppressed French-Canadian nation chose amalgamation with English-speaking Canada. This is also a form of federation, despite the fact that French Canada is a federal province and not a federal republic.

Likewise, Comrade Franklin cannot mean amalgamation in the sense in which the oppressed Negro nation in the Black Belt might choose amalgamation with the American nation on the basis of some form of statehood. This too is a form of federation, even though a state is not a republic or a province. In fact, he expressly condemns all past orientations to any such form of amalgamation by an unqualified disavowal of "separate federated state," "separate statehood," and plain ordinary "statehood."

Finally, Comrade Franklin cannot mean amalgamation in any conceivable sense—no matter how unprecedented—which involves the continued existence of the Negro nation.

Clearly, a "non-Leninist oversimplification of the national question" spells for Comrade Franklin an uncompromising insistence that the

right of self-determination means the right of a nation to self-government, whether such self-government be established as a result of secession, or on the basis of some form of autonomy or federation. Comrade Franklin wants to give a new meaning to the right of a nation to self-determination—a meaning that annuls its essence.

*For Comrade Franklin, the amalgamation of the Negro nation means nothing more nor less than the disintegration of the Negro nation.*

In the first place, Comrade Franklin so analyses the specific characteristics of the Negro nation that any perspective for self-government necessarily becomes meaningless. According to him, the existence and further development of the Negro nation depends on the continuation of Jim Crow oppression; once this oppression is lifted, the basis for the continued existence and development of the Negro nation will have been eliminated. It follows from what he says that the abolition of inequality, discrimination, and segregation will result in the disintegration of the Negro nation; that given the growth of democracy in the United States, the Negro nation has no future.

Since it is only for nations which now exist and which, presumably, will continue to exist in the future, that any demand for self-government has real meaning, how can one think in terms of self-government for the Negro nation?

The right of self-determination for

such a nation can mean only its right to disintegrate itself. This is the essential meaning of Comrade Franklin's newly-discovered "right to voluntary democratic amalgamation."

According to him, this is exactly what the Negro people want. He says:

The Negro people take great pride in their heroic struggles, their contributions to America as a whole. But they take no pride in their nationhood as such. They do not want to be a separate nation.

It follows from this that, for the Negro nation, the right of self-determination means the right not to be a nation, the right to put an end to its existence as a nation.

In order to exercise such a strange right what is required is certainly not any form of self-government. What is required is an arrangement, or rather a disarrangement, which will disintegrate the ties that bind the community which is a nation.

But, in point of fact, it is absolutely incorrect to say that the Negro people "take no pride in their nationhood as such," that "they do not want to be a separate nation."

Comrade Franklin makes an inadmissible separation between the heroic struggles and contributions of the Negro people and their "nationhood as such." Does not the nationhood of a people also comprise their common history, and therefore, their traditions of struggle, their contributions to their own development, to

the development of other nations and to the world generally? What kind of nationhood can one have in mind which excludes this essential characteristic of a nation is defined by Stalin, *i.e.*, its common psychological make-up as manifested in its common history, culture, etc? And what kind of national pride can one have in mind which excludes pride in heroic struggles and contributions?

Pride in the location of frontier posts, perhaps? Pride in the geographical extent of the common territory?

The great pride of the Negro people in their struggles and contributions is the most important and vital element of their *national* pride as it is in the national pride of all peoples. Without it, "pride in nationhood as such" becomes a shadowy Kantian "thing in itself" which, to a Marxist, lurks with a ghostly air behind the historical reality of the Negro nation as it exists objectively.

Furthermore, it is meaningless to talk about the Negro people "not wanting" to be a nation. The "want" to be a nation is simply the collective sum total of the very real concrete wants which manifest themselves in the struggle of a people, sometimes even without their conscious knowledge of the scientific significance of these wants.

If a people "want" to continue speaking the same language, to continue inhabiting their common territory, to continue developing a common economic life, to continue claim-

ing their common history, culture, etc., then this means, to use Comrade Franklin's language, that they "want" to be a nation. For the sum total of these things which they "want" constitutes the nation.

Comrade Franklin overlooks the *objective* reality of the Negro nation and raises above that objectivity a subjective intent (as he sees it). In this, he departs from the historical-materialist approach to the question.

There is, however, another aspect to this question with which Comrade Franklin deals only inferentially.

He states that the Negro people do not want to be a separate nation. But he gives no clear answer to the question: do the Negro people today regard themselves as a nation?

The actual fact is that—apart from their most advanced section—the Negro people today do not regard themselves as a nation.

It would however, be incorrect to draw the conclusion that, since the Negro people in the Black Belt are not conscious of being a nation, they are therefore not a nation.

Such idealistic reasoning would be in flagrant contradiction to an objective, historical-materialist approach. It is not consciousness which determines being but being which determines consciousness, even though consciousness, in turn, reacts upon being and influences it. The existence and growth of a nation is an objective fact. The reflection of this objective fact in the consciousness of a

people is as much an historic process as the formation of the nation itself. Just as a nation does not spring into existence full-fashioned from the brow of Jove but grows and develops as a result of an historic process, so the consciousness of nationhood does not suddenly take possession of a people as the result of some single, instantaneous act like a Biblical miracle of revelation. It also grows and develops historically, and *not necessarily as a simultaneous process.*

For the most part, the Negro people considered themselves a racial community, not a national community. What in other nations expressed itself as national consciousness, national pride, national solidarity, expressed itself among the Negro people as "race pride," "race solidarity," "race consciousness."

However, the actual content of this "race pride," "race solidarity" and "race consciousness" was national in character. To be convinced of this it is necessary only to reflect on an extreme example, the significance of the Garvey movement. This movement was essentially a separatist movement. Among other nations, such a separatist movement would have developed under the banner of the "fatherland," the "nation," "patria." But among the Negro people the Garvey movement, which everybody recognizes clearly as a nationalist movement, was developed under the banner of "race consciousness," "race interests," "race solidarity," "race pride." What

Marxist would, on that account, deny the national character of the Garvey movement?

This makes it clear that national consciousness develops among the Negro people in special forms which, for specific historical reasons, do not correspond to the example of other nations. It is necessary to penetrate beneath the outward forms in which the consciousness of nationhood is developing, in order to grasp the direction of its present evolution.

More and more, this evolution, is from consciousness of racial unity to consciousness of unity as a people. More and more "race pride," "race solidarity," "race consciousness" begins to be transformed into "people's pride," "people's consciousness," "people's solidarity." This is in full accord with the historical process of the formation of the Negro nation. One of the most important aspects of the formation of the Negro nation was the formation of a Negro people in the United States. The whole period following their original enslavement was one in which a heterogeneous group of varying African peoples who were originally tribally distinct, territorially dispersed, and linguistically separate were being welded into a single homogeneous Negro people. The growing tendency to rise above "race consciousness" to consciousness of a Negro people is also a stage in the development of the consciousness of nationhood among the Negro people.

One of special features of the

development of the Negro nation is the fact that, in contradistinction to all other nations under capitalism, it is not the bourgeoisie but the proletariat through its most advanced section, the Communists, which is helping to develop the consciousness of nationhood among the Negro people. The proletariat is the carrier of the "national idea" among the Negro people. This creates a strong foundation for the development of the consciousness of nationhood on the basis, not of national aloofness, but of internationalism, in the form of a historic alliance between the Negro people and the working class as a whole.

Comrade Franklin invests the Negro nation with an inherent instability, which inevitably pre-determines its disintegration. He writes:

The Negro people in the Black Belt are, thus, in a *transitional state of flux in which development in either direction—either toward further separate national development or toward complete voluntary amalgamation within the American nation on the basis of equality—is still quite possible.*

He repeats this central idea:

We should not give a merely static description of this contradictory status, but should present it historically in its development and *movement*, emphasizing that the Negro community in the Black Belt is now in a *transitional* state, able to move in either direction (either toward further separate national development, which will occur for as long as Jim Crow remains, or toward

democratic voluntary amalgamation within America, which can occur if Jim Crow and semi-feudal oppression is overthrown).

Thus, there are two possible paths of development: continued existence as a nation under conditions of oppression; or, disintegration and disappearance of the Negro nation under conditions of democracy and equality.

The obsessive thought that it is impossible to conceive of the Negro nation apart from its oppression, that this oppression is its immanent and necessary characteristic, that its nationhood is identical and coterminous with its oppression, that its continued existence is impossible without this oppression, runs like a red thread through Comrade Franklin's entire treatment of the question.

#### THE "SEPARATENESS" OF NATIONS

On what basis does Comrade Franklin justify his conception that the Negro nation can continue to exist and develop as a nation only if Jim Crow oppression continues?

He says:

Segregation laws and practices have prevented Negro small producers and the very few and relatively poor Negro capitalists from access to the whole American market. Forced to produce for a separate Negro market, there has thus developed a slight Negro capitalism. It is this separate Negro capitalism which has formed the economic base for the emergence among the Ne-

gro people of the Black Belt of separate national characteristics of their own. . . .

Separate national development among the Negro people, however, has not reached the point where it has become impossible economically to secure very rapidly the *reversal* of the present line of development, which is *toward* further national development. It is fully possible to move *away from* the present growth of the Negro nation *toward* the full integration of the Negro people of the Black Belt within the American economy as a whole.

But "separate" national development does not depend on separate market relations. Nations are characterized by the fact that they are communities which, among other things, are united by bonds of a common economic life—not a separate and distinct economic life. How "separate" and distinct is the economic life of French Canada from that of the rest of Canada? How separate and distinct is the economic life of Scotland from that of England? How separate and distinct is the economic life of Serbia from that of Croatia in the new Yugoslav state?

Every nation develops as a "separate" nation. The very characteristics which in their totality constitute a nation at the same time mark that nation off as a separate entity from other nations. Insofar as that which distinguishes one nation from another is concerned, there is no one characteristic which can be singled out as the test of its "separateness." Stalin says:



It is therefore clear that there is in fact no *single* distinguishing characteristic of a nation. There is only a sum total of characteristics, of which, when nations are compared, one characteristic (national character), or another (language), or a third (territory, economic conditions), stands out in sharper relief. A nation constitutes the combination of all these characteristics taken together. (*Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 11.)

Comrade Franklin, however, insists on the "separateness" or lack of "separateness" of capitalist relations among the Negro people as the criterion of its "separateness" or lack of "separateness" as a nation. He adduces as proof that the Negro people do not want to develop as a "separate" nation the fact that, from the very beginning, the Negro capitalist class had no program for "separate national development," *i.e.*, for a separate economy delimited by frontier posts, tariff walls, etc.

But what program for separate national development did the Scottish capitalists have after Scotland was conquered by British arms at the beginning of the 18th century? Actually, one of the reasons that led the developing Scottish bourgeoisie to accommodate itself to the union between England and Scotland was a clear recognition that its future could be secure only by attachment to the English market, the English overseas trade, etc. In other words, it had no program for the development of a "separate Scottish capitalism." Does

this mean that the Scottish nation has not developed as a "separate" nation?

What program for separate capitalist development did the French-Canadian bourgeoisie have? It had no desire to separate itself from the Canadian market as a whole. The French-Canadian bourgeoisie—more particularly the decisive big French-Canadian railroad interests—looked forward to the exploitation of the whole Canadian market jointly with the English-Canadian bourgeoisie. That is why it favored the establishment of Canada as a federal state with provincial status for French Canada rather than separation from Canada, even though the French-Canadian national movement was marked by strong separatist currents and struggles.

For different historical reasons, the developing Negro bourgeoisie—except for the Garvey movement and the "49th Staters"—has also had no program for the development of a "separate capitalism."

The "separateness" of nations must not be confused with the state separation (secession) of one nation from another. Puerto Rico has developed as a separate nation and at the same time the Puerto Rican people are demanding state separation from the United States, *i.e.*, independence. French Canada has developed as a separate nation, but is not demanding state separation from Canada. The Negro people in the Black Belt have, under different his-

torical conditions, developed as a separate nation, but are not demanding state separation from the United States.

Comrade Franklin actually concedes only the transient, ephemeral surface phenomenon of a special kind of nation which can last only as long as its oppression lasts.

According to him the Negro nation came into existence after 1877 as a result of the post-Reconstruction oppression, is maintaining itself today only because of the continuance of this oppression, and will disappear when this oppression is ended. He has, so to speak, made the oppression of the Negro nation its immanent and necessary characteristic without which its existence is impossible.

This analysis of the Negro nation bases itself upon a consideration that is contingent and not at all integral to the concept of a nation.

According to Stalin:

A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture. (*Ibid.*, p. 8.)

For a community of people to be a nation, all these characteristics must be present. If even one of these characteristics is absent we cannot speak of it as a nation.

But any other characteristic of a specific nation, no matter how important and vital in other respects, is not a necessary feature of its nationhood.

A nation may be free or it may not. It may be oppressed or it may not. It may be imperialist or it may not. These characteristics of a nation are contingent and not basic to its status as a nation.

If the Negro people in the Black Belt have all the characteristics set forth in the scientific definition formulated by Stalin, then they are a nation. The fact that the Negro people in the Black Belt possess the characteristics of a nation does not in itself tell us whether they are free or oppressed.

This must be determined by examining the nation from other points of view and by considering characteristics other than those which are basic to Stalin's definition. If a nation lacks or loses one of these contingent characteristics it is still a nation.

But according to Comrade Franklin, if its oppression should be lifted, then the Negro nation in the Black Belt would cease to exist as a nation, even though it still had all the characteristics of a nation. The end of oppression would according to this view mark the end of the Negro nation in the Black Belt.

But according to the Stalinist theory of nations, the end of oppression will lead to the full flowering of the Negro nation in the Black Belt.

According to Comrade Franklin's theory, the fact that the Negro nation is still in an early phase of development leads to the conclusion that it is a weak nation which is

destined to be disintegrated as soon as it is exposed to the fresh air and sunlight of full equality.

According to the Stalinist theory of nations, the fact that the Negro nation is still in an early phase of development leads to the conclusion that it is a young nation which, if it achieves conditions of full equality, is destined to flourish and to make untold creative contributions to a unified, democratic, bi-national United States.

#### THE NEGRO NATION AND NATIONALITY GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES

In the second place, Comrade Franklin makes a direct analogy between the "voluntary democratic amalgamation" of the Negro people in the Black Belt and the amalgamations of the nationality groups in the United States which has proceeded and will continue to proceed without any element of self-government entering into that process.

He writes:

This program [of the Left wing of the Radical Republicans during Reconstruction—M.W.], which would have assured the Negro people an economic base for maintaining social and political equality, was passionately supported by the Negro people. It was part of a program for full incorporation of the Negro people as equals into the American nation. The realization of that program would have converted Negro Americans into equal participants in the American nation with a status similar

to that of German Americans or Irish Americans.

The German Americans and the Irish Americans, as well as other nationality groups, have never constituted self-governing communities. They do not constitute such self-governing communities today, and never will in the future. Their voluntary democratic amalgamation not only excludes but is contrary to any form of self-government based on national composition. Advocacy of a similar status for the Negro people in the Black Belt means advocacy of amalgamation as a form of self-determination which excludes the principle of self-government in any form.

It is absolutely incorrect to make a superficial comparison between the path of development of the Negro people during Reconstruction and the path of development of the Irish Americans, the Italian Americans, etc. Two basic questions distinguished the path of historical development of the Negro people in the Black Belt during Reconstruction from the path of historical development of various nationality groups in the United States. These two questions are as valid today as they were during Reconstruction.

First: The land question determined beforehand that victory in the struggle for Reconstruction would have resulted in the consolidation of the Black Belt as the common territory of the Negro people. By fighting for the land, the Negro people in the

Black Belt were fighting to retain the Black Belt as their common territory but on a new basis, on the basis of freedom and ownership instead of slavery and peonage. There has not been, and is not now, any similar factor present in the case of the Irish Americans, the Italian Americans, the Jewish Americans, or the German Americans. Hence, the historical path of development of these nationality groups leads to geographic dispersal, and not to the retention or establishment of a common territory.

Second: The fact that there was a compact Negro majority in the Black Belt determined beforehand that victory in the struggle for Reconstruction would have resulted in the establishment of representative self-government for the Negro people in the Black Belt through the consolidation of wide political power of the Negro majority in one or more states as a whole, as well as in adjoining counties, towns and villages in other states. This power would have been won and shared jointly with the white masses in a new kind of revolutionary democracy, but nevertheless it would have been decisively in the hands of the Negro majority. The fight for Negro suffrage was not merely a fight for democratic rights as, for example, in the case of women's suffrage. It was in reality a fight for self-government in all areas of Negro majority in the Black Belt. The violence of the Bourbon attack against the so-called "Black Parliaments" of Reconstruction days proves this. But

there was not then and there is not now any similar factor present in the historical development of the nationality groups in the United States.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

In the third place, Comrade Franklin makes a series of explicit denials that any principle of self-government (not merely separation, but even autonomy or federation) can be considered an element in the solution of the national question in the United States. He considers that, up to the present, Communists have understood the right of self-determination to mean some form of self-government based on the national composition of a given area—whether that be based on outright separation, or on one or another variation of the principle of autonomy or of federation. He considers that we must now expand the concept of the right of self-determination to include the "right of amalgamation" which, according to him, is different from, opposed to, and exclusive of, either separation, autonomy or federation.

In rejecting not only separation but also the principle of autonomy or federation, as well as any variation of federation such as "federated state," or "separate statehood," or "statehood," Comrade Franklin rejects any possibility of self-government. No one has yet invented a form of self-government which is not one or another variation of the principle of complete sovereignty (separation), or

federation, or autonomy. Different solutions of the national question in different countries are only specific applications of these three principles of self-government.

In the light of Comrade Franklin's categoric injunction against "statehood," "federated state," or "separate state," it is interesting to note that while he does not once in the course of his extended discussion of the meaning of the right of self-determination even so much as make an oblique reference to the question of self-government, he concludes his article with this demand:

The total reorganization of Southern county and state governments in such forms as to guarantee majority representation to Negroes in all departments of government, including police and militia in all areas of Negro majority, *a reorganization which will require redrawing of electoral and county lines, etc.* [My italics—M.W.]

We do not know what the "etc." stands for. Perhaps it stands for "state lines." If it does not, then we must ask Comrade Franklin why a state line is more sacred than a county line? Why, if a county line may be redrawn to guarantee majority representation to Negroes in all departments of government, should not—if this proves necessary—a state line be redrawn to accomplish the same purpose? As a matter of fact, the distribution of the areas of Negro majority in the Black Belt in relation to county and state lines is such that

state lines must be changed—and not only county lines—if majority representation to Negroes in all departments of government is to be guaranteed for the areas of Negro majority.

But once this is done, it means statehood for the Negro people in the main areas of Negro majority in the Black Belt! That is what statehood means in the United States. If Comrade Franklin objects to a "federated state," we must remind him that every one of the 48 states in the United States is a "federated" state. The United States is a federal republic, that is, a federation of 48 states, essentially as Canada is a federation of various provinces. If Comrade Franklin objects to a "separate state," we must repeat that every state is a separate state—New Jersey is a separate state, as is New York, etc. Perhaps Comrade Franklin objects only to a single state covering the entire Black Belt, but has no objection to a number of different states in the Black Belt in which the Negro majority will be guaranteed self-government. If so, it makes no difference as far as the principle at issue is concerned. As far as the actual demands of the Negro people are concerned, it is most certainly true that the Negro people do not demand the state unity of the Black Belt. But neither do they demand the revision of electoral or county lines in any of the areas of Negro majority in the Black Belt. The struggle for self-government has not yet reached the stage where the

Negro people have found it necessary to formulate for the Black Belt any precise demand on this score.

What must be established is the principle that self-government for the Negro people in the Black Belt areas of Negro majority cannot be exercised except on the basis of statehood. Only the Negro people themselves will determine whether the areas of self-government will consist of more than one state or whether there will be established the single state unity of the Black Belt.

#### SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL QUESTION

There are certain important questions suggested by Comrade Franklin's article with which he does not deal but which require to be discussed in order that we may arrive at a correct formulation of our program on the Negro question. These relate to the specific solution of the national question in the United States. Such a specific solution can be found only on the basis of a correct understanding of the general foundation of our theory.

A nation can exercise the right of self-determination only through the establishment of some form of self-government. The only principles on the basis of which a nation may establish itself as a self-governing community are: separation, autonomy, or federation. These represent the only conceivable ways in which one nation may arrange its affairs in relation to another nation. They refer exclusive-

ly to the relations between the organs of self-government of one nation and the state institutions of another nation.

It is clear that when Stalin says a different solution of the national question may be necessary for each nation, he refers exclusively to the difference in the relationships which may be established between the organs of self-government of one nation and the state institutions of another nation. Comrade Franklin puts a wrong construction on Stalin's clear reference to different solutions for specific nations when he advances the possibility of a solution in which the element of self-government does not enter.

The manner in which the principle of autonomy or the principle of federation is applied depends entirely on the concrete nature of the particular national problem under discussion. It may, and does, vary from nation to nation.

The principle of federation, for example, has been applied in one way in Yugoslavia and in a different way in Canada.

In Yugoslavia, a federated republic has been established which consists of a number of federal peoples' republics included among which are the Republics of Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia. Thus, the Croatian nation has established its self-government within the framework of the Yugoslav state as a republic, on the basis of the principle of federation.

In Canada, the French-Canadian

nation has also established its self-government on the basis of the principle of federation, but in a different way. Here, the self-government of the French-Canadian nation is exercised by virtue of its status as a province of Canada, the Province of Quebec. The provincial status of the French-Canadian nation is the outward form of its self-government. The powers of self-government of a province in Canada are as extensive as the powers of self-government of a republic in Yugoslavia. French Canada does not have to declare itself a republic in order to exercise the same powers of self-government within the framework of the Canadian state as the Republic of Croatia exercises within the framework of the new Yugoslav state.

This question is central to the issue as raised in Comrade Franklin's article.

As Marxists we recognize that the Negro people in the Black Belt have the right of self-determination up to and including actual separation from the United States. A situation may conceivably arise in the future in which they may desire to exercise that right of separation. But in the situation of today, the Negro people do not want to secede from the United States. The likelihood is not present, from what we know today, that the demands of the national movement of the Negro people will take on the forms assumed, for example, in the case of Puerto Rico, Ireland, India, the Philippines, that is—sep-

aration from the United States. For this there are profound historical and political reasons, both in the circumstances under which the Negro people have developed as a nation, in the nature of the developing and constantly growing alliance between the working class and the Negro people's movement, and in the state structure of the United States as a federal republic.

It is elementary for Marxists that, if a nation does not wish to secede, it has the right to arrange its life on the basis of autonomy or on the basis of federation.

Can autonomy become the solution of the question of self-government for the Negro people in the Black Belt? No. Autonomy is unsuitable as a basis for the self-government of the Negro people because it does not correspond to the special features of the structure of state in the United States. Autonomy is a principle which is applicable to a unitary state within which there is no decentralization of state power through extensive local self-government such as exists in the United States. Poland, for example, is such a unitary state.

Furthermore, the direction in which the demands of the national movement among the Negro people are developing does not correspond to any form of autonomous self-government. The Negro people do not want to establish the Black Belt as an autonomous republic or an autonomous region.

The United States, on the other

hand, is a federal republic; it is a federation of 48 separate states, none of which has sovereignty, since this is vested only in the federal government, but each of which has the most extensive powers of local self-government. This specific feature of the state structure of the United States is of enormous importance in finding a specific solution of the question of self-government of the Negro people in the Black Belt within the framework of the United States.

#### WHAT DOES FEDERATION MEAN?

In this connection, Lenin's analysis of the views of Marx and Engels on the question of federation and federal republics is indispensable to a clear understanding of what the principle of federation means in the United States.

Thus, Lenin states:

"On the question of a federal republic, in connection with the national composition of the population, Engels wrote:

What should take its place? (of present day Germany with its reactionary monarchical constitution and its equally reactionary division into petty states . . .). In my view, the proletariat can only use the form of one and indivisible republic. *In the gigantic territory of the United States a federal republic is still, on the whole, a necessity, although in the Eastern states it is already becoming a hindrance.* It would be a step forward in England, where the two islands are peopled by four na-

tions and in spite of a single Parliament, three different systems of legislation exist side by side even today. . . . *Two points distinguish a federal state from a unitary state: first, that each separate federated state . . . has its own civil and criminal legislative and judicial system, and, second, that alongside of a popular chamber there is also a federal chamber in which each canton, large or small, votes as such. . . .*

From the point of view of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, insisted on democratic centralism, on one indivisible republic. He regarded the federal republic either as an exception and a hindrance to development, or as a transitional form from a monarchy to a centralized republic, as a "step forward" under certain special conditions. *And in these special conditions, the national question comes to the front.* (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 66.) [My italics—M.W.]

Lenin again quotes Engels on the question of local self-government in a federal republic as follows:

So, then, a unitary republic—but not in the sense of the present French Republic, which is nothing but the Empire established in 1798 minus the Emperor. *From 1792 to 1798 each Department of France, each commune . . . enjoyed complete self-government on the American model, and this is what we too must have. How self-government is to be organized and how we can manage without a bureaucracy has been shown by America and the first French Republic, and is being shown even today by Australia, Canada and the other English colonies.* And a provincial and



local self-government of this type is far freer than Swiss federalism. . . . (*Ibid.*, p. 67.)

These illuminating observations make it clear that in speaking of federation as a principle of self-government on the basis of which a nation may determine its own destiny in those cases where it does not wish to exercise the right of separation or secession, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin had in mind the content of self-government as it is exemplified best of all by the state governments in the United States.

It is in this sense that the French-Canadian nation has exercised its right of self-determination by accepting federation with English-speaking Canada. This form of federation is expressed in the Dominion-Provincial relationship which exists between the Canadian national government and the Province of Quebec.

In the United States, the powers of self-government of a state are even greater than those of a province in Canada. In no capitalist country in the world does a local federated unit of government exercise such great power as does a state government in the United States. A state government in the United States, for example, now exercises more powers of local self-government than Scotland would, even if the demand for a Scottish Parliament were to be granted!

A state in the United States has its own legislature, its own judiciary, its

own armed forces (not only state police but also state militia); it has the power of taxation of property and income; it has the power of license (and therefore control) over all intra-state commerce and transportation; it completely controls the educational system; it sets qualifications for the exercise of the right of franchise; it controls marriage and divorce laws; it has the power to incorporate business enterprises; it controls insurance laws; it controls health and safety regulations, etc. In short, a state government has the right to exercise any power not expressly reserved to the Federal government in the Constitution of the United States.

#### FORMS OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

If the entire area of Negro majority in the Black Belt were, for example, concentrated within the boundaries of a single state such as Texas, the specific form through which the Negro people could establish their self-government would be the machinery of self-government of this state. The situation would then be analogous to what exists in Canada, where the French-Canadian nation enjoys self-government through the machinery of government of the Province of Quebec. In such a case, provided the land question were solved and Federal guarantees for full equality established, the Negro people would have an even greater power of self-government than the French-Canadian nation has through the provincial government of Quebec.

The fact is, however, that the area of Negro majority is not concentrated in one state but runs across a number of state lines. It is this which complicates the struggle of the Negro masses in the Black Belt for self-government. Even when the plantation areas of the Southern Bourbons have been confiscated and redistributed, when the poll tax is abolished, when the Negro people in the Black Belt are able fully and freely to vote, to run for office, to be elected, it will still be true that the present arrangement of county and state lines will effectively prevent the will of the Negro people in the areas of Negro majority from being realized.

Although these state lines were not drawn up to accomplish any such result (they were as a matter of fact drawn up without any regard whatsoever to their effect on the self-government of the Negro people who at that time were slaves), the fact is that they objectively have that result. Hence, in order to establish real conditions for the self-government of the Negro people in the areas of Negro majority in the Black Belt, the contour of these county and state lines must be changed to correspond to the areas of Negro majority.

It will not be sufficient, as Comrade Franklin suggests, merely to change the boundaries of electoral districts or county lines or township lines. While even this would be an advance, it would still not correspond to conditions necessary for the self-

government of the Negro people in areas of Negro majority. The powers of self-government of a county or township are negligible and completely dominated — and whenever necessary—overruled by actions of the state government from which the Negro masses would be effectively excluded insofar as their exercising a decisive and preponderant role is concerned.

#### SELF-GOVERNMENT FOR THE NEGRO PEOPLE IN THE BLACK BELT AREA OF NEGRO MAJORITY

From this it is easy to understand in what sense—among others—our Communist approach to the Negro question as a national question in which the right of self-determination is involved differs basically from the bourgeois-liberal approach, which is restricted (and in most cases in words only) to a question of equal rights. The bourgeois-liberal proponents of equal rights support the demand for the right of the Negro masses in the Black Belt to vote. But because they refuse to recognize the Negro question as a national question, they reject any program which will guarantee that this right to vote will result in the power of self-government in the areas of Negro majority in the Black Belt.

The principle of local or regional self-government on a federal basis is not in contradiction to the state structure of the United States as it

was in  
ciple  
dian  
ciple  
imper  
of loc  
basis  
of the  
States  
tablis  
the pr  
dental  
self-g  
shall  
gro m  
tional  
order  
the N  
Is it  
vance  
of the  
1930?  
The  
Amer  
in the  
States  
direct  
public  
vocate  
most  
prolec  
repub  
of the  
ment  
system  
inatin  
which  
visible  
doubt  
artific  
the U

was in Tzarist Russia where the principle of local self-government was diametrically opposed to the principle of a bureaucratically centralized imperial government. The principle of local self-government on a federal basis is a firmly established element of the state structure of the United States. What is required is the establishment of a new principle that the present arbitrary and purely accidental pattern of local or regional self-government of the existing states shall be altered in the areas of Negro majority to correspond to the national composition of that territory in order to establish self-government for the Negro nation.

Is it necessary for the Party to advance the demand for the state unity of the Black Belt as was done in 1930? No, it is not.

There is no doubt that a Socialist America will make extensive changes in the state structure of the United States. These changes will be in the direction of the "one indivisible republic" which Engels and Lenin advocated as the form of state structure most suited to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such a "one indivisible republic" will retain the best features of the principles of local self-government now embodied in the present system of federated states while eliminating those aspects of federalism which impede progress to "one indivisible republic." But there is no doubt that the present arbitrary and artificial division of the territory of the United States into 48 states,

whose jurisdiction in most cases have little relation to any specific economic or national peculiarities of one or another region, will be altered. There is no doubt that the territorial boundaries within which each state exercises the powers of self-government will be altered to conform to a more rational arrangement. Such an arrangement will take into account the economic requirements of the most rapid development of various regions marked by specific economic features (agricultural areas, compact industrial areas, etc.). In such a re-arrangement of state boundaries, it may well be that a state like Texas will be subdivided; or that a state like Delaware will be merged with New Jersey or Pennsylvania; or that the state boundaries which split up into three artificial state jurisdictions a single integral economic region like the tri-state area of Western Pennsylvania, East Ohio and West Virginia will be altered, so as to bring this single economic region into a single unity of local self-government.

It is possible that in such a re-arrangement of the units of local self-government, a Socialist America will seek to unite into integral units of local self-government not only territories marked by a specific economic identity, but also a territory like the Black Belt which is not only marked by a certain economic unity but also by a definite national composition of the population, where the principle of self-government must be

preserved as the main consideration, regardless of economic factors.

It is in this sense that the state unity of the Black Belt might ultimately prove to be the best form in which the Negro people could exercise the powers of self-government over the whole area which makes up the common territory of the Negro nation.

At the present moment, however, the Negro people do not demand the state unity of the Black Belt or any other form of all-national institution covering the entire area of the Black Belt. Neither do they advance as a demand what comrade Franklin suggests for inclusion in our program, *viz.*, "the total reorganization of Southern county and state governments in such forms as to guarantee majority representation to Negroes in all departments of government including police and militia in all areas of Negro majority, a reorganization which will require redrawing of electoral and county lines, etc."

Their demands today are essentially the same as those they advanced during the days of Reconstruction—land, equal rights and the suffrage.

But these demands embody the aspirations of the Negro people for the elements of self-government which they consider necessary at this stage of development to determine their own destiny.

The abolition of the poll tax and the establishment of real—not merely paper—guarantees for the right of

the Negro people in the Black Belt to vote in primaries and elections, to run for office and serve, is not a simple numerical expansion of the size of the electorate in the United States. It is not simply the extension of a democratic right to a section of the population now excluded from exercising that right, as would be the case, for example, if the right of youth to vote at 18 were granted.

What would victory in the fight for land, equal rights and the suffrage result in?

It would result in the confiscation of the landed estates of the plantation owners and their distribution to the landless Negro and white tenants and sharecroppers. It would result, in the areas of most compact Negro majorities in the Black Belt, in the election of Negroes as burgesses, mayors, county commissioners, justices of the peace, sheriffs, police commissioners, judges of lower and state courts, governors; it would result in the election of majorities or near majorities of Negro members to various legislative bodies—town councils, city councils, state legislatures; it would result in the election of Negro Congressmen and Senators; it would result in decisive representation on juries and grand juries; it would result in reconstituting the leading personnel as well as the composition of state militias, county and city police forces, state, county and city hospitals and clinics, penal institutions, school boards; it would result in the rewriting of city

char  
co  
In  
amp  
read  
absol  
an a  
ple a  
to th  
not  
gove  
state  
He  
Blac  
self-g  
imm  
is pl  
artifi  
the  
move  
Sta  
The  
ment,  
be the  
the di  
ment.  
an agr  
conce  
place  
and r  
the na  
Assem  
not ir  
featur  
genera  
(Marx  
mal Q  
Onl  
allian  
their  
tional

charters, state constitutions, penal codes, etc.

In a state like Mississippi, for example, where the Negro people already constitute slightly less than an absolute majority of the population, an alliance between the Negro people and the working class would give to the Negro people in Mississippi not merely the power of local self-government but actually elements of statehood.

Hence, the Negro people in the Black Belt are today fighting for self-government in the concrete and immediate form in which the issue is placed by life itself and not by artificial and unreal schemes. This is the characteristic of all national movements in their development.

Stalin points out:

The nature of the national movement, of course, will not everywhere be the same: it is wholly determined by the diverse demands made by the movement. In Ireland the movement bears an agrarian character; in Bohemia it is concerned with "language"; in one place the demand is for civil equality and religious freedom, in another for the nation's "own" officials or its own Assembly. The diversity of demands not infrequently reveals the diverse features which characterize a nation in general (language, territory, etc.). . . . (*Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 16.)

Only when the Negro people, in alliance with the white masses, win their present demands will the national movement enter into a new

stage of development. At that time, life itself will bring forward new concrete demands whose realization the Negro people will find necessary to assure their power of self-government in the areas of Negro majority. That such new demands will arise there can be no doubt.

The achievement of certain elements of local self-government in all the areas of Negro majority in the Black Belt, with the possibility of achieving elements of statehood in a state like Mississippi, will inevitably lead to a further consolidation of the Negro nation, to a further development of the consciousness of nationhood among the Negro people. It will, if it takes place before the advent of socialism, bring about a new relationship of forces within the national movement of the Negro people. It will result in a new development of the Negro bourgeoisie in the Black Belt, with the possibility of its developing as an industrial bourgeoisie. At the same time, the role of the Negro proletariat in this movement will be enormously enhanced, will become decisive and preponderant. Simultaneously, the course of the national movement of the Negro people will be influenced by a new stage of development of the alliance between the Negro people and the working class of the United States.

It is idle conjecture, at this moment, to anticipate speculatively what the specific demands of such a national movement will be: will the demand arise for changes in state

lines? Will the demand arise for merging a number of states in the Black Belt into a single state (state unity of the Black Belt)? The task of the Party is to rally the white masses in support of the present struggle of the Negro people for those demands which they advance at this moment.

It is not necessary, therefore, to raise any demand for the state unity of the Black Belt. From the point of view of realizing the conditions for self-government of the Negro people in the areas of Negro majority in the Black Belt, it is not a decisive question if such self-government is exercised through a single state government or through more than one state government. What is decisive is that without advancing any specific or concrete demand at this moment we establish the principle involved. This principle is that in accordance with the wishes of the Negro majority in the Black Belt, in the manner they desire, and when they themselves raise the demand, state lines be altered so as to make it possible for the Negro people to have a majority (hence decisive) voice in state units of self-government in the Black Belt areas of Negro majority, such as South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. The Negro people themselves will in the course of the struggle for self-government decide in what way the contour of state lines

in the Black Belt will be changed and will advance their own specific demands to accomplish such changes. To raise such demands at this moment would be to introduce them artificially without relation to the present stage of the struggle.

Understood in this sense, it is clear that the present struggle of the white and Negro masses, led by the working class, for equal rights, for abolition of the poll tax, for destruction of the political power of the Southern Bourbons—even though it does not at the present moment also comprise a struggle for a redivision of the land in the Black Belt to the tenants and sharecroppers or for the immediate redrawing of electoral, county or state lines—is an integral and indispensable part of the struggle of the Negro people in the Black Belt for the right of self-determination.

The history of the Negro people in the United States and the course of the struggles of the working class as a whole—both white and Negro—have clearly demonstrated that the best interests of both can be served only by the firmest unity and alliance of Negro and white. The path to complete emancipation of the working class and the path to the liberation of the Negro people move in the same direction—the direction of joint struggle, unbreakable unity, solidarity, and alliance between Negro and white.

## CURRENT PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- What America Faces: The New War Danger and the Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Economic Security.* Eugene Dennis. (New Century Publishers) New York, 1946. 64 pp. 10¢.
- Speech delivered by J. V. Stalin at a Meeting of Voters of the Stalin Electoral Area of Moscow, February 9, 1946.* (Information Bulletin, Embassy of the U.S.S.R.) Washington, 1946. 16 pp.
- Speech Delivered by V. M. Molotov at a Meeting of Voters of the Molotov Electoral Area of Moscow, February 6, 1946.* (Information Bulletin, Embassy of the U.S.S.R.) Washington, 1946. 12 pp.
- Our Country Needs a Strong Communist Party.* William Z. Foster (New Century Publishers) 1946. 24 pp. 5¢.
- Meet the Communists.* Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (Communist Party, U.S.A.) New York, 1946. 24 pp. 3¢.
- Why Negroes Are Joining the Communist Party.* Doxey Wilkerson. (Communist Party, U.S.A.) 1946. 16 pp. 3¢.
- Tell the People How Ben Davis Was Elected.* Robert Minor. (New Century Publishers) 1946. 24 pp. 5¢.
- Marxism and Revisionism.* V. I. Lenin and Joseph Stalin. Little Lenin Library, Volume 29. (International Publishers) New York, 1946. 64 pp. 20¢.
- Labour Conditions in Great Britain: 1750 to the Present.* Jurgen Kuczynski. (International Publishers) 192 pp. \$2.00.
- Socialism: What's In It for You.* A. B. Magil. (New Century Publishers) 1946. 64 pp. 10¢.
- The Truth About Unions.* Leo Huberman. (Pamphlet Press) New York, 1946. 88 pp. \$1.00.
- Europe's Homeless Millions.* Fred K. Hoehler. (Foreign Policy Association) New York, 1946. 96 pp. 25¢.
- Slavic Americans in the Fight for Victory and Peace.* George Pirinsky. (American Slav Congress) New York, 1946. 64 pp. 35¢.

- The Path of a Renegade: Why Earl Browder Was Expelled from the Communist Party.* Robert Thompson. (New Century Publishers) 1946. 24 pp. 5¢.
- Unfinished Business in American Education: An Inventory of Public School Expenditures in the United States.* John K. Norton and Eugene S. Lawler. (American Council on Education) Washington, 1946. 64 pp. \$1.00.
- Hands Off Indonesia.* Arthur Clegg. (Communist Party of Great Britain) London, 1946. 16 pp. 3d.
- A Free, Happy India: Election Policy of Indian Communists.* P. C. Joshi. (People's Publishing House) Bombay. 24 pp. 3 annas.
- Samuel Adams: Selections from His Writings.* Edited with an introduction by Elizabeth Lawson. (International Publishers) 1946. 96 pp. 35¢.
- Piper Tompkins.* Ben Field. (Doubleday, Doran) New York, 1946. 262 pp. \$2.50.



Com-  
46. 24

School  
ene S.  
64 pp.

ritain)

Joshi.

duction  
5£.

262 pp.