

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

*A magazine devoted
to the theory and practice of Marxism - Leninism*

EDITORIAL BOARD

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AMERICA'S FIRST POSTWAR ELECTIONS

AN EDITORIAL

THE VICTORY OF THE Republican Party in the Congressional elections, which was accompanied by the defeat of many outstanding New Dealers in both the House and the Senate, is a severe blow to the people of the United States. It signifies that the control of Congress, which was already in the hands of a bipartisan coalition of reactionary Republicans and poll-tax Democrats, will now be even more firmly held in the grip of Big Business. The Republicans have also strengthened their position in a number of states by winning the Governorship, as in the case of Massachusetts and Ohio, and by tightening their hold on a number of state legislatures.

The program which the Republican Party expects to put through Congress, unless checked by united struggle, would spell doom to many of the outstanding achievements of the people under Roosevelt and the New Deal. It would mean, in addition, new onslaughts on the living standards of the people, new blows against the people's democratic liberties, and a more aggressive pushing forward of the Hoover-Vandenberg-Byrnes policy of world domination.

There should be no illusion that the Truman Administration can be relied upon to be a serious check to the program of Big Business and

the Republican Party. The President's first post-election statement should leave no doubt on this score. Nor should there be any illusion that considerations of the 1948 elections will postpone the danger that the Republican Party's victory and program hold for labor and all the common people.

The attacks that the people face will not be limited to the legislative field, whether nationally or in the states. Side by side with these attacks, and inseparable from them, we can expect direct attacks from Big Business upon the wage standards of the workers and the living standards of the people generally, through increased prices and rents and attacks on the trade unions and other people's organizations. Openly fascist and pro-fascist organizations will be further encouraged in their attacks on the labor movement, on the Negro people, and on the Jewish people and other minority groups.

In the words of the November 6 statement of the National Board of the Communist Party:

America is in for tough days ahead, in terms of wages, rents, labor's rights and democratic liberties. The nation's relations to the rest of the world will be subjected to an intensification of the "get tough" bullying program of atom-dollar diplomacy, with the writing of

a democratic peace made more difficult. The nation will be subjected to increased militarization and speeding up of preparations for war.

* * *

The contrast between the trends disclosed in the elections in the United States and those in recent elections in other parts of the world, has been widely noted.

As is well known, great victories were scored in the recent period by the labor and people's forces in the elections in France, Italy, Chile, and Bulgaria. These victories continued the same leftward trend evidenced in previous elections, especially in Europe and Great Britain. Why is it then that, following the great war against fascism, it is in the United States alone that reaction has been able to strengthen itself in the first postwar election? Is it that the American people are satisfied with existing conditions and therefore turned their backs on the Roosevelt policies of social reform? Is it that they really want the reactionary program of Big Business, as openly advanced by the Republican Party? Of course not.

The workers who shifted from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party to express their hatred of the Truman Administration's breaking of the railroad strike, certainly did not vote for the anti-labor policies of the Republican Party. The men and women voters who voiced their dissatisfaction with the Administration's abandonment of price controls by voting for the G.O.P. did not be-

lieve that, in so doing, they were actually voting for a Congress that would further reduce their living standards and give unrestricted authority to the monopolies to raise prices higher and to abolish rent control. Even the Republicans will find it difficult to prove that this is what the people wanted.

The basic reason why the people's dissatisfaction with the reactionary course of the Truman Administration in foreign and domestic policy expressed itself in a shift to the Republican Party, the main party of reaction and Big Business, must be found in the factors that are peculiar to the United States, and that distinguish it from the countries in which the masses voted in increasing numbers for the parties of the Left—Communist, Socialist, and others. A key to the answer to this question is further to be found in the fact that in most countries the Communist Parties made the biggest gains in the recent elections, as in the case of France, Italy, and Bulgaria.

The American people, in the 1948 elections, were not presented with a clear alternative to the reactionary retreats of the Truman Administration, expressed in its abandonment of the Roosevelt program. Even those forces in the labor and people's movements that were critical of the Administration—the C.I.O., the C.I.O.-P.A.C., the A.L.P. in New York, and similar groups such as the I.C.C. and N.C.P.A.C.—did not give a definite and clear lead to the people through an independent pro-

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gram and campaign. Such independent action was all the more necessary since the people were called upon to vote for Democratic candidates, the standard bearers of the party of Truman.

Under these conditions it was possible for the G.O.P. to channelize much of the discontent of the people to its own advantage. It was able, through its demagoguery, to fool the people; and important sections of the working class were misled, especially because of the low level of class consciousness among the workers. It was able to secure the votes of workers who only yesterday expressed their militant demands for better conditions on the picket lines in struggle against the very forces that control the Republican Party body and soul.

That this happened to workers as yet lacking in class consciousness should be no surprise to Communists if they remember the profound observation of Lenin who said:

People always were and always will be the stupid victims of deceit and self-deceit in politics, as long as they have not learned to discover the interests of one or another of the classes behind any moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises.*

The most striking lesson that the results of the elections in our country underscore is, therefore, the necessity to provide a clear alternative

to the people against the control by reaction of both the Republican and Democratic Parties. From this follows the necessity to strengthen the Communist Party and its role; to develop greater class consciousness in the working class which has the task of leading the people as a whole in the fight against the trusts; and to create a people's party which will include the Communists, an anti-monopoly, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist party, led by the working class and capable of uniting the workers, the farmers, the middle classes in the cities, the Negro people, and all others who can and must fight against the exploitation and oppression of the economic royalists.

This is in no way a challenge to the correctness of the Party's policy in the 1946 elections. That policy had to be based on facts, such as the absence of a mass people's party and the resulting necessity of conducting the electoral struggle on the basis of utilizing whatever differences were reflected between the two major parties and within these parties. But it was not a policy of placing reliance on the Democratic Party. It was a policy of organizing the independent forces of labor and the people in the struggle against reaction under the conditions that existed. It was a policy which did not say that we were indifferent to a G.O.P. victory, or that we underestimated the danger of such a victory. It was a policy of advancing the interests of labor and the people through the election struggle, a policy having among its

* V. I. Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, International Publishers, p. 54.

major objectives the promotion of the class consciousness of the workers, the unity of labor and the people, and the utilization of the experience of the elections to accelerate the creation of the new people's party.

In examining the concrete factors that led to the G.O.P. victory, the analysis made by our General Secretary, Eugene Dennis, deserves to be carefully studied by the entire Party and the labor movement. This analysis, made in the course of an interview with Comrade Dennis by the *Worker*, and published in its November 17 issue, not only answers the question of why the G.O.P. won. It also provides the key to the major tasks which now must be carried out if the situation is to be changed. Comrade Dennis outlines the following nine general causes of the Republican victory:

1. Truman's capitulation and surrender to the trusts and to its major party, the G.O.P., on every important foreign and domestic issue facing the country. This could, and did, result in nothing less than mass dissatisfaction with and a definite turn away from both the Administration and many of the candidates of the Democratic Party.

2. The clever use made by the trusts and their Republican spokesmen of the mistakes, weaknesses, and betrayals of the Truman Administration. The demagogic campaign of the G.O.P. to direct the anger of the nation at the reactionary bipartisan coalition in Congress against the Federal Administration which carries out, in essence, the main policies of the G.O.P.

3. The continued disastrous division

between the A. F. of L. and C.I.O.; and the destructive activity of the reactionary top A. F. of L. officialdom in opposing progressive and pro-Roosevelt policies and candidates.

4. Underestimation of the real danger of a G.O.P. victory by a substantial part of the Left wing of labor, including many Communists; also their tweedledee and tweedledum attitude towards most major party candidates. This was corrected in many cases in the very last phase of the campaign, but then it was already too late to change the situation.

5. The capitulation by most Democrats and many C.I.O.-P.A.C. leaders to the Red-baiters, or, at best, their silence in the face of the G.O.P. anti-Communist barrage. Thus, the Republicans succeeded in confusing and influencing several million middle-class, farm and A. F. of L. voters with their anti-C.I.O. and Red-baiting campaign.

6. The weak ties of labor with the progressive non-labor strata of the population, as well as the restricted scope of existing labor-progressive unity.

7. The aggressive and reactionary campaign of the Catholic church hierarchy and its adverse influence upon hundreds of thousands of Democratic voters—especially in Boston, in Queens, New York City and in Philadelphia.

8. The defensive, evasive, and negative character of the Democratic party campaign; the unsatisfactory type of candidates put forward by that party in a majority of cases; the sabotaging activity of the Farleys, Flynn, and Malones, and of a number of Democratic party machines, all of whom preferred defeat to achieving victory on the basis of the progressive features of the F.D.R. program and of tactics for forging a broad progressive coalition.

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9. The sloughing over of the key issue of peace and foreign policy by most of the Democrats and many labor leaders. They accepted at face value the G.O.P.-Byrnes formula that the government's foreign policy was "bipartisan" and "national" and hence above criticism in the campaign. This played into the game of the G.O.P. and actually served to protect the Republicans from the wrath of the people against their reactionary, "bipartisan" imperialist foreign policy.

We must in no way minimize the danger that the G.O.P. victory represents, or the significance of the fact that millions of voters shifted to the Republicans. Nevertheless, it is necessary to combat all propaganda that there was a big sweep for the Republicans and that this presages many years of Republican control similar to that which followed the first world war with the election of Harding. In 1920, the G.O.P. garnered 64 per cent of the vote. In the 1946 election they received only 55 per cent of the vote. This figure may be compared with the 50.2 per cent of the vote that the Republicans received in the 1942 Congressional elections when they failed to gain a majority of Congress, winning only 209 seats. As we know, this was followed by a defeat of the Republicans in 1944, when they received only 47 per cent of the vote.

This reflects a new relation of forces and, above all, the growth of the labor movement both in numbers and ideologically. It also reflects the new role being played by the Negro

people who, in the main, continue their break with the G.O.P., although in this election larger numbers, relatively speaking, of both workers and the Negro people voted for the G.O.P. than in the 1944 elections. A large proportion of both workers and Negro voters also expressed their dissatisfaction with the Truman Administration this year by staying away from the polls. This, of course, was indirectly a help to the Republicans.

The fact that the Republican Party this year made great headway in the cities would indicate a shift of votes to the G.O.P., both on the part of workers and city middle-class people. There is as yet no clear indication as to the extent of the shift among the workers and among the city middle classes. The Gallup Poll, for example, makes the claim that there was a shift of about 20 per cent of the trade union members to the Republicans and an over-all 9 per cent shift of manual workers. That there was a shift cannot be doubted. The role played by the A. F. of L. top leaders and many state A. F. of L. leaders undoubtedly resulted in many A. F. of L. workers voting Republican. How much this dissatisfaction among trade unionists, as indicated in the Gallup Poll taken before the elections, actually materialized in a shift to the G.O.P., and how much it expressed itself in abstentions will have to be studied in every locality. But already it can be taken for granted that much work remains to be done to enlighten those

workers who shifted to the G.O.P. as to what this means. It is more than ever necessary to work for united action of the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. workers and the workers in the Railroad Brotherhoods against the attacks that the labor movement now faces, and thus win these workers for united independent political action of labor and for the building of a people's party.

Nor can the labor movement remain indifferent to the further shift that took place among the middle classes in the cities and the continued support that the Republicans are receiving among the majority of the farmers and white collar and professional workers. Labor unity is essential, not only to advance the specific interests of the workers, but also to enable labor to attract the middle classes to its side. Reaction is able to exploit the divisions in labor's ranks in its appeal to the middle classes. The labor movement, to win the support of the middle classes, must make the fight for the interests of these groups part of its own demands.

In this connection, the Communist Party of France, which is the party of the great majority of the French working class, has shown the labor movement of this country, and our own Party as well, how the working class should fight to win the middle classes. In the recent elections in France the French Communists laid great stress on such issues as the defense of the value of the franc against the danger of inflation, and pledged themselves to fight to

safeguard the private property of the workers, the farmers, and the small businessmen against the danger threatening from the trusts. It was precisely because of its correct approach to the middle class that the electoral victory recently gained by the Communist Party of France was a great one.

* * *

Was the G.O.P. victory inevitable even under the given conditions, even in face of the policies pursued by the Truman Administration, even in face of the policies pursued by the A. F. of L. Executive Council, even in face of the fact that outside of New York State the people were confronted with voting either for the Republicans or the Democrats? Without minimizing the objective difficulties, without exaggerating what the labor-progressive forces might have achieved in face of these conditions, we are still justified in answering in the negative: it was not inevitable.

Since the G.O.P. received only about 55 per cent of the vote, a shift of 5 per cent of the vote would have resulted in an even vote for both parties and a majority in Congress for the Democrats. In 1942 the Democratic vote was only 47.4 per cent and the vote of the minor parties was 2 per cent. The G.O.P. vote was 50.8 per cent. But the Democrats won 222 seats in Congress, the minor parties 4 seats, and the G.O.P. only 209 seats. Was it possible to achieve such a shift of votes in this election? It was possible. Let us see how and why.

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Let us take the Marcantonio campaign as an example. This was the hardest fought campaign anywhere in the country. Marcantonio was confronted with an opposition the like of which no other Congressman faced anywhere, with the possible exception of De Lacy in Washington and Bobrowicz in Milwaukee. Marcantonio lost the G.O.P. primaries for the first time in his career. The Democratic opponent of Marcantonio in the primaries, who received only 600 votes less than Marcantonio, went over to the Republicans. Against Marcantonio were lined up the Catholic Church hierarchy and the entire city press with the exception of the *Daily Worker* and some mild support from *PM*. The Social Democrats were against him and the so-called Liberal Party of David Dubinsky endorsed Marcantonio's G.O.P. opponent. The newly organized, fascist American Action, Inc., made the defeat of Marcantonio its Number One objective. Marcantonio was attacked for his forthright support of Roosevelt's foreign policy, for his support of Henry Wallace. *But he won.*

Why did he win? Because he squarely met all the issues and did not run away from them. He campaigned on a Roosevelt platform. He did not capitulate to the Red-baiters. He went to the people with the issues. He organized the people. A larger percentage of the registered voters than in the previous elections voted in this district this year. Substantially the same lessons can be

drawn from the successful campaign for the re-election of Congressman Adam Clayton Powell.

It is said that there were some defections among nationality group voters, such as the Polish-American, Italian-American, Jewish-American, etc., because they were influenced by the demagogic appeals of reactionary spokesmen among these groups who supported the Republicans. Undoubtedly, this was a factor in the elections. But the results also show that where the issue was met the demagogues were defeated, as Marcantonio's vote among the Italian-Americans shows.

In New York City, reactionary forces among the Zionists campaigned for Dewey. But where the issue was met and their role exposed, they were decisively beaten. In the largely Jewish-American assembly districts in Brooklyn, for example in the 23rd and 24th districts, Dewey was beaten by a vote of nearly 8 to 1. But this was only achieved by a real struggle and by bringing out a vote almost equal to that of the 1944 elections. And in these districts the independent vote of the A.L.P. and the Liberal Party was larger than the vote received by Mead and Lemman on the Democratic Party line.

In Milwaukee the Polish-American labor leader, Bobrowicz, was defeated because his opponent, the reactionary former Congressman Wassilewski, after being defeated in the primaries, ran as an independent and split the vote. But despite this, and despite the fact that the campaign against Bobrowicz was no less vi-

cious than that against Marcantonio; despite the fact that the G.O.P., frightened the Democratic Party nationally and in the state and city into a cowardly and shameful repudiation of its own Democratic candidate. In this largely Polish-American district Bobrowicz received some 39,000 votes, as against 43,000 for the winning candidate and only 36,000 for the incumbent Wassilewski. All this shows that where the issue was met, reaction could be defeated or set back.

To pursue this question further, we limit ourselves to some of the results in the New York elections since we have more details on hand for this state than for other states.

Dewey was elected by a majority of 678,000 votes out of a total of five million, or by about 13½ per cent. Lehman was defeated by a majority of only 253,000, or about 5 per cent. In the case of Mead, a shift of 7 per cent or about 350,000 votes, and in the case of Lehman a shift of 2½ per cent or about 127,000 votes, would have elected both Mead and Lehman. Had these candidates, in addition, conducted the kind of campaign that Marcantonio did, there is no question but that they would have won.

The A.L.P. vote of about 425,000 is a great achievement, especially in the face of the decline of the Democratic Party vote. It shows that the A.L.P. has made real progress and has a solid nucleus of loyal supporters. The A.L.P. vote is also significant because the election this year

was the first carried on by the A.L.P. without Roosevelt and without Hillman. But from another viewpoint, taking into account the gravity of the situation and the great possibilities, it cannot be said that the A.L.P. vote is entirely satisfactory. It is of great significance that the A.L.P. vote was nearly two and a half times as large as that of the Social-Democratic-led Liberal Party which, by its Red-baiting, helped elect Dewey. It shows that most of the progressive-labor-independent voters repudiated the Red-baiting of the Dubinskys.

The A.L.P., however, had the possibility of winning hundreds of thousands of additional voters to its banner. Certainly, those workers who voted for Dewey because Truman broke the railroad strike could have been convinced of the need to vote for the A.L.P. as an expression of their opposition, instead of their falling into the trap of voting for the G.O.P. Those housewives who were angered because of the scrapping of price control, and mistakenly expressed their anger by voting Republican, could have been won for the A.L.P. Those Negro voters who abstained from voting in Harlem but did not go over to the G.O.P., which already shows a marked degree of political consciousness, could have been won for a positive vote for the A.L.P. And many of the middle-class voters who were dissatisfied with the Administration's bungling and fell for the demagoguery of the G.O.P. could have been won to the banner of the A.L.P.

But the foregoing could have been done only if the A.L.P. had conducted a more independent campaign, had secured one of its own people as a candidate of the combined forces, or, failing to achieve this, had nominated at least one independent candidate; if the A.L.P. had had a clearer and more concrete program for the farmers, the city middle classes, and had organized a more systematic fight to win these masses. Nor should the fact be overlooked that in the eyes of many workers and the people generally, the A.L.P. is looked upon as a "C.I.O." party. Much greater effort has to be made to win the A. F. of L. unions to the banner of the A.L.P.

The main thing now is to grasp fully what has to be done to realize the full potentialities of the A.L.P., especially the role that the A.L.P. can and should play in accelerating the process of political realignment in the nation. Here, many problems of program and leadership and of relationships to the trade unions and other organizations such as those of the Negro people, the farmers, etc., have to be examined and solved.

These problems, though for the moment they take on a different form in other states because of the absence of such an independent third party as the A.L.P., exist everywhere. They are the problems of the development of independent political action by labor and its allies, of unity of the C.I.O. and the A. F.

of L. on the political field, of the unity of labor with the farmers, the Negro people, the middle classes. They are the problems of the unions, including the need for the most progressive unions to give greater attention to the political education of their membership and to draw the mass of the union membership into independent political action.

Another factor which must be mentioned is the role played by the Wallace-Pepper forces in the Democratic Party. They made a great contribution in the fight for the unity of all progressives around the Roosevelt program. Henry Wallace, by his stand, by his challenging of the Byrnes-Vandenberg foreign policy and by his defense of the Roosevelt policies, contributed a great deal toward checking the G.O.P. advance. Of those Democratic leaders who may listen to the G.O.P. and other reactionary propaganda that it was the failure of the Democrats to break completely with Roosevelt's policies and with the C.I.O. and P.A.C. that brought about the defeat of the Democrats, one has only to ask why Roosevelt won with these policies and with the support of the above-mentioned groups? The last two days of campaigning by Wallace and Pepper in New York City did much to win votes for Mead and Lehman and also helped build the vote of the A.L.P. But it is also a fact that the intervention by Wallace and those grouped around him did not come early enough to make itself fully felt in the outcome of the elections.

Here, also, there are important lessons for all progressives to draw for the future battles. There are some indications that the progressives have learned these lessons. The Conference of Progressives organized in Chicago just prior to the election has already announced a broad conference for the middle of January to organize the labor-progressive forces for the continuation of the fight now, and in preparation for the 1948 elections. This step by such outstanding leaders as former Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Philip Murray, James Patton of the Farmers Union, Walter White, head of the N.A.A.C.P., Jack Kroll, head of C.I.O.-P.A.C., Frank Kingdon, former Governor Elmer Benson, and many others, is a very promising one. It will undoubtedly become the rallying center of all pro-Roosevelt forces outside the two major parties and strengthen the progressive forces inside the two major parties, especially the Wallace-Pepper forces in the Democratic Party.

* * *

The Communist Party played a significant role in the election campaign. Wherever its influence was brought to bear, it was in the direction of crystallizing the unity and independent action of the labor and progressive forces. It played a major role in clarifying the issues in the fields both of foreign and domestic policy. It helped expose the program of reaction, whether promoted by the Republican Party or by the reactionaries in the Democratic Party who more and more dominate that

party's policies. The Communist Party worked for the unity of all the pro-Roosevelt forces and for the defeat of the Republicans and reactionary Democrats. By putting forth its own program and, in a number of cases, Communist candidates, it brought the Party's position on the immediate issues and its program of socialism to new hundreds of thousands of voters.

As a consequence of this policy, the Communist Party strengthened its bond with the masses generally and with the growing labor-progressive coalition. It contributed toward the election of outstanding progressives and to the defeat of some of the most reactionary candidates. It also materially increased its own vote where it put forward its own candidates. In New York State, for which complete figures are available, the Party vote of some 95,000 is the largest vote it ever received in this state for candidates running for a state office. The splendid campaign of the two Party spokesmen, Robert Thompson and Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., was undoubtedly a big factor in the results achieved. While the figures for most other states are not available, the indications are that the votes everywhere will show an increase, and usually in proportion to the activity of the Party organization. Those Communists in New York and elsewhere who contributed to the results achieved can take a justifiable pride in their work. Those who, for one reason or another, lagged in their activity should be inspired to greater activity in the big

struggles now looming ahead for the people of our country, the labor movement, and our Party.

The election results and the lessons of the elections fully confirm the correctness of the Party's election policy. This election policy, which is nothing more than the application to the elections of the policy adopted at the July, 1945, Emergency Convention, was a sharp break with the revisionist policies of Browder which were repudiated by the convention. While Browder preached reliance upon the so-called "progressive" role of monopoly capitalism, the Party strove to rally all the labor and progressive forces, all the people, against the offensive of the monopolists both at home and abroad. While Browder tried to create illusions that Truman was carrying forward the Roosevelt policies, the Party exposed the Truman abandonment of these policies. While Browder spoke of the permanence of the traditional two-party system, the Party policy was to utilize the elections to promote the building of the new mass people's party. While Browder, in his reliance on the "progressive" monopolies subordinated the working class to the bourgeoisie, the Party policy stressed the role of labor as the leader of the people's coalition and emphasized the need for the unity of labor and greater independent political action by labor. While Browder liquidated the Communist Party, the policy of the Party in the elections showed its indispensable and positive role.

Already prior to the July, 1946,

meeting of the National Committee, certain Right-opportunist and "Left"-sectarian distortions of the Party's line in general, and especially in relation to the elections, were noted. The National Committee dealt with these deviations and called for their speedy correction. As a result of the struggle on two fronts, against both Right and "Left" deviations, which was intensified after the July meeting, the Party was able to play the positive role it did in the elections.

But at the same time it must be noted that because of the effect of the mistakes made in the primary campaigns prior to the July meeting, and the persistence of some of these deviations throughout the election campaign, the Party was prevented from making its positive role felt everywhere and at all times.

The Right deviation was expressed in the election struggle in the form of an underestimation of the necessity to expose the role of the Truman Administration and the need for the labor-progressive forces always to maintain an independent position. This resulted in a weakening of the struggle to win the masses dissatisfied with the Truman Administration's policy over to the side of the labor-progressive camp and in many cases their falling victim to the demagoguery of the Republicans. The Right deviation was also expressed in an uncritical attitude toward the weaknesses in the labor-progressive coalition, and an underestimation of the role of the Party and the necessity for it to bring forward its own program, and in many cases its own

candidates, as essential to the successes of the coalition.

"Left" sectarianism in the course of the election campaign was expressed in a continued tendency to "go it alone," either by calling for the running everywhere of full slates of Party candidates or by calling for the "launching" of third parties or tickets, even though the labor-progressive forces were not yet prepared for this step. It was expressed in indifference to a G.O.P. victory and a dilettante approach to the Party's allies, to unity of the progressive forces of which Communists are a part.

It will be necessary to review the results, state by state, in the light of the Party's main line and in terms of the tasks ahead. It is already clear that much work still remains to be done to bring full clarity to the entire Party membership. This is essential for the full unification of the Party on the basis of its general policies. This will enable us to achieve a greater activation of the entire Party, all Party members, and all Party organizations.

The results of Party building and the building of the circulation of our press, especially the *Worker* and the *Daily Worker*, also show that while very good work was done in some states at different times, the Party as a whole has not yet mastered the art, or even fully understood the necessity, of building the Party and its press precisely in the course of struggles. Special measures will have to be taken to fulfill the goals already set by the end of the year, since their fulfillment is necessary if

we are to carry out the tasks facing us.

* * *

What tasks face the labor and people's forces in the immediate situation growing out of the elections? What are the perspectives and the possibilities for the 1948 elections? What about the third party? Let us briefly consider these interrelated questions.

Big Business and reaction will intensify their drive on the people's welfare and against a democratic peace. This will be expressed in direct attacks by the employers on the living standards of the masses, by their refusal to increase wages to meet the rising cost of living, by their attempts to break the unions and union agreements. The greedy profiteers will intensify, as they are already doing, their drive to boost prices. There will be an increase in the direct attacks by various reactionary and pro-fascist organizations on the unity of the people through the tactic of singling out for attack the Negro people, the Jewish people, the Communists, and other minority groups. Reaction will intensify its pressure on the Truman Administration to force it to carry forward without restraint the Byrnes-Vandenberg reactionary foreign policy.

Also to be taken into account must be the signs, now apparent for some time, that a new economic crisis is maturing. The forces making for this crisis, which are inherent in the capitalist system, will be strengthened by the reactionary drive of Big Business on the living standards of the

people, and by the foreign policy they are now pursuing and intend to continue pursuing.

The Republican majority in both houses of Congress and the reactionary poll-tax Democrats will undoubtedly follow a parallel line in so far as legislation is concerned. They will try to enact a tax program that will bring new billions to the new rich. They will try to emasculate the Wagner Act and pass anti-labor legislation. Price control is already dead, and they may now also abolish rent control. Increased rents may come even earlier by the boosting of rent by the Truman Administration in the name of maintaining rent control. We can expect attempts to enact reactionary legislation all along the line, both on domestic and foreign issues, signifying new attacks on the people's living standards and democratic rights, and on world peace.

Obviously, the main immediate task is to organize the struggle of labor and the people to defeat these attacks. Around this fight, and especially around a positive counter-program for the advancement of the people's economic security and civil liberties and a just and democratic peace, the unity of labor and its allies has to be forged. Such a program must include the fight for increased wages, for the lowering of prices, for rent control, for taxing the rich, for the abolition of the withholding tax, for tax relief for the middle classes, for housing, for veterans' needs, for the anti-lynching bill and the abolition of the poll tax, against all militarization of the nation, for the

Roosevelt peace policy. It is in the course of fighting for such a program that the unity of the labor-progressive coalition against the trusts must and will be developed.

A major task, therefore, is the development of united struggle on the part of the C.I.O., the A. F. of L., and the workers organized in the railroad unions. People's unity around the elements grouped about the Chicago Conference of Progressives and the Roosevelt program as further elaborated by the C.I.O. and other progressive organizations, must find expression through action and unity of these forces in every state, city, locality, and neighborhood.

By developing these struggles, by developing such unity, the perspectives for 1948 will also, to a great degree, be clarified. The objective of the labor-progressive coalition must be the defeat of reaction in the 1948 elections. Without the organization of the labor and progressive forces independent of both major parties, there can be no prospect of defeating reaction in 1948. Furthermore, unity must be maintained of those forces which are already working for the establishment of a new people's party, as the party of this great coalition that is in the making, and those forces not yet convinced of the need to establish such a party.

We Communists are for a third party because we are of the opinion that the Democratic Party cannot be transformed into a people's party. This could not be achieved even during the Roosevelt period, and there is no reason to believe that it can be

done now. We must convince all the labor and progressive forces of the need for a new people's party. Further, to those progressive forces who favor the formation of a third party eventually, but who doubt that it can or should be done by 1948, we point out that there are no guarantees that the Democratic Party will nominate a Roosevelt candidate on a Roosevelt platform for 1948, which means running the risk of being confronted with two candidates and two tickets controlled by Big Business.

But it is clear that the third party cannot be called into being by the Communists and their supporters alone. It can come into being only when the forces represented at the Chicago Conference of Progressives, or at least a great majority of those represented there, become convinced of its necessity and are ready to build it. We, on our part, must help set in motion the struggles and the movements among the masses that will convince large masses and the progressive leaders, through experience, of the need to build the third party.

At the same time we must not confuse two things: one, the question of transforming the Democratic Party into a people's party, which is impossible; the other, the possibility of the labor-progressive forces, acting independently outside the Democratic Party but jointly with the Wallace-Pepper forces within the Democratic Party, influencing the candidate and program for the 1948

elections. This latter possibility exists, but only if the labor-progressive forces organized independently of the Democratic Party are already organized into a third party, either nationally or in a majority of the states, and thus have the ability to put forward a third party ticket at the time the Democratic Party convention is confronted with the alternative roads it may take.

A third party may or may not mean a separate Presidential ticket. It may make possible a coalition with the Democrats on a national scale along the lines followed by the A.L.P. on a state scale. But such a coalition must not be on a basis such as in New York where the Democrats have been confronting the A.L.P. with their own ticket in a take-it-or-leave-it manner. It must be on such a basis that the labor-progressive coalition will actually have a voice in the selection of the candidates and the writing of the platform. Without an independent third party organization on the part of the labor-progressive forces, either nationally or in a majority of the states, there can be only one result—the complete domination by the reactionaries of the Democratic Party convention.

Many of these questions cannot be answered fully now. They are not questions merely of policy alone. The struggles, the movement, will determine what happens. But to know what is needed, to have a clear perspective, to know how to work for it is essential. This the Communists must bring to the people.

THE A. F. OF L. AFTER 65 YEARS

By **GEORGE MORRIS**

NEVER IN THE A. F. of L.'s three generations of history has its controlling clique displayed collaboration with monopoly capitalism so openly and brazenly as at the 65th Convention at Chicago.

Many years have passed since A. F. of L. conventions were regarded as barometers of sentiment among the membership. The process that brought Big Business influence into the A. F. of L.'s top officialdom was paralleled by a concentration of control in most of its major affiliates in the hands of dictatorial individuals or tiny cliques.

An analysis of voting strength among the 700 delegates at Chicago shows that only a dozen of the powerful union heads cast nearly half of the ballots for the Federation's 7,000,000 members.

Those blocks of votes, if the very rare need to cast them arises, are cast solely at the direction of these powerful union leaders. The following 12, or their associates, in the A. F. of L.'s Executive Council, cast directly 29,162 ballots out of a possible convention maximum of 68,552 votes:

William L. Hutcheson, Carpenters 6,000

Charles J. McGowan, Boilermakers 2,417
 John L. Lewis, Miners 4,000
 George M. Harrison, Railway Clerks 2,292
 Dan Tracy, Electricians 3,300
 David Dubinsky, Ladies Garment 2,500
 Joseph Moreschi, Hodcarriers 2,417
 William E. Maloney, Oper. Engineers 1,083
 James C. Petrillo, Musicians .. 1,000
 W. D. Mahon, Streetcarman .. 1,145
 Felix H. Knight, R.R. Carmen 1,008
 Martin P. Durkin, Plumbers .. 2,000

Other unions, too, have large blocks of votes. Dan Tobin's teamsters have 6,250 votes. But, although their leaders are not much of an advance over the others, circumstances within their unions force them on occasions to pay at least some attention to their members. There was no evidence, however, of a real differentiation among A. F. of L. leaders at the Chicago convention.

The convention was a curtain raiser of what the return to A. F. of L. leadership of Republican Lewis and Social-Democratic Dubinsky means. It means a combination of rulers of greater vigor and pro-imperialist consciousness, rulers who seem unburdened, at least at this moment, by differences or wavering in the Executive Council which in past years steered the A. F. of L. along a *status quo* path.

Roosevelt and his policies, which were a big influence in the ranks of labor, and labor's predominant inter-

est in the war effort, to some extent restrained the real reactionary designs of men like Matthew Woll, Lewis, Dubinsky, Hutcheson, and the others. But even during the war they strongly hinted their preparedness for a postwar policy of open collaboration with Big Business such as they had in the twenties and *their hope that this unholy alliance could smash the C.I.O. during the reconversion period.* They lost the first postwar round in this effort. But that, apparently, has made them all the more determined on pursuing their strategy, for the C.I.O. blocks their deal with Big Business. It is precisely this sinister strategy that the Chicago convention rubber-stamped.

With the above in view, it becomes more apparent how the decisions of the A. F. of L. convention fit into the general joint program of Big Business and the A. F. of L.'s bureaucracy, including the latter's fifth column Red-baiters in the ranks of the C.I.O.

ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Max Danish, editor of *Justice*, organ of the I.L.G.W.U., wrote as follows, from Chicago, in the Social-Democratic *New Leader*:

The major focal interest of the convention of the A. F. of L. here, centers on international relations, a phenomenon which has no precedent in A. F. of L. history.

This phenomenon is the increase of Social-Democracy's influence in the affairs of the A. F. of L. Danish's

employer, Dubinsky, and that old standby of Big Business in the A. F. of L.'s leadership, Woll, are joint directors of the A. F. of L.'s international policy. Dubinsky's Social-Democrats are elated with the results of the convention because they were successful in giving emphasis to those issues—on foreign policy—that make the partnership between the imperialists and top labor leaders *most durable and basic.*

Danish is correct in saying that A. F. of L. life in the past has not been particularly noted for interest in matters beyond the boundaries of the United States. But the "internationalist" fever in the A. F. of L.'s top circles, which Danish describes as something progressive, has nothing in common with working-class internationalism. It is as internationalist as a corporation with investments in foreign lands.

The convention resolution on peace treaties, supporting fully the Byrnes-Vandenberg line, called for "continued vigor and firmness" against, and no "appeasement" of, the Soviet Union. The resolution embodied all the Hearst-like and Social-Democratic anti-Soviet slanders.

On atomic energy, the convention urged the government "not to compromise" on the Baruch plan. The resolution on the United Nations approved the so-called "Labor's Bill of Rights" drafted by Dubinsky and Woll. That document questions the possibility of peaceful coexistence of such differing systems as those of the

Soviet Union and capitalist United States. It violates the big powers unity thesis as a basis for peace, by demanding an end of the veto.

But the A. F. of L.'s role in international relations was chiefly shown in its decisions to wage a war against the World Federation of Trade Unions, which is viewed by our atom-bomb diplomats as a major obstacle to their plans of world domination.

Aside from reaffirming its old slanders against the U.S.S.R.'s unions as "government dominated," and characterizing the bulk of Europe's unions as "totalitarian," the A. F. of L. declared that "it must now assume new and greater responsibilities" because there is "no longer an international rallying center for free trade unions." The mission is to aid "free trade unions and leaders. . . . to liberate themselves from totalitarian control." Therefore, continues the resolution:

We are pleased to record the fact that provision has been made by the American Federation of Labor to set up a European office through which to service European trade unionists. . . .

The convention no sooner ended than Irving Brown, one of the A. F. of L.'s "ambassadors" in the U. S. occupation zone in Germany, moved to establish an office in Paris from which disruptive operations are to be carried on.

The convention heard a number of men who have already been en-

gaged in the business of "servicing" unions in Europe, Japan, and Latin America. They frothed at the mouth with anti-Soviet denunciations.

William Green announced the appointment of two more "ambassadors" to the "working people" of Germany: W. D. Doherty of the Post Office clerks union and Israel Feinberg, manager of the Cloak Joint Board of the I.L.G.W.U. Social-Democratic types like the latter, including most of the I.L.G.W.U.'s vice presidents, have already journeyed to all corners of the world in search of old line Social-Democrats to be "revived" as fifth-columnists for "free" unionism.

"Internationalism" literally boiled over on the convention's fifth day when Serafini Ramueldo, the A. F. of L.'s pay-off man below the Rio Grande, brought in a parade of Latin-American bootlickers of the A. F. of L. he had contacted. The A. F. of L.'s leaders have once more embarked on a campaign to realize one of their fondest dreams—the smashing of the Latin-American Federation of Labor (C.F.A.L.), headed by Vincente Lombardo Toledano.

This Federation of 4,000,000 Latin-American trade unionists is a thorn in the side of our imperialists. The inability of labor traitors to split major South American union organizations is driving the A. F. of L. bureaucrats mad. Their show of "fraternal" delegates from Latin America, led by officers of Argentina's Peronistas, was a sorry one. For the

most part they were broken down, ousted leaders or heads of dual, discredited organizations.

The fraternity of the well-financed Yankee "labor" agents consists of spying in the Latin-American labor movement to discover disgruntled and treacherous elements who would aid in the establishment of a labor movement dominated by our State Department. Documentary proof recently disclosed in the Cuban progressive paper *Hoy*, showing how Matthew Woll is working with the Military Intelligence Service for that objective, left no further evidence wanting.

Ramualdo made no bones about his mission. He saw it as a military step for American imperialism in line with the Monroe Doctrine.

"It is not sufficient to sign an inter-American military pact," he told the convention. "We must at the same time reach a close understanding in cooperation and unity of international purpose with the workers of Latin America, because those who control the port workers are far stronger than several military divisions."

The convention's resolution expressed hope that "a permanent inter-American trade union association" would soon be formed.

The display of "internationalism" was spoiled on two counts, however. The first was when British fraternal delegate Tom O'Brien addressed the convention. He justified affiliation of the British Trade Union Congress

with the W.F.T.U. and pointed out that an international must include "all representative organizations, however different in structure or ideology." But O'Brien also indulged in considerable Red-baiting and made the untruthful claim that British Communists "have never exercised so little influence." William Green, in his reply to O'Brien, took advantage of his Red-baiting and falsehood, for British Communists have more top posts in major unions. Green said "it seemed a bit contradictory for them [British labor] to refuse to take these boys into their political party, but they are willing to sit with them in an international trade union movement."

The other occasion was the embarrassing news that the Canadian Trades and Labor Congress, in convention on the eve of the A. F. of L. meeting, had voted to affiliate with the W.F.T.U., had decided to be autonomous, had turned down a Red-baiting resolution and had voted for a "Big Three" unity foreign policy. Thus, the A. F. of L. was deserted on international policy by its own Canadian affiliate.

ON DOMESTIC POLICY

The basic policy document on domestic affairs was the report on wages. For this the Executive Council brought up the wages resolution of the 1925 Atlantic City convention, the "new" wage policy of that time.

"Increased productivity is essential to permanent increases in our

standard of living," said the 1925 resolution quoted in the 1946 Executive Council report. "Cooperation between all groups concerned with production results in a very genuine partnership that brings reciprocal benefits of the highest value."

The resolution passed at Chicago in 1946 called for immediate scrapping of price controls; "return to collective bargaining based on workers' contribution to production and capacity of the employer to pay"; and "development of union-management cooperation plans with joint responsibility of improving production and reducing wastes."

As in 1925, the strike weapon is practically discarded. The Executive Council's report, adopted by the convention, treacherously denounces the C.I.O., blaming its strikes and wage increases for the price increases that have occurred.

"Those unions which broke price ceilings to get 18½ cents followed a shortsighted policy," declares the report. "Had they been really willing to accept smaller increases and adjust their demands by genuine collective bargaining to industry's ability to pay, they would be better off and so would all American workers."

The Council report boasted how A. F. of L. unions had made settlements without strikes, affecting millions of workers, for raises of "five and ten cents an hour."

Thus, A. F. of L. workers are placed under a policy that conditions a wage raise upon speedup of produc-

tion and upon an employer's books —whether they show "ability to pay."

Here is what William Z. Foster, writing in the *Labor Monthly* of January, 1926, said about the 1925 wage policy shortly after it was adopted by the A. F. of L.:

Of late new tendencies are manifesting themselves which indicate that employers and the trade union bureaucrats are beginning to agree on a policy to allow the existence of some semblance of labor unionism in the industries and thus to permit the continuance of labor bureaucracy. This drift toward an agreement comes from two directions. On the employers' side it comes from the development of company unionism, and on the bureaucrats' side from the degeneration of the trade unions through the B. & O. plan and other schemes of class collaboration. The tendency of these two converging lines of development is to culminate in some form of unionism between those of present day company unionism and trade unionism.

In his valuable collection of material on the "higher strategy" of labor (no strikes) upon which the A. F. of L. then embarked, Foster also cited the following plain talk by William Green in the *American Federationist* of December, 1926:

The company union movement admits the need of labor management, but rejects the means to that end. . . . Even though such employers may realize the necessity of having employees organized in order to deal with them efficiently, they feel they must control any such organization. They feel that

the labor movement . . . cannot be trusted to share on an independent footing in the direction of industrial policies. . . . By imposing their wills instead of finding how to get consent through the development of mutual interests they miss the larger possibilities that would come by sharing responsibility with their workmen on a basis of independence and equality and through the organized labor movement.

This was the language in which the leaders of labor offered to substitute for company unions. The A. F. of L. is doing exactly the same today.

Writing two decades later in the November 3, 1946, issue of *The Worker*, on the A. F. of L.'s 65th convention, Foster said:

. . . the substance of what the convention did was to lend its support, actual or tacit, to the drive of the big capitalists to fasten more tightly their grip upon the economic and political life of our country and to back up their insane attempt to establish imperialistic domination over the rest of the world.

The correctness of Foster's assertion that the 65th Convention adopted the "boom and bust line" can hardly be open to question in the light of what American workers have witnessed in the past twenty years. The very policy of driving workers to a break-neck speedup, and depending upon the generosity of imperialist profit-hogs to give wage increases, speeded us to the day of bulging warehouses, empty pockets, and the great "bust" of 1929.

In an attempt to lend plausibility

to its surrender theory, the Executive Council's report palms off some very transparent fakery upon A. F. of L. members.

"During the years since 1925, productivity as represented in production per manhour has increased rapidly in American industry," says the report. "Unions affiliated with the Federation, following the above wage policy, have succeeded in raising wages as production per manhour increased. During the period from 1925 to 1939 this policy brought an increase in wages while living costs declined and living standards were thus substantially raised for all groups."

The Executive Council makes the claim that with an increase of 54 per cent in productivity for the period, the purchasing power of a factory worker's hourly wage rose 41 per cent.

Pamphlet No. R1150 of the U. S. Department of Labor, a study of wages, hours, and productivity since 1909, gives the lie to this claim, as the following table will show:

(The 1923-25 average index equals 100)

	Weekly Earnings in Manufacturing	Cost of Living Index	Output Per Manhour	Mfg. Wages Adjusted to C. of L.
1925	25.71	101.8	106.5	99.6
1926	26.00	102.6	110.0	99.9
1927	26.10	100.7	113.7	102.2
1928	26.34	99.5	121.9	104.4
1929	26.40	99.5	124.1	104.6
1930	24.53	96.9	123.8	99.8
1931	22.02	88.2	133.0	98.4

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1932	17.86	79.2	129.6	88.9
1933	17.36	75.0	136.3	91.3
1934	18.93	77.7	139.2	96.0
1935	20.85	79.6	149.4	103.3
1936	22.60	80.4	152.3	110.8
1937	24.95	83.4	148.2	118.0
1938	22.70	81.8	150.4	109.4
1939	24.58	80.7	164.2	120.1

The table proves how disastrous the A. F. of L.'s wage theory is. It shows that wages were almost level even during the five "prosperity" years through 1929, weekly earnings in manufacturing remained almost unchanged. But with the crash they took a dive that soon brought them to the low point of \$17.36 in 1933. *Even in 1939 they were still \$1.13 a week below 1925.*

The only compensating feature, for those who could find jobs, was the drop in the cost of living due to crisis underconsumption, which according to the Labor Department's adjusted index, kept standards somewhere between 88.9 and 99.8 of the 1923-25 average during the Hoover crisis days.

But output per manhour (and speedup) knew no decline during the 14 years. It climbed steadily to 164.2 per cent of the 1923-25 index. By 1930, during the "prosperity" years, it reached 123.8 when weekly wages were \$1.18 below 1925. It kept on climbing as fear of unemployment stimulated speedup and earnings dropped to \$17.36.

A somewhat better advantage for workers is indicated in the adjusted cost of living index from 1935 to

1939 because the prices of cost of living products did not jump as fast as the progress of the C.I.O.'s campaign that was under way.

The year 1937, historic as the starting point of the C.I.O.'s major campaigns in the steel, auto, electrical, and textile industries, shows the first marked upward trend in wages. The improvements that began earlier were due in the main to the effect of Roosevelt's reforms such as the 40-cent hourly minimum of the N.R.A. and shorter hours.

In the light of the above, is it to be wondered that the Executive Council "skipped" 14 years?

ON LABOR UNITY AND RED-BAITING

Those who thought that postwar attacks from capital and the threat of drastic anti-labor legislation would lead to C.I.O.-A. F. of L. collaboration, found little hope in the A. F. of L. convention. The Executive Council's report, it is true, contained a great deal on labor's sad legislative experience and the warning that the next Congress may prove decisive on the outcome of this battle. The address of Joseph A. Padway, chief counsel of the A. F. of L., was a lengthy and frank analysis of the legislative storm that is gathering over labor. But Padway's speeches are just nicely received and filed at A. F. of L. conventions. Some resolutions opposing anti-labor bills were passed in routine fashion. For that matter, the convention

also passed resolutions favoring the 30-hour week and most of the progressive-supported social bills that are collecting dust in Congress committee pigeon-holes. But all this has little meaning in the light of the A. F. of L.'s major decision to collaborate with Big Business and to wage war upon the C.I.O.

The A. F. of L. also turned back twenty years for new inspiration for its present Red-baiting campaign which this Chicago convention carried to hysterical heights. *The A. F. of L. in 1925 inaugurated its policy of waging a Red-baiting war upon Left-wing progressives simultaneously with its no-strike, production speedup wage policy.* It was under the guise of fighting "Communism" that honest rank-and-file leaders in the unions were terrorized lest they effectively mobilize the dissatisfied membership against the bureaucracy. John L. Lewis and Dubinsky's union gave the lead with mass expulsions of outstanding militants and even whole locals and district organizations. Writing on this in his *Misleaders of Labor*, Foster said:

As the trade union bureaucracy drifts more to the right it fights even more viciously to prevent the left wing from mobilizing the discontented rank and file upheavals new dictatorial methods have been added.

While twenty years ago the attack was aimed against the rising progressive movement in the A. F. of L., today it is against both the progres-

sives within the A. F. of L. and the progressive C.I.O. as a whole that is the main stumbling block to another reign of roughshod reaction such as we had during the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover era.

But never before was the A. F. of L.'s bureaucracy so openly on the auction block for the favor of Big Business, for never before have labor leaders dared to denounce unions for asking and winning wage increases. Literally taking the words out of N.A.M. statements, the A. F. of L.'s Executive Council complained to the convention that "some unions outside the Federation did not consider the needs of reconversion. A series of strikes were called in which wage demands were set at 30 per cent, or \$2.00 a day." While blaming the C.I.O.'s successful wage fight for the "disastrous effect upon our entire economy," the Council boasted that "unions outside of the A. F. of L. accounted for 77 per cent of those on strike."

C.I.O. President Philip Murray gave an eloquent description of the strategy of the A. F. of L.'s leaders in his October 10 speech before the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen:

After a C.I.O. union wins bargaining rights some A. F. of L. so-called leader frequently appears at the employer's side door blushing, but purposeful: "how would you like," said he, "to get rid of the C.I.O. crowd by making a contract with my labor organization under much more advantageous terms?" Sometime this appeal sounds

attractive to an employer and he is tempted to accept it . . .

This organization has become so accustomed to permitting itself to be used for the purpose of frustrating the legitimate trade union aspirations of the workers that it has become a national scandal. Many of its leaders proceed upon the theory that trade unionism is a species of evil and that they can sell themselves to the employer because they are the lesser of two evils.

We in the C.I.O. regard it as a high compliment that so many of the A. F. of L. leaders, feeling unable to sell their program to the workers, are forced to peddle their wares in the employer market.

The second aspect of this anti-C.I.O. strategy is Red-baiting, with an eye upon certain groups within the C.I.O. for new split-offs. With that in view, the convention adopted a long "special" report on "Communism" which was a mixture of the usual slanders and nonsense. But this time the usual stupidity of labeling the entire C.I.O. as "Communist" was avoided. "Unquestionably the majority of the membership of the C.I.O. is composed of loyal and patriotic Americans who are now dismayed as they understand the use which Moscow is making of their organization." The report, after flooding the C.I.O. with "Communism," adds hopefully that "at present this condition is causing bitter division in the ranks of that dual organization, and already has greatly weakened its effectiveness."

When the convention opened, dele-

gates received the October issue of the *American Federationist* in which Green, summarizing the A. F. of L.'s program concludes:

In my opinion, the disintegration of the C.I.O. will gain momentum during the coming months. I predict that some of the more firmly established affiliates of the dual movement will break away from it and come knocking at our door. We will welcome our returning brothers, willing to forget their wanderings in order to consolidate the strength and the unity of labor.

The A. F. of L.'s "unity" policy still follows the line outlined by David Dubinsky in 1940 when he swung his union back into the A. F. of L. after a fruitless short stay in the ranks of the C.I.O. He then described his own union's break with the C.I.O. as the course through which "unity" will eventually be achieved in the American labor movement. Ever since then, the A. F. of L. has rejected even collaboration with the C.I.O. on issues (except formal joint membership on war bodies). Its "unity" strategists have been constantly looking out for new opportunities to split groups away from the C.I.O.

In this respect, too, Social-Democracy gained as a factor within the A. F. of L.'s top circle. Green's "break-away" hopes are based principally on the work of Dubinsky's political associates in C.I.O. ranks. The A. F. of L.'s policy of absolving parts of the C.I.O. from "Communism" is aimed at helping the Red-baiters

within the C.I.O. and extending to them a bridge for the "break-away." Social-Democrats in the C.I.O. showed their hand in that respect last Spring when they actively promoted the fortunes of their friends in the U.A.W.

By its inability to conceal its collaboration with Big Business, the A. F. of L.'s bureaucracy reveals its weakness. It takes no expert analyst to see through its policy, and the experience of the last "prosperity" period and its consequences are still well remembered in most homes. Large sections of the membership are ignoring the Chicago resolutions.

The A. F. of L.'s leaders, however, are drawing a mechanical parallel with the postwar twenties. They think that "prosperity" illusions and now, the G.O.P. electoral victory will enable them to repeat tragic history. But A. F. of L. leaders were never noted for knowledge of the fundamental economic and social laws, and less so today than ever before.

They are overlooking the rapidity with which the purchasing power of the masses of people is being siphoned off in face of the far greater productive capacity of America's industrial machine. They are ignoring the imprint that the last crisis and the experience under Roosevelt has left on the minds of the people. They see the C.I.O. as their enemy but fail to appreciate the great influence it has upon the thoughts of even the A. F. of L. membership. Like their capitalist masters, they view the tre-

mendous democratic and socialist upsurge throughout the world as a "menace" to be fought, but they do not realize the influence of the surrounding new world upon the people of this country.

The A. F. of L.'s leaders think, fundamentally, as the capitalists do. They do not even vaguely profess to favor an ultimate social order that would differ from present-day U. S. capitalism. Having no perspective for the working class other than repetition of the past, they naturally fall into the arms of the most reactionary circles.

The A. F. of L. bureaucracy's orientation to the Republicans has been developing for some time. But the officials have been cautious, for they know that A. F. of L. members in general are still in the ranks of the coalition that had been shaping up under Roosevelt. The Republican victory on November 5 has emboldened them to show their association with the G.O.P. more openly, and, as the top leaders develop their alliance with the Republicans, so also will the chasm between them and the rank-and-file widen.

The inability of the A. F. of L.'s top leaders to deliver much of the vote has been well demonstrated in recent years. The same is being demonstrated by their inability to kill the memory of Roosevelt and his foreign and domestic policies. The recent Illinois Federation of Labor convention adopted a resolution "re-affirming its belief" in the policies of

F.D.R. The New York State Federation convention, after its leaders tried every trick in the bag to get a Dewey endorsement, refused to do so. Even in bureaucratically "safe" international conventions, leaders find it better judgment to keep foreign policy matters off the floor than to risk the sentiment of delegates.

But the most direct contrast between A. F. of L. policy and the needs of the members is showing itself on wages. A. F. of L. members, having been held back in the first round of the wage fight, are in many fields behind C.I.O. scales. Now they want raises to cover the losses they suffered, as well.

What the New York truck drivers and longshoremen did is indicative of what millions in the A. F. of L. are thinking about. The victory of the 10,000 drivers of Local 807—a 31 cents an hour raise, reduction of hours from 45 to 40, and elimination of a truck boss as arbitrator—soon influenced action to benefit similarly many tens of thousands of drivers along the entire East Coast. This union's example of leadership is recognized far more widely than the surrender policy advanced at Chicago. Similarly with the A. F. of L.'s longshoremen. They won a total raise of 40 cents an hour since V-J Day thanks only to the rank-and-file leadership which now has so powerful an influence among the members that "King" Joe Ryan can

deliver nothing to the shipowners.

The unity of A. F. of L.-C.I.O. maritime workers, dramatized vividly through three successive tests along our entire 7,000-mile coastline, and its significant wage gains for all seamen, has probably gone farther than anything else that has happened to show what unity means. This unity took place despite the efforts of Ryan and of Harry Lundberg of the A. F. of L.'s seamen's union to induce their members to scab.

Of course, manifestations against the Green - Lewis - Woll - Dubinsky - Hutcheson bureaucracy from the rank-and-file or lower officials, do not occur spontaneously. It takes the initiative and courage of progressives to bring them out. What is most interesting today is that where the membership gets half a chance to show its sentiment or where even weak progressive initiative is shown, the response is unmistakably against the policy of collaboration with Big Business.

This confronts progressives, primarily those within the A. F. of L., with an historic challenge. They have the opportunity of winning the majority of the membership for a policy of progress—a path charted in the Roosevelt-Wallace peace policy and in F.D.R.'s Economic Bill of Rights. They have the capacity to prevent the top bureaucracy from delivering upon its "sweetheart contract" with reaction.

WHITHER THE AMERICAN LEGION?

By JOHN GATES

THE AMERICAN LEGION, the nation's largest veterans' organization, held its 28th National Convention in San Francisco from Sept. 30 to Oct. 4. Approximately 3,600 delegates, representing 3,300,000 members in 15,400 posts, attended. The Legion had about one million members prior to World War II, to which have been added about 2,300,000 World War II veterans who now comprise more than 68 per cent of the total membership. Despite the fact that the newer veterans now make up over two-thirds of the organization, they comprised less than 20 per cent of the delegates.

Although the Legion leadership has cause for satisfaction in the organization's growth among World War II veterans, it was greatly disturbed by the relatively poor turnout of veterans at the convention. They confidently predicted prior to the convention that there would be an influx of 150,000 Legionnaires into San Francisco. No more than 25,000 registered. This compared with 42,000 in New York in 1937 and 39,000 in Chicago in 1939 when the Legion membership was less than one-third its present strength. Moreover, the

expected 14-hour parade lasted less than 4 hours, with virtually no World War II participation, in contrast to the 20-hour parade in 1937.

These figures would seem to indicate that the World War I members are beginning to feel their age and that they may want to take a back seat to the younger and more numerous veterans of the recent war. The small participation of World War II veterans in the convention plus their poor attendance at post meetings undoubtedly results from the refusal to grant the new members a role commensurate with their membership, as well as from the failure of the Legion to fight vigorously enough for the needs of World War II veterans. Millions of new veterans have flocked into the Legion because of the immense power the Legion wields in adjusting disability claims, its influence in local politics, etc., but they do not as yet look upon the Legion as *their* organization, nor do they feel a deep loyalty to it. Nevertheless, it would be foolhardy to underestimate the power of the Legion and its ability to indoctrinate World War II veterans with reactionary ideas.

FOREIGN POLICY

As was universally expected, the Legion convention adopted an extremely reactionary program, following the line of the N.A.M., the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, the F.B.I., American Action, Inc., the Hearst press, and the Republican-led bi-partisan coalition in Congress. It

undoubtedly aided considerably the Republican electoral victory. The Legion thus openly reasserts the reactionary aims on which it was founded and which have characterized its entire existence, except for the few short war years when it toned down its anti-labor bias and anti-Communist crusade and pretended to be anti-fascist. Having waited until millions of new veterans joined its ranks, the Legion leadership now feels strong enough to resume the offensive.

On foreign policy, the Legion backed the Byrnes-Vandenberg foreign policy and a "big stick" program of gigantic military expenditures and universal military training. William K. Jackson, President of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, stated at the convention: "There's no longer any strategic or morale reason for double-talk on the subject. The Soviet regime was 'oversold' to us during the war, and it is high time that we undid the mischief." The convention, following this lead, provided the platform for an endless stream of brass-hat speakers, each trying to outdo the other in whipping up a war hysteria and attacking the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. There was a veritable orgy of Red-baiting for which the tone was set by J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover made clear the broader objectives of the anti-Communist campaign when he called for war, not only against the Communists, but also "their satellites, fellow travellers and their so-called progres-

sive and phony liberal allies." Here all progressive Americans have, right from the horse's mouth, what they may not yet have learned from experience—that the attack against Communists is but the prelude to destroying the liberty and freedom of all.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

With an eye towards the World War II veterans, the convention adopted a demagogic program on veterans affairs. One resolution called for the repeal of the ceilings imposed on the on-the-job training earnings under the G.I. Bill of Rights, which resulted in wage cuts for thousands of veterans and eliminated thousands of others from the program altogether. The Legion leadership was motivated on this issue not so much by sympathy for the victimized veterans as by the personal feud of the retiring national commander John Stelle against General Bradley, director of the Veterans Administration. This feud dates back to early 1946 when Stelle launched a violent attack against Bradley for refusing to grant the Legion the same favoritism it enjoyed when General Hines headed the Veterans Administration. Stelle was repudiated by public opinion, which backed Bradley, and he suffered a great loss in prestige. He nursed his wounds and bided his time until an issue arose on which he could "get" Bradley. His opportunity came when Bradley recommended to Congress that ceilings be

placed on the on-the-job training wages and continued to defend the cut after the entire trade union movement, most veteran organizations and even some employers had condemned the cut. In this instance, General Bradley carried out the will of the "economy bloc" in Congress, whose idea of economizing is to do so at the expense of veterans.

Most veterans support Bradley generally as against Stelle because of Bradley's efforts to clean up the notoriously inefficient Veterans Administration in contrast to Stelle's inaction on behalf of veterans and war-mongering as expressed by his statement: "Let's aim atomic rocket bombs at Tito and Moscow now." Unfortunately, Bradley weakened his whole case at the convention against Stelle and the Legion bureaucracy by defending his own erroneous position on the ceilings. Interestingly enough, he justified the wage cut by the fallacious A.V.C. slogan, "Citizen First, Veteran Second." The Legion spokesmen demagogically ripped this argument to shreds, saying that what was in the best interests of the veterans (who with their families make up the majority of the nation) was good for the nation. This was, of course, sheer demagogy on their part, despite the fact that their arguments were correct on this issue, since the general program of the Legion convention was in the interests neither of the nation nor the veterans.

Bradley must be opposed on the

ceiling issue as well as on his denial of unemployment compensation to striking veterans. He deserves support against the Legion bureaucrats insofar as he fights their attempt to retain the Veterans Administration as a huge pork barrel, and fights against slashes in veterans' allowances. At the moment it appears that Bradley is to return to army duties and the danger is that he will be replaced by a man like General Hershey, a darling of the Legion and well known for his anti-labor bias in favoring super-seniority. Veterans and the labor movement should fight against any appointment that will return the Veterans Administration to Legion domination and to an anti-union policy.

SUPER-SENIORITY

The convention came out for cash payment of terminal leave for enlisted men and for income tax exemption for World War II veterans up to \$5,000 for three years after the official end of the war. These were undoubtedly sops thrown out to World War II veterans and it remains to be seen how seriously the Legion will fight to win these demands. But lest one may think the Legion has become progressive on veterans' needs, its stand on super-seniority will disabuse him. Refusing to accept the rejection of super-seniority by the Supreme Court, the Legion has served notice that it will press for legislation in the new Congress to legalize super-seniority—that

is, a veteran is to be guaranteed re-employment in his old plant for as many years as he served in the armed forces regardless of greater seniority of non-veterans. Despite the fact that all unions grant veterans seniority equal to time spent in the service and that seniority has largely become a settled question among veterans since the Supreme Court ruling, the Legion stand constitutes a serious threat to the entire seniority system built up by the unions and threatens the very existence of unions. If unions are weakened on the seniority issue or any other, most veterans will be the losers in the long run regardless of any temporary advantages a few veterans might receive.

The danger is that this threat of a new super-seniority law may not be taken seriously by the trade union movement because the relatively high employment at present seems to make it an academic issue. But it will cease to be an academic issue when the economic situation worsens and there is a growth of mass unemployment. Then it will be much easier for employers to set worker against veteran. This is exactly what the employers want—two workers for each job, let the workers fight it out among themselves, the veteran against the non-veteran, with the employer on the sidelines egging on one against the other and laughing up his sleeve all the time. Veterans and unions must not fall for this game. They must not only work

to defeat the so-called super-seniority legislation proposed by the Legion, which is really *anti-seniority*, anti-labor, and anti-veteran, but must put forward *now* a positive program to meet the coming mass unemployment along the lines of government public works, a shorter work week without reduction in pay, an annual wage, government operation of unused war plants, etc. Of course, there was not a word about this kind of program in the Legion's resolutions.

THE BONUS ISSUE

The popular impression exists that the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars favor a federal bonus for veterans of World War II, but such is not the case. Bonus resolutions were buried in committee and not acted upon at the conventions of both organizations. This reflects the influence of Big Business interests on the policies of these organizations. However, it can be expected that the pressure from the millions of World War II veterans in their ranks will inevitably force the Legion and V.F.W. to come out in favor of the bonus. The only veterans' organization which has actually *opposed* a bonus is the American Veterans Committee. This is so because it is as yet a very small organization with a mainly middle-class membership and does not accurately represent the wishes and demands of the great majority of veterans. As this is written, not a single major veterans' organization is on

record in favor of the bonus. The only forces favoring the bonus now are some unions, the Communist Party, and practically all of the veterans. That public opinion generally, as well as the veterans, favors a bonus has been conclusively proved by the recent elections in which state bonuses received the support of the electorate wherever the question was on the ballot, as in Michigan, Illinois, and Rhode Island.

Only a small minority of veterans receive assistance from the G.I. Bill of Rights. Since three-quarters of all veterans are workers, and are in no position to take advantage of the education provisions, the G. I. Bill of Rights in effect discriminates against workers. A federal bonus is especially needed by worker-veterans. This explains why trade unions and the Communist Party, which is a workers' party, are the main forces fighting for a bonus at the present time, while the veterans' organizations, which are largely led by Big Business and middle class interests, either do nothing or oppose it. The bonus will increasingly become a major issue as the economic situation worsens. It is particularly incumbent upon the trade unions to become the main driving force in mobilizing mass support for the bonus, to develop unity between unions and veterans, and to defeat the maneuvers of fascist demagogues who will seek to utilize this issue for their own reactionary purposes.

That the Legion attack means far

more than attack against the Communists alone is proved by the resolution calling for compulsory arbitration of "labor disputes" and for governmental "regulation" of trade unions. This resolution clearly does not represent the will of the majority of veterans in the United States. The most recent Fortune poll again confirms the trend already noticed in previous polls that the majority of veterans favor unions and that the overwhelming majority are opposed to the prohibition of strikes. The pro-labor trend of veterans is greater than that of the public as a whole. Of course, the veterans had very little to say about the Legion position, about as much as they had to say about the election of their officers. The new National Commander, Paul Griffith, was actually chosen by the Kingmakers (the clique which runs the Legion) back in 1943. He is an electrical corporation executive and a "retread" (as veterans of both World Wars are called). His army service consisted mainly of acting as assistant to General Hershey, director of Selective Service, and he is the outstanding champion in the Legion of super-seniority, that is, of anti-unionism.

Negro veterans were conspicuous by their absence. Not a single Negro speaker addressed the convention, nor did a single Negro grace the platform at any time, let alone be nominated for or elected to office. These facts are an accurate reflection of the Negro's status in the Le-

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gion. He is tolerated only in Jim-Crow posts and is allowed absolutely no voice within the organization. The convention passed pious resolutions against discrimination, but the Legion has never been known to throw its powerful support behind such measures as the F.E.P.C., and the anti-poll tax and anti-lynching bills. In fact, the convention deleted the word "lynching" from a resolution and substituted the phrase "mob violence" so as not to offend the Southern white delegates. It can safely be said that the Bilbos and Rankins were not offended by, and have nothing to fear from, the Legion's resolution against the Ku Klux Klan, which was neatly balanced and negated by granting an Americanism award to William Randolph Hearst.

WORLD WAR II VETERANS

The biggest news of the Legion convention was the men who weren't there—the veterans of World War II. This was and will continue to be the irrepressible issue. The value of the Legion to reaction will progressively decrease with the years unless it proves able, not only to recruit, but to keep millions of World War II members. The perfect setup for the old guard of the Legion would be for the new members to stay in the background and let the old "experienced" men act as their spokesmen. But the G.I. will refuse to take a back seat. He will demand leadership in proportion to his strength and will insist on action on his de-

mands, failing which he will leave the Legion en masse. The bureaucracy makes eloquent speeches about wanting the World War II men to come in and take over but they do not practice what they preach. As Harry Moses, a U. S. Steel Corporation executive and a Kingmaker, stated: "After all, this Legion is a billion dollar business. You don't just throw something that big over to a bunch of inexperienced boys." Eventually, World War II men must come into leadership, but the Kingmakers plan to hand over power on their own terms and on condition that their reactionary policies be continued. They are already selecting their men and grooming them for leadership.

At county and state conventions of both the Legion and the V.F.W., World War II veterans expressed their discontent in many ways. This often took the form of spontaneous caucuses which nominated World War II men in opposition to official slates and formulated programs around their own special needs. These "revolts" were crushed in most cases, were successful in a few, but in every case badly frightened the Legion leadership. Learning from these experiences, the old guard decided to head off any World War II protest at the national convention by itself organizing the World War II caucus. The caucus was convened by a national vice-commander, Dudley Swim, a railroad executive and former member of the America First

Committee. There were about 100 World War II men at the caucus. There was a flurry of protest at the choice of Griffith for commander and some grumbling about the notorious inaction of the Legion on the housing crisis, but the meeting was so packed with old guard stooges that the whole protest was steered into harmless channels. The criticism of the Legion's inactivity on housing was transformed into an attack against government controls, public housing projects, and the Wagner-Ellender-Taft Bill, while the protest against Griffith was turned into an endorsement of him.

Another significant development with respect to the World War II issue was the attempt to expel the Duncan-Paris post, a New York City post, consisting of former writers for *Yank* and *Stars and Stripes*, whose crime evidently consisted in that it had organized the best housing action of any Legion post in the country, and which was accused of having some Communists as members. The New York State Legion had recommended to the National Executive that the post be expelled. During the convention a secret meeting of the Executive expelled the post, without a hearing or formal charges ever having been preferred against the post. However, this secret action was made public, and a delegation from the post, led by Marion Hargrove, flew out to the convention to protest. The incident received tremendous publicity, on the whole

very unfavorable to the Legion. Despite the efforts of the Legion leadership to present it as a Communist issue, it was recognized generally as a World War II issue and as the cracking down by the Legion hierarchy upon an aggressive World War II post that was trying to get action on the number one issue confronting veterans—housing. As a result of this damaging publicity, the Legion heads retreated, reversed the expulsion decision, and suspended the post until the next meeting of the National Executive when, allegedly, the post is to receive a "fair hearing." Obviously, the intent of the Legion remains to expel the post, only in a more "legal" fashion.

The significance of the World War II veterans development in the Legion is not its failures or weaknesses. This movement is only in its infancy. Most World War II members of the Legion have been in less than one year. What must be understood is that this movement will inevitably grow and assume mass proportions, especially with the advent of the economic crisis. The millions of World War II Legionnaires will not remain passive instruments of the Legion leadership. They will increasingly come into conflict with that leadership.

Whether the millions of new members will remain within the organization or drop out in droves is a question that no one can answer as yet. In any case, progressive-minded veterans, trade unionists, and Com-

munists must be among these millions of veterans, helping to influence their movement in a progressive direction. There should be no illusions that there is any serious likelihood that the American Legion as a whole can become a force for progress. Its leadership and organization is too closely integrated with Big Business, the F.B.I., and the War Department. But the millions of members of the Legion are not reactionary and should not be left to the tender mercies of the leaders of the Legion. The reactionary policies of the Legion leadership can and must be defeated and this must be done from within and without.

THE OUTLOOK

The year 1947 will be a crucial one for veterans. The Republican electoral victory will hasten the economic crisis, of which the veterans will be the first and worst victims. What is in store for them is shown by Senator Taft's proposed veteran's budget of six billion dollars for 1947. The veterans' outlay for 1946 was seven billion dollars, and since the 20 per cent increase in disability payments did not go into effect until September, at least eight billion dollars will be necessary in 1947 to maintain the veterans' program at even its present level. Veterans must organize and act as never before in unity with the trade unions to prevent slashes in the present program, to win increases to meet the higher cost of living, to stop rent increases, and to force the

mass building of low cost and low rental housing for veterans.

The reactionary program of the Legion leadership is only one side of the picture. The other side is represented by such actions as the Missouri Bonus March, the Athens, Tennessee movement, the sitdown of veterans in the New York Legislature, the squatters movement now developing. *These action are just the first previews of the great actions which are to come.*

The veterans movement is not developing in a vacuum. The course of events is forcing a new political realignment leading toward the formation of a new mass people's party. It is inevitable that there will be a veterans' movement corresponding to the development of this new party. At present, the progressive veterans movement is divided into many currents—the World War II veterans' movements in the Legion and the V.F.W., the trade union veterans, the Negro veterans, the student veterans, the A.V.C., etc. The need is to work among all of these, strengthen them to the maximum, and to develop the broadest united action.

The united action of the veterans, in alliance with the trade unions, will lay the basis for the eventual merging of the many progressive currents in the veterans movement into a mighty stream that will be able to defeat the reactionary program of the Legion and the V.F.W., and be a major ally of the working class in the fight for peace and progress.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST DEVIATIONS AND FACTIONALISM IN SAN FRANCISCO

By OLETA O'CONNOR YATES

THE BUILDING OF THE Communist Party into a powerful mass party of the American working class must be based upon a correct Marxist line and policy, maintained in the struggle against deviations to the Right or the "Left," and brought to life in the struggle around the vital issues facing labor and the nation today.

The resolution of the National Convention in July, 1945, emphasized that American monopoly capitalism has become the chief stronghold of world reaction, seeking to establish its domination over the world. In this period, consequently, the main aim is to block the onslaught of the trusts, to smash their anti-labor, anti-people's domestic program, as well as their imperialist foreign policies. The struggle against Wall Street and its program requires the welding together of all anti-fascist, anti-monopoly, democratic forces into a broad coalition that can prevent new wars and aggression, and stop the advance of reaction and fascism in the U. S.

It is within the framework of this basic approach that the Party's position on economic and political issues, campaigns, and struggles is developed, with constant struggle against the distortion of our line by trends or tendencies toward either Right opportunism or "Left"-sectarianism. This necessitates raising the ideological level of the entire Party, learning to estimate correctly the relationship of forces in given periods and situations, and becoming fully involved in mass struggles on the economic and political front—struggles that will sharpen as the result of the G.O.P. electoral victory.

In San Francisco, during the last year, the application and further development of the line of the National Convention have brought to the surface evidences of both Right opportunism and "Left"-sectarianism. These tendencies have taken the form either of direct challenge to the Party's main strategy and tactics; or of an apparent "agreement" with its basic line, but an attack on the manner in which this line is applied to specific campaigns and activities, such as strike struggles, the election campaign, and the fight for peace. Where, however, the same handful of people were consistently in opposition to the Party's policies, however much they pretended to accept the line of the Convention, it was clear that there was a basic difference between their line and the Party's.

The entire history of the Communist movement, as well as the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and

Stalin, have amply demonstrated that Right opportunism and "Left"-sectarianism grow from the same social roots. Both are the results of bourgeois ideology and influences, and are carried into the Party either by elements who have failed to rid themselves of these capitalist influences, or by alien forces who deliberately seek to disrupt the Party's program and activity. Those who defended "Left"-sectarianism maintained that only Right opportunism reflects the pressure of the bourgeoisie, while "Left"-sectarianism represents the pressure of "working-class militancy," and is, therefore, not such a serious deviation. In fact, both reflect bourgeois pressures. "Left"-sectarianism is a mirror of the impatience and frustration of petty-bourgeois elements who are "driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism, and reflects the pressure of these petty-bourgeois elements."

Objectively, both aid the class enemy. The danger from the Right results in capitulation to the bourgeoisie, passivity, avoidance of struggle, hesitancy and unwillingness to advance the Party's independent role and program. The "Left" danger, advancing a line which cloaks itself with revolutionary phrases but entirely disregards the existing conditions and relationship of forces in given periods or situations, results in isolation of the Communist Party from the working class, the working class from its allies, and the defeat of all by the bourgeoisie. Either

would weaken the Communist Party, and thereby weaken the struggle against the bourgeoisie, its program and its policies. *Both* must be fought simultaneously and relentlessly.

What have been the experiences of the Communist Party in San Francisco in the struggle on two fronts? How have Right and "Left" deviations expressed themselves in major campaigns and activities?

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, COALITION, AND THIRD PARTY

The Party's policy in the election campaign was directed toward defeating the program and candidates of reaction and fascism, mainly centered in the Republican Party; advancing the independent role of labor and its allies, and strengthening the unity of these forces as a necessary step toward a third party; converting the election campaign into a campaign of struggle around the issues; and bringing forward the program and candidates of the Communist Party.

In the early stages of the campaign, there were some comrades who showed hesitancy to support a policy of running candidates in selected districts who were independent of the bourgeois political machines. These comrades failed to grasp the relationship between such independent candidates, and the mass activities around them, to the third party perspective. Later there were instances of reluctance on the part of a few

trade unionists to exert the pressure of the independent forces upon Democratic candidates in order to move them toward stronger commitments to the program of the labor and progressive groups. A few comrades objected to running a Communist write-in candidate on the ground that it would "interfere with the broad progressive campaign."

Fundamentally, these Right-opportunist tendencies were signs of revisionist hangovers which could lead only to submerging the Party and denying its vanguard role, to making labor and other progressive groups completely subservient to a bourgeois political party. The Party leadership conducted a struggle against such Right opportunism throughout the campaign.

"Left" opposition to the Party's policy consisted of the following:

1. An outright attack upon the concept of an anti-fascist, anti-monopoly coalition and upon the third party perspective.

2. Consistent objection to an immediate program of partial demands as a "reformist" program.

The attack upon the building of a coalition and the outlook for a third party grew out of the "Left" theory that there is no difference between the character of the coalition envisaged by the Party today, and the concept of the coalition developed by Browder. The "Leftists" maintained that it could result in nothing more than a new, capitalist third party, the progressive program of which

could not be guaranteed; that the Communist Party should wait until it is strong enough to lead any coalition before we consider building or participating in one.

The policy of an anti-fascist, anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist coalition, of which the Communists would be a recognized part, developed by the National Convention and the National Committee, clearly has nothing in common with, and is the exact opposite of, the coalition proposed by Browder. The one proposed by Browder is a coalition with monopoly capital and is based upon the revisionist view that monopoly capitalism has become progressive. It includes the Truman Administration within such a coalition. It is based upon a perspective of the permanence of the two-party system and excludes any perspective of a third party. It is therefore based on an acceptance by the working class of the political leadership of the bourgeoisie and minimizes labor's independent action. It not only proposed but actually resulted in the liquidation of the Communist Party which it considers an obstacle to the building of such a coalition.

In sharp contrast to this, the Party seeks to build a coalition, not with, but against monopoly capital. Such a coalition does not include the Truman Administration. Such a coalition is oriented toward realizing the perspective of a third party at the earliest possible date. Its aim is to free the working class from the po-

litical leadership of the bourgeoisie. With labor playing a leading role, it must include the allies of labor: the Negro people, the poor farmers, the city middle classes, as well as certain capitalist elements who are prepared to go along with it. Such a policy is based, not on the liquidation, but on the building of a mass Communist Party as a recognized part of such a coalition.

A third party growing out of such a broad movement based on struggle against the trusts would not be a "third capitalist party," but an independent anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly, people's party, fighting in defense of democracy and peace, against fascism and war.

This coalition policy of the Party is predicated upon recognition of the fact that large sections of the American people, who do not yet have a socialist perspective, do have a common will to fight the trusts, to block the drive toward fascism and war. The Communist Party leads that fight and will wholeheartedly join with other democratic, anti-fascist forces in common struggle. For the Communist Party to wait until it is strong enough to lead any coalition before participating in it, as demanded by the "Left"-sectarians, is to blind ourselves to the fascist danger or to accept its inevitability. Further, it is axiomatic that the Party will increase in size and influence to the degree that it reacts to the immediate dangers confronting the masses, provides leadership that will

mobilize them for the solution of their problems, and fights in coalition with all other democratic forces against the common enemy.

Significantly, the "Left"-sectarian elements minimized or ignored the struggle against fascism, and took note of the fight for peace chiefly by fatalistic references to the time when "the war against the Soviet Union will be ready." This amounts to passivity and defeatism which, consciously or unconsciously, plays into the hands of monopoly capital, and which would result in generating moods of hopelessness and despair in the working class.

With regard to the Party's election platform, "Left" tendencies revealed themselves in proposals that we should not put forward demands for immediate reforms, demands which will also be advanced by other sections of the progressive movement, because this would create illusions about the bourgeois state. Specific reference was made to the campaign for a California Fair Employment Practices Act, to which objection was made on the grounds that it would cause the Negro people to think that their problems were soluble within the framework of our present social order.

There is indicated here an obvious confusion between the maximum program of the Party, Socialism, and the minimum program, the fight for immediate demands under capitalism. Our maximum program cannot be realized under capitalism, and to-

day obviously is supported only by those whom we have already won for Socialism. Our immediate program of partial demands, which are in fact demands for bourgeois-democratic reforms, flows from the burning issues of the day and the needs of the masses to which the Party gives articulate expression. This immediate program can be supported by other democratic, anti-fascist forces and is actually the basis upon which we establish our place in the coalition movement, as has been demonstrated by the experiences of the Communist Parties in many countries.

As the level of the anti-fascist movement becomes higher, more of the progressive forces will support the immediate demands advanced by the Party, to no small extent stimulated by the Party's lead. The Communist Party, however, wins the increasing support of the workers and advances their political level and class consciousness by the consistent, vanguard manner in which it fights and organizes the workers to fight to win their immediate demands. It accompanies this by widespread mass education for Socialism, through its agitation and propaganda, and the building of the Party. The State Election Platform of the Communist Party in California, upon which our candidate for Governor, Archie Brown, conducted his campaign, contained both an extensive program of immediate demands, and a section dealing with the ultimate goal of the Party, socialism.

Both Right opportunism and "Left"-sectarianism, if not fought against and defeated, would have immobilized the Party for election work. It is a measure of the Party's success in combatting them that the last phases of the election campaign saw an increasing number of Party and non-Party workers actively engaged in the struggle against reaction which was represented by the Hoover-Republican Warren-Knowland ticket.

THE 1945-46 BAY AREA MACHINISTS' STRIKE

On October 29, 1945, A. F. of L. Lodge No. 68 of the I.A.M. in San Francisco, and Local No. 1304 of the C.I.O. Steel Workers Union in Alameda County, went on strike, their main demands being a 30 per cent pay increase, double-time for overtime, two weeks' annual vacation with pay, and nine paid holidays per year. Without any prior consultation with other unions whose membership would be affected, they shut down virtually all of the Bay Area shipyards, involving some 50,000 A. F. of L. metal workers of other crafts. Lodge No. 68, which had previously withdrawn from the A. F. of L. Bay Cities Metal Trades Council—the body holding the master contract for all A. F. of L. metal trades workers—was unable from the outset even to negotiate for marine machinists.

Uptown San Francisco machine shops over which Lodge No. 68 had jurisdiction were also shut down, and

the union leadership moved at once to spread the strike to the waterfront, fringe shops and warehouses, where 3,500 workers were kept out by 125 maintenance machinists. Machinists' picket lines were respected by workers of all other crafts, A. F. of L. and C.I.O., throughout the entire strike.

The harmful policies of the union leadership, in which the basic weaknesses of the strike were inherent, may be stated briefly as follows: they sought to tie up the waterfront, including troop ships; they intended to isolate themselves from the rest of the labor movement; they refused community support; they conducted the strike on an extremely undemocratic basis with a hand-picked strike committee; and they followed adventurist strike tactics which ultimately made it possible for the Grand Lodge of the I.A.M., in the person of Harvey Brown, to move in and declare a receivership in Lodge No. 68.

These policies, advanced by the union's business agents, Harry Hook and Ed Dillon, represented a combination of factors, including hangovers from their anarcho-syndicalist backgrounds, a narrow craft concept of the superior role of the machinists, and a Trotskyist line emanating from their own direct Trotskyist connections as well as from the Trotskyist-influenced group in the C.I.O. Steel Workers with whom they cooperated.

The Party's policy was founded upon recognition of the legitimacy of the machinists' demands, called

for support of the strike, but stressed the need for an independent program that would free the machinists from the disastrous consequences of the Hook and Dillon line. The State Board of the Party, in the interests of winning the strike, pointed out that it was essential to prevent the tie-up of the waterfront and troop ships; called upon all shipyard workers to respect the picket lines, and for coast-wide action by all shipyard workers behind their own demands; urged cooperation and not conflict between the Machinists and other local unions; and showed the necessity for an organized retreat when the prolongation of the strike would have led to disaster.

This policy was established only after a determined struggle against tendencies to Right opportunism and "Left"-sectarianism.

Tendencies from the Right were expressed by some who characterized the strike as a "phony strike," without seeing the difference between the justified demands of the workers and the dangerous policies of the Machinists' leadership. This led some people to wild and irresponsible talk of violating picket lines, and tended toward immobilizing the Party at critical periods. The Party leadership condemned and rejected such views as well as the estimate of the strike on which they were based. The comrades most directly involved in this, after extensive discussion in the Party, admitted their mistakes and proceeded to correct them. On

the part of some comrades, there was some passivity displayed and an inability to give leadership to the rank-and-file strikers along the lines indicated by the Party's policy.

The Party leadership, on the other hand, was responsible for slowness in bringing the issues before the Party membership, insufficient development of independent Party activity in support of the strike, failure to enforce Party decisions, and indecisiveness in carrying out the policy that was adopted. A sharper struggle against Right and "Left" distortions of our policy should also have been made.

The majority of machinist comrades in San Francisco, on the other hand, adopted a "Left" position which actually amounted to their going along with the wrong and harmful policies of the union leadership. They underestimated the danger of the Trotskyist-influenced policies of Hook and Dillon, not only failing to differentiate themselves from these policies but actually carrying them into the Party. Although the Trotskyite press enthusiastically hailed the policies of the union's leadership, and one of the union business agents had written an article for the *Militant* during the war, these comrades saw no Trotskyite danger, and even placed this business agent on the progressive slate in the union elections!

There was further evidence of "Left"-sectarianism in the concept advanced by some comrades that

strikes automatically bring class consciousness, and are therefore always a gain for the working class, regardless of whether they are won or lost, and in the demand raised for a general strike to support the machinists, without taking into consideration the existing relationship of forces in the local labor movement, particularly the metal trades.

The machinist comrades who upheld these "Left"-sectarian views maintained that the Party leadership was merely throwing up a "smoke-screen of Trotskyism," in order to conceal its own shortcomings, a position which was, in reality, a conciliatory attitude toward Trotskyism. Their opposition to Party policies, which they sought to spread among the Party membership, led them to factional attacks upon the Party leadership, as well as to violation of Party discipline and the principle of democratic centralism.

Their "Left" position was overwhelmingly rejected by the Party membership at a county-wide meeting where an analysis of the strike was made.

JUNE 30 MARITIME SETTLEMENT

The June 30 settlement in the maritime industry followed closely after the birth of the Committee for Maritime Unity, which marked a new high point in maritime unity and organization.

Prior to June 30, the unions involved were deeply immersed in

strike preparations, around a program of economic demands covering wages, hours, and working conditions. Extensive plans were made and ready to be put into effect on the organization of the strike itself, as well as the mobilization of public support in the community as a whole.

During this period, the shipowners, the Hearst press and other anti-labor newspapers cried out hysterically that this was not a "legitimate strike" for economic demands, but a "political strike." This was an effort to pave the way for employer or government strike-breaking, to alienate support of the A. F. of L. and the community, and to create confusion among the maritime workers.

The Party's characterization of the situation was that the strike would be primarily a struggle for economic demands, but with a deep political significance because of the time in which it was occurring. It was in a period marked by the anti-labor offensive of the government and the employers to pass strike-breaking and union-smashing legislation. Big Business was pushing its inflationary program against the people's living standards. The monopolists, who were cracking down on labor at home, were simultaneously driving for an imperialist foreign policy, and sought to crush those progressive sections of the labor movement that were a bulwark against reaction.

At the eleventh hour, a settlement was reached that was acceptable to

the membership and leadership of the maritime unions, and was recognized as a substantial gain by the National and State Boards of the Party. It was not so regarded by the "Left"-sectarian elements within the Party, who firmly maintained from the outset that this was a "political strike," a "strike against imperialism." They contended that no gains were made as a result of the settlement, which they characterized as "worse than a sell-out"; and that the strike should have gone on, even if the port of San Francisco had to go out alone! These views were spread, not only within the Party, but were even transmitted to non-Party waterfront workers as well.

Again the solid unity of the Party membership was demonstrated by the overwhelming endorsement the membership gave to the strike analysis made by the State Board from which the following extract is taken:

This was primarily a struggle for economic demands. But the political significance of the maritime workers' struggle and their victory cannot be underestimated. The drive of the big monopolists aims at crushing the fighting capacity of the labor movement, and especially the most militant and progressive sections, as the main bulwark of the fight against the imperialist war drive and the drive to lower the people's living standards.

That is why they threw the full force of the government into the fight against the maritime unions. The maritime unions' success in beating back this attack was therefore a great victory no

less important than the economic gains they won. It has laid the foundation for greater labor unity and international solidarity, for building a national industrial organization in the maritime industry, and for greater independent political action by labor and its allies against the reactionary policies of the Truman Administration.

It effectively exposed and defeated the Lundberg-Trotskyite strategy which was in alliance with the shipowners against the C.M.U., whose program won a wide response among the rank-and-file of Lundberg's union as well as generally among A. F. of L. workers in spite of the Red-baiting disruption of the A. F. of L. top leadership.

It is all the more necessary, therefore, to bring to the attention of the whole Party that a line is being advanced by a few people in the Party that the maritime strike settlement was a "sell-out." The State Board declares that this is an anti-Party line and closely parallels the estimate made by the Trotskyites of the maritime strike situation. This characterization of the strike settlement flows out of the theory advanced that the projected strike was a "political strike."

The State Board declares that such a characterization of the strike is pure adventurism which if not combatted and rooted out of the Party could lead only to the most disastrous consequences for the labor movement.

The experiences of the San Francisco Party on these major issues, as well as a series of lesser ones, was making it clear that a very real and present danger from the "Left" existed, the most serious in that it had crystallized into a "Left"-sectar-

ian factional grouping in which alien anti-Party forces were operating.

PRINCIPLES OF PARTY ORGANIZATION

One of our first and most pressing tasks following the National Convention was to root out the revisionist passivity and organizational laxity into which the Party had sunk under Browder, to transform all bodies of the Party into initiators and leaders of struggle, capable of transmitting our Marxist program to the masses. This task was greatly complicated in San Francisco by the existence of a "Left" factional grouping.

Political immaturity and inexperience, lack of training in the principles of Marxism-Leninism, can easily lead to "Leftist" mistakes, especially when the Party is in revulsion against our revisionist past. But this is quite different from the deliberate systematization of a "Leftist" program on all current questions, including that of the principles of Party organization, of which the small but hardened core of people who formed a faction in the San Francisco Party organization were guilty.

Admitting they had ideological differences with the Party, they demanded the right to continue them within the Party, comparing themselves to Lenin in the struggle against the Mensheviks! One person stated, "I will say that within the Party of the working class there will always be different and conflicting ideolo-

gies. This is because the working class is not homogeneous, and its Party is not homogeneous. The fact that all workers and all Party members do not think alike may be deplored; but it is inevitable."

The existence of basic, consistent ideological differences within the Marxist Party of the working class would wreck it and render it ineffective. The Party's greatest strength comes from its monolithic unity—unity of ideology, of program, of action. Those who disagree with the fundamental ideology, policy, and strategy of the Party must either renounce their views or take themselves elsewhere.

This does not imply that there is no room for any differences within the Party. It is when these "differences" become consistent, persisting in every situation that comes along, flowing from a basic ideological conflict, that they cannot be tolerated because they would weaken and destroy the Party.

The "Left" faction further launched an insidious attack upon the principle of democratic centralism. Pretending to accept it "in principle," they interpreted it to mean that the Party would "abide by," and "carry out," majority decisions, but the factionalists would reserve the right to agitate and continue to seek support for their position. Any other interpretation was regarded as "stifling" the criticism and opinion of the membership.

Within the Party there is the right

of discussion and criticism—we must find more and more effective channels for it, and strengthen the political development of the membership so that greater contributions to such discussion will be made. Discussion and criticism, however, must be within the bounds of the program and policies of the National Convention; or, if there are basic disagreements, they may be expressed as provided for in the Constitution of the Communist Party. On all such questions, of course, in between conventions the decision of the National Committee is binding.

Finally, the "Left" factionalists advanced a conception of the requirements to be placed for admission into the Party which would definitely tend to prevent the Party from becoming a mass Party of the working class. This was most clearly illustrated in the suggestion of one person that no new members should be accepted unless they understood the Marxist theory of surplus value. Such an ultra-purist approach belongs only in some narrow sect, not in the Communist Party which attracts workers through their experiences and struggles as well as through study, and in which new members must be given the opportunity and responsibility of learning the theories of Marxism-Leninism.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE "LEFT"-SECTARIAN FACTION

The existence of the "Left"-sectarian faction, which later proved to

have connections outside of San Francisco, and even outside of the state, was becoming increasingly discernible some time before decisive action against it was taken.

Factionalism results in the disruption of Party unity, and the disintegration of Party discipline. It is an attempt to create a Party within the Party, with loyalty to a factional grouping taking precedence over loyalty to the Party and its program. All members of a faction do not always meet together regularly, although this may be the case. There may, sometimes, be a number of groupings, which get together on a casual basis, with communication between groupings carried on by one or two people. Factional associations may also be maintained largely on an individual basis, through use of the telephone, by mail, and by means of social relationships. Nearly all of these methods were used in San Francisco. The most important point, however, is the faction's consistent projection of an anti-Party political line, in the present instance a "Left"-sectarian one.

A number of factors contributed to the development of this "Left" faction, among which were the following:

a. The unsatisfactory social composition of the Party membership, too low a percentage of which had its roots and background in basic industry;

b. The slowness of the Party to undertake independent activities and

struggles around burning local, state or national issues;

c. Lack of understanding of democratic centralism by sections of the Party membership, as well as distortions of democratic centralism by factional elements. Indecisiveness on the part of the Party leadership in enforcing the line and decisions of leading Party committees;

d. Political immaturity of the San Francisco County leadership in conducting an ideological struggle for the line and policies of the National Convention; and inexperience in constantly showing the relationship between our basic theoretical principles and our day-to-day problems and tasks. This was important because it was the struggle for political line which was the key to exposing the "Left"-sectarian distortions of the faction, and exploding the myth they invented that they were the only real Marxists;

e. Remnants of anarcho-syndicalism which still persist among the working class on the West Coast, and penetrate into the ranks of the Party;

f. Finally, as the letter of the National Board on the factional situation pointed out, "the pressure and penetration of other, alien class influences and ideologies within our own ranks," was a significant factor. Enemy agents were either directly or indirectly involved in fomenting disruption which would immobilize the Party in a critical period of mass economic and political struggles.

The slowness of the Party leadership to eliminate the factional condition may be explained, in part at least, by hesitancy or inability to distinguish between "Left"-sectarianism as such, and the operation of alien forces. It was further contributed to by an insufficient speed and drive in vigorously conducting the struggle on two fronts simultaneously.

Action was finally taken against this "Left" factional grouping. Vern Smith, Walter Lambert, Ed Lee and a number of their followers were expelled from the Party for participation in an anti-Party, "Left"-sectarian factional grouping, and the membership was warned against further association with these expelled people. The report of the County Committee and of the Security Commission to the membership, covering the ideological line of the faction and the manner in which it operated, received overwhelming support. In fact, many Clubs and individual members, worn out by months of disruption, considered the expulsions long past due.

PRESENT ROLE OF EXPELLED FACTIONALISTS

Subsequent developments have fully confirmed the correctness of the Party in ridding itself of the anti-Party faction.

Today this little group of expelled people have organized themselves and meet regularly. They have centered their attention on the waterfront during the present strike,

where they have formed a bloc with other anti-Party elements who have long played the shipowners' game, to fight the line of the Party and sow confusion and disunity. They are engaged in the circulation of documents, some prepared locally, others written by persons who have been expelled elsewhere, including anti-Party material being circulated by Sam Darcy. They hope, through the use of their documents and through personal contact, to re-establish their faction within the Party. They have rapidly entered into the camp of the renegades.

SOME LESSONS OF THE FACTIONAL STRUGGLE

Our Party has become more strongly united in the course of this struggle, growing more steeled and vigilant, gaining in political maturity. Attitudes of liberalism are being dissipated as the path of the expelled anti-Party elements becomes more clearly defined. Alertness to the infiltration of enemy forces and ideology is reaching a new level, and a deeper appreciation of the need for Marxist theory as a guide to meeting practical problems is developing.

The annual Party registration of members, recording its numerical growth and industrial composition, will prove the basic unity of the membership and the advance in political understanding that has taken place since the National Convention.

POLICY AND TACTICS OF THE NEW YORK TEAMSTERS' STRIKE

By DAN STEVENS

ON OCTOBER 28, the 58-day old New York teamster strike came to an end. The wage scale committee of the hold-out employers dissolved itself, bringing about the unconditional surrender of the general staff of the bosses' association. All that remained for the union was to mop up individual pockets of resistance.

This disintegration of the employer front was unusual in this day of strongly organized employers' associations.

Three locals of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, A. F. of L., were involved: 807, 816, 282. Of these, Local 807 is the largest and key local, numbering 12,000 members.

The teamsters won very substantial gains. They won an average of 31¢ an hour increase and the 40-hour week. They won an annual two weeks vacation with pay for 175 workdays and one week for 125 workdays. They won removal of the "impartial" Arbitrator, who was a boss truckman. And they won the elimination of certain supplementary agreements on working conditions which limited the jurisdiction of the

union and gave the employers an opportunity to transfer workers from one craft to another at will, causing increased unemployment.

This victory has set a new level for wage increases to meet soaring living costs, and has already given an impetus to other A. F. of L. unions to fight for comparable gains.

How was this big victory achieved? How did it come to pass that a bosses' association which refused to compromise on any of the demands of the workers, which remained adamant to the very last, finally collapsed completely, bringing about its own destruction as an association?

The reasons for this victory also furnish the main lessons of this strike.

1. The mass of A. F. of L. workers are in a militant mood, and are not disposed to accept the policy of capitulation to the trusts, as advanced by William Green and the top bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. at the Chicago Convention.

2. The striking teamsters saw through Red-baiting as the special weapon of the bosses and rejected it.

3. A powerful rank-and-file movement of the teamsters carried out a two-fold policy—it advanced a clear program and at the same time fought for a policy of unity and coalition with union officials.

BACKGROUND

Long before the strike, the New York truck drivers were in a fighting mood. The drivers were affected by the increased cost of living and

the fact that during the entire war they had received only a \$2.50-a-week increase. They were dissatisfied with the 44-hour week. There is a shape-up system of hiring similar to that among the longshoremen on the East Coast, and, except for the war period, there has never been full employment in the trucking industry in New York.

The men were also dissatisfied with the speedup forced upon them through supplementary agreements, and they were disgruntled over the farce of arbitration where the arbitrator was a boss truckman and "impartial" chairman at the same time.

On the basis of their experience, the teamsters knew that increased productivity was not the way to get increased wages. Over the past years, and especially during the wartime shortage of manpower, the productivity of the truck drivers has been constantly increasing, mainly due to speedup of work. This speedup was intensified by the supplementary agreements to the contract. All that the workers received after the war was more unemployment and no increase in pay.

In addition to these factors, the teamsters were affected by the wave of C.I.O. strikes and victories of last Spring and the gains made by the New York longshoremen as a result of their October, 1945, strike.

Thus William Green's call for increased production as the way to higher wages could not find a ready response among the drivers.

This was especially true in the key local, 807, which has a tradition of militant rank-and-file struggle over a period of ten years.

THE FIGHT FOR WAGE POLICY

In the preparation for, and in the first stage of, the strike, there were two issues which had to be resolved.

The first was to establish the right of the membership to ratify the contract before it is signed. Some of the officials were afraid of the rank-and-file and sought to give the hand-picked wage scale committee full power to conclude a contract. A sharp battle at two successive union meetings decided this question in favor of the membership.

The second issue was the fight for a correct wage policy. The bosses offered an insulting $6\frac{1}{2}\phi$ hourly increase and no change in conditions. But for a year before the strike progressive teamsters who publish the *I.B.T. News* had already advanced a program for the negotiations. This program called for a 30 per cent increase, the 40-hour week, two weeks vacation with pay, elimination of the existing arbitrator and of the supplements, and a union hiring hall.

Some officials of Local 807 approached the negotiations and the strike in a manner typical of many leaders of the A. F. of L. They urged the men not to ask for "too much." They were afraid to fight against the speedup provisions in the supplementary agreements, and they did not

enter the negotiations with a fighting spirit.

The militant mood of the membership forced the adoption of the rank-and-file program as the basis for negotiating the contract.

MAYOR O'DWYER STEPS IN

The struggle for a correct wage policy came to a head, however, around the compromise proposals made by Mayor William O'Dwyer when he entered the dispute just before contract deadline.

The Mayor's proposals were: an 18½¢ an hour increase, a 40-hour week, two weeks vacation with pay for men who worked 175 days a year, and one week for men with 125 days work a year. That was all.

The employers turned these proposals down and walked out of the conference. The union officials and Wage Scale Committee accepted the Mayor's proposals and announced that they would sign contracts with individual employers on the Mayor's terms over the weekend.

It soon became clear that the drivers were opposed to the Mayor's proposals. The real opinions of the workers found clear expression in the *I.B.T. News*, which appeared almost daily during the first days of the strike. This paper stated:

1. The wage increase offered by the Mayor was inadequate. It was based on the antiquated formula of 18½¢ which was not adequate even nine months ago, when it was won by the steel workers. But today, with

the increased cost of living, it would mean very little to these workers.

2. Accepting the Mayor's proposals would mean losing out on the long-term fight for the 40-hour week demand, which demand meant, in this industry, getting 44 hours' pay for a 40-hour week.

3. The Mayor's proposals made absolutely no provision for any change in working conditions or for the elimination of Sheridan, the boss truckman, as arbitrator for the industry.

In addition to these three factors, the *I.B.T. News* stressed the fact that the bosses had turned down the proposals. Therefore, any acceptance of the Mayor's proposals would tend to make them, not those that would finally be adopted, but a ceiling for negotiations, and the final outcome would be somewhere between the 6½¢ offered by the bosses' association and the 18½¢ offered by the Mayor.

The struggle around the acceptance of the Mayor's proposals became the highpoint in the strike. The press, the Mayor, the bosses' association, and some union officials brought tremendous pressure to bear on the membership for acceptance. The Local 807 membership meeting was postponed a few days to give the union officials more time to convince the men to accept these terms. The union issued a leaflet to the men, extolling the gains that the Mayor's proposals meant for the teamsters. The union officials tried to sign up individual companies on the Mayor's

proposals, in order to present the membership with an accomplished fact.

Despite all these pressures, the rank-and-file stuck to their guns. They put up an inspiring fight at the famous Armory meeting on September 8. For two hours they fought the policy of their president, rejecting the Mayor's terms and calling for a fight on the full demands of the membership.

Finally, after the debate, the rank-and-file succeeded in getting the sentiment of the men registered. The vote was a unanimous rejection of the Mayor's proposals by the 6,000 men present.

The rank-and-file leaders correctly estimated the militancy and sentiments of the men. Had they done otherwise, they might have accepted the Mayor's proposals at once and the strike would have been lost.

The membership carried on the sharpest fight against the wrong *policies* of their officials and for unity in the strike. Yet at no time did they completely break with the officials themselves. They directed their main fire against the bosses. When they fought the Mayor's proposals, they fought the proposals and not the Mayor. They did not open a head-on attack against the officials of the local, but presented a program and fought for it. It was this program which won, and became the official program of the union.

Local 807 emerged from this first stage of the strike with a recogni-

tion of the membership's right to ratify the contract and a clear mandate to fight for a substantial increase in wages and an improvement in working conditions.

THE COUNTERATTACK SETS IN

The next stage in the strike was the most critical. Now that the Mayor's proposals were defeated, the membership called upon their officials to prosecute the strike more energetically. There were no strike benefits, no organized picketing, no publicity, no activities or meetings to organize the men. The *I.B.T. News* called for these measures, urging the officials to take the offensive.

But, instead of the union officials taking the offensive, the bosses opened up their attacks on the workers. The Mayor helped them with a hysterical blast in the press blaming the impasse in negotiations on the union. He claimed that the men were out of control and led by a small group of "Reds," that the rank-and-file paper was financed, written, and circulated by Communists. Some union officials joined in these cries. They spoke of a "run-away" situation.

The Mayor also sent a telegram to Daniel Tobin, International President of the A. F. of L. teamsters union, blaming the strike and future "violence and bloodshed" on the international officers unless they inter-

vened. He hurriedly called up 2,000 rookie policemen and hinted he would break the strike with this force.

Under cover of the Red-baiting barrage, members of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists and certain Christian Front elements tried to capture control of the membership. They called a rank-and-file outdoor meeting with the assistance of the police who dispatched squad cars to the barns all over the city, rounded up the men and provided a police loudspeaker. This meeting sent a delegation to the union officials to ask for a membership meeting of the local. The officials granted their request for the following day.

This whole move, staged with the assistance of the Police Department, which, the day before, had denounced the membership of Local 807 as "Communist," was an obvious attempt to bring forward new "leaders" of the rank-and-file and swing the membership into the "safe" arms of the A.C.T.U. and certain Christian Fronters.

Several things happened, however, to defeat the plans of the Red-baiters.

Tobin, in his reply to the Mayor, came out in full support of the striking teamsters.

A group of rank-and-file teamsters calmly dispatched a telegram to the Mayor and made it clear that there was no outlaw or break-away movement, that Local 807 was a democratic local and that the membership

was merely exercising its democratic rights.

Tobin's telegram and the level-headed approach of the rank-and-file influenced the Mayor to drop his Red-baiting and his attack on the teamsters.

On the following day, Red-baiting was finally put to rest. When, at the membership meeting, a representative of the Teamster International Red-baited the *I.B.T. News*, he was answered by the loud boos of the membership. An A.C.T.U. leader also Red-baited. He received the same response and nobody tried it again.

The real leaders of the rank-and-file presented a positive program. They praised the role of Tobin and the International in the strike. They called for unity of the officials and membership and offered a basis for settlement. This was greeted enthusiastically by the entire membership and was adopted by the officials as the program of the union. The meeting ended in a spirit of unity.

This brought to a close the second stage in the strike. Red-baiting had been defeated. The gap had been breached between the officials and the men. The struggle for unity of the local had been, in the main, achieved. Now all the fight and attention could be directed against the bosses.

BOSSSES ARE DIVIDED

Once the main issues within the union had been settled—the right of ratification, a correct wage policy, the defeat of Red-baiting—victory

was assured. The bosses had counted on a split in the ranks of the teamsters. But in the final stage of the strike it was the bosses who were split and not the union.

Many employers rushed to sign up under the union terms which became known as the "Bohack Plan" and the highly competitive nature of the industry finally forced the rest to fall in line. The Association, consisting of long distance truckers and some of the big local truckmen, held out till the very end, refusing to compromise or give in. But after holding out for 58 days, their resistance finally collapsed.

HOW RED-BAITING WAS REPUDIATED

Red-baiting in this strike was successfully repudiated because the workers were able to see through it as a weapon of the bosses. They resented the attacks on their best leaders and on their own progressive newspaper. This paper was the recognized spokesman for the men. It fought in the interests of the membership and helped save the day when some of the officials were not giving leadership to the strike. They knew that this little newspaper meant money in the pockets of the workers because it fought consistently for a correct strike policy.

They delivered a smashing rebuff to the Red-baiters. But this cannot be considered a *conclusive* victory over Red-baiting because it was not yet based on the defense of the right

of the Communists to be in the union and to play their rightful role.

Matters were not helped by the manner in which John Strong, president of Local 807, answered the Red-baiters. He stated that there were no Communists in Local 807. If there were any, he said, they would be expelled, since there is an anti-Communist clause in the Constitution of the I.B.T.

Red-baiting, however, cannot be answered with Red-baiting. It only leaves the way open for more Red-baiting and division in the future. Sincere trade unionists should defend the right of Communists to be members of the union, not only because Communists have the right to earn their living as truck drivers, but because Communists have shown, in more than two decades of trade union experience, that they are among the best fighters for genuinely democratic trade union policies.

In many teamster locals and throughout the militant history of Local 807, ever since the days some ten years ago when the first rank-and-file movement drove the racketeering officials out of office and the present officials came into leadership, Communists have been part of the broad, progressive movements in the locals. At every turn they fought alongside the best trade union members for more trade union democracy, for honest trade union practices, for improving the working conditions and wages of the teamsters.

At no time did the membership of

Local 807 permit itself to be swayed from its major objective during the strike, which was to unite the entire local, *the rank-and-file and the officials, against the bosses*. Communists go along with and help to encourage such a policy of unity.

The teamsters should realize that as long as the anti-Communist clause remains in the By-Laws and Constitution of the Teamster International, it will always be used as a club over the heads of the progressive trade unionists and as a weapon to divide the men.

LESSONS ON POLICY OF UNITY

The major lesson in this strike is derived from the policy of coalition pursued by the rank-and-file of the local.

The rank-and-file, through its independent role and program, played a decisive part in the strike. At each successive stage, the rank-and-file advanced a program for the demands of the men and the tactics for winning the strike.

Despite the sharpness of the struggle, in the early stages, for union democracy and correct wage policy, and despite the stubborn attitude of certain officials, the rank-and-file never split with these officials. In fact, they even achieved a certain unity with the officials.

This point is important, for it would have been comparatively easy for the rank-and-file to commit a serious error. Provoked by the mis-

takes and weak policy of the officials, they could have declared an all-out war against these officials, the consequence of which would have been an irreparable rift between the men and the officials. The fact that they did not permit themselves to be misled into doing this, testifies to the sober, clear-headed policy and judgment of this rank-and-file and gives the lie to the charges of disruption and irresponsibility that were hurled at the strikers.

Once the incorrect official policies were defeated, the union officials yielded to the pressure of the men and went along with the rank-and-file program. In their carrying out of the strike program, there remained much to be desired. But, eventually, they *did* carry out all the major points of strike action. Strike benefits were allotted, picketing at key points was established, medical care was furnished, and the officials took a strong stand against the bosses.

The main lesson from this experience is, therefore, that a correct policy of struggle is a *two-fold* policy: first, the *independent* program and movement of the progressive rank-and-file; second, real effort on the part of this rank-and-file to develop a proper working relationship with officials, where this is possible.

While the rank-and-file must learn this lesson, it is important that certain A. F. of L. officials should also draw the proper conclusions from this strike. These conclusions are that those officials who are working

in the interests of the men have nothing to fear from rank-and-file movements. These progressive movements arise out of the aspirations of the membership for greater trade union democracy, for increased wages and improved conditions. They strengthen the hands of the officials in negotiations. They are the best safeguards against reactionary attack, inside or outside the labor movement.

UNITY IN THE A. F. OF L.

The strength of the C.I.O. lies in the unity of the left-progressive forces with the Murray-Hillman groups. In the A. F. of L., however, the progressive forces have not yet reached a clear understanding as to who and where their allies can be found.

Certainly they are not Green, Woll, Hutcheson, Lewis and Dubinsky. Between them and the mass of A. F. of L. members, however, stand the thousands of officials in local unions, central labor bodies, district councils. Many of these officials are machine men who merely follow out the orders of their international officers. Many are bureaucratic and reactionary and some are corrupt. But among these officials—and we should not exclude even certain international officers—are many sincere, though conservative, A. F. of L. leaders who would respond to the pressure of the rank-and-file once they begin to recognize it as a serious force, provided that this rank-and-file pursues a correct coalition policy.

It is precisely around the pressing wage problems that it is possible to achieve such unity today. There may not be, and probably will not be, complete unity in the beginning. But the first steps in that direction can be established in the course of struggle for a correct wage policy. It must be emphasized here, however, on the basis of experience in the teamster strike, that most of these officials will not move until they are forced into motion by the independent action and program of the rank-and-file.

The wage policy of the A. F. of L. Executive Council is a policy of surrender to Big Business. The mass of members in the A. F. of L. and many officials, responding to the mood of the rank-and-file, reject its wage policies and are for a struggle for increased wages.

It is in the course of the struggle for correct wage policy that the majority of the A. F. of L. membership can make the break with the sell-out policy of its Executive Council.

The A. F. of L. can be brought into the mainstream of the people's coalition. Those who think that this can come about only after a complete change and shake-up of the leadership of the A. F. of L., are consigning the A. F. of L. to hopelessness. Large sections of the A. F. of L., especially in the lower bodies, can be won *now* for steps toward the goal of united action to defeat reaction.

ON THE ERRORS OF THE SOVIET LITERARY JOURNALS, "ZVEZDA" AND "LENINGRAD"*

By A. A. ZHDANOV

COMRADES!

From the ruling of the Central Committee it is clear that the gross-error of the journal *Zvezda* is the opening of its pages to the literary "creations" of Zoshchenko and Akhmatova. I think there is no need for me to cite here the "work" of Zoshchenko, "Adventures of a Monkey." Evidently you have all read it and know it better than I. The meaning of this "work" by Zoshchenko consists in this, that he depicts Soviet people as idlers and monsters, as silly and primitive people. Zoshchenko takes absolutely no interest in the labor of the Soviet people, their exertions and heroism, their high social and moral qualities. With him this theme is always absent. Zoshchenko, like the philistine and vulgarian that he is, chose as his permanent theme digging in the basest and pettiest sides of life. This digging in the trivialities of life is not accidental. It is characteristic of all vulgar philistine writers, and hence of Zoshchenko. Gorky said a lot about this in his time. You remember how at the congress of Soviet writers in 1934 Gorky branded—excuse my saying so—

* Abridged and combined text of the reports of A. A. Zhdanov at a meeting of Party activists and at a meeting of writers in Leningrad. Published in *Uchitel'skaya Gazeta* (Teachers' Gazette), Moscow, September 21, 1946.

"men of letters" who see nothing beyond the soot in the kitchen and bathhouse.

For Zoshchenko "Adventures of a Monkey" is not something that goes beyond the framework of his usual writings. This "work" has come into the focus of criticism only as the clearest reflection of the whole negative tendency that exists in the "creative genius" of Zoshchenko. It is known that since the time of his return to Leningrad from evacuation Zoshchenko has written several things characterized by the fact that he is incapable of finding in the life of the Soviet people one positive phenomenon, one positive type. As in the "Adventures of a Monkey," Zoshchenko is accustomed to mock at Soviet life, Soviet ways, Soviet people, covering this mockery with a mask of vacuous diversion and pointless humor.

If you read attentively and think over the story "Adventures of a Monkey" you will see that Zoshchenko casts the monkey in the role of supreme judge of our social customs and forces one to read something on the order of a moral lesson to the Soviet people. The monkey is presented as some sort of rational element, whose job is to evaluate the behavior

of the people. Zoshchenko needed to give a deliberately deformed, caricatured and vulgar picture of the life of the Soviet people in order to insert in the mouth of the monkey the nasty, poisonous, anti-Soviet maxim to the effect that it is better to live in the zoo than at liberty, and that it is easier to breathe in a cage than among the Soviet people.

Is it possible to reach a lower stage of moral and political decline, and how can the people of Leningrad tolerate on the pages of their journals such filth and indecency?

If "works" of this sort are presented to Soviet readers by the journal *Zvezda*, how weak must be the vigilance of those citizens of Leningrad in the leadership of *Zvezda* for it to have been possible to place in this journal works that are poisoned with the venom of zoological hostility to the Soviet order. Only the dregs of literature could produce such "works" and only blind and apolitical people could give them entry.

They say that Zoshchenko's story went the rounds of the Leningrad platforms. How greatly must the leadership of ideological work in Leningrad have weakened for such things to have taken place!

Zoshchenko, with his loathesome moral, succeeded in penetrating to the pages of a big Leningrad journal, and in settling himself there with all the conveniences. And the journal *Zvezda* is an organ whose duty it is to educate our youth. But how can a journal reckon with this task,

which gives shelter to such a vulgarian and un-Soviet writer as Zoshchenko? Can it be that Zoshchenko's physiognomy is unknown to the editorial board of *Zvezda*?

Yet, quite recently, in the beginning of 1944, Zoshchenko's tale, "Before Sunrise," written at the height of the liberation war of the Soviet people against the German invaders, was subjected to sharp criticism in the journal *Bolshevik*. In this tale Zoshchenko turned his vulgar and mean little soul inside out, doing so with delight, with relish, with the desire to show every one: look, see what a hooligan I am.

It would be hard to find in our literature anything more repulsive than the "moral" preached by Zoshchenko in "Before Sunrise," which depicts people and himself as vile, lewd beasts without shame or conscience. And this moral he presented to Soviet readers in that period when our people were pouring out their blood in a war of unheard of difficulty, when the life of the Soviet state hung by a hair, when the Soviet people endured countless sacrifices in the name of victory over the Germans. But Zoshchenko, having dug himself in in Alma-Ata, deep in the rear, did nothing at that time to help the Soviet people in its struggle with the German invaders. With complete justice Zoshchenko was publicly spanked in the *Bolshevik* as a libeler and vulgarian alien to Soviet literature. He spat on public opinion then, and here, before two years have passed, before the ink with which the

Bolshevik review was written has dried, the same Zoshchenko makes his triumphal entry into Leningrad and begins strolling freely in the pages of Leningrad journals. Not only *Zvezda*, but the journal *Leninograd* also prints him eagerly. They eagerly and readily present him with theatrical auditoriums. More than that, they give him the opportunity to occupy a leading position in the Leningrad division of the Writers' Union and play an active role in the literary affairs of Leningrad. On what basis do you allow Zoshchenko to stroll in the gardens and parks of Leningrad literature? Why have the party activists of Leningrad, its writers' organization permitted these shameful things?

The thoroughly rotten and corrupt socio-political and literary physiognomy of Zoshchenko was not formed in the most recent period. His contemporary "works" are by no means an accident. They are only the continuation of that whole literary "heritage" of Zoshchenko which takes its start in the 1920's.

Who was Zoshchenko in the past? He was one of the organizers of the literary group of the so-called "Serapion brothers." What was the socio-political physiognomy of Zoshchenko in the period of organizing the "Serapion brothers"? Permit me to turn to the journal *Literaturnye zapiski*, No. 3 for 1922, in which the founders of this group set forth their credo. Among other revelations, Zoshchenko has his "articles of faith" there also in a piece called "About Myself and About Something Else."

Feeling no constraint before anyone or anything Zoshchenko strips publicly and quite frankly expresses his political, literary "views." Listen to what he said there:

In general it is very troublesome to be a writer. Let us say, that ideology . . . Nowadays a writer is required to have an ideology . . . such a nuisance, really, to me. . . .

What sort of an "exact ideology" can I have, you will say, if not one party attracts me as a whole?

From the point of view of party people I am an unprincipled man. All right. I myself shall speak for myself: I am not a Communist, not an S.-R., not a monarchist, but simply a Russian and furthermore a politically immoral one. . . .

I give you my honest word—I don't know to this day, well, here, let's say, Guchkov . . . what party is Guchkov in? The devil knows what party he's in. I know; he's not a Bolshevik, but whether he is an S.-R. or a Cadet—I don't know and I don't want to know. Etc., etc.

What will you say, comrades, of such an "ideology"? Twenty-five years have passed since Zoshchenko published this "confession" of his. Has he changed since then? Not noticeably. During two and a half decades not only has he not learned anything and not only has he not changed in any way, but, on the contrary, with cynical frankness he continues to remain a preacher of ideological emptiness and vulgarity, an unprincipled and conscienceless literary hooligan. This means that now, as then, Zoshchenko does not like Soviet ways, Now, as then, he is

alien, and hostile to Soviet literature. If, with all this, Zoshchenko has become practically the coryphaeus of literature in Leningrad, if he is exalted in the Leningrad Parnassus, then one can only be amazed at the degree of unprincipledness, looseness, slackness and unsqueamishness achieved by the people who pave the way for Zoshchenko and sing eulogies to him.

Permit me to bring in another illustration of the physiognomy of the so-called "Serapion brothers." In the same *Literaturnye zapiski*, No. 3 for 1922, another Serapionist, Lev Lunts, also tries to provide an ideological grounding for that tendency, harmful and alien to Soviet literature, which the "Serapion brothers" group represented. Lunts writes:

We have gathered in days of revolutionary, in days of powerful political tension. "He who is not with us is against us!"—we are told from right and left—whom are you with, Serapion brothers—with the Communists or against the Communists, for the revolution or against the revolution?

Whom are we with, Serapion brothers? We are with the hermit Serapion.

Too long and painfully has public opinion ruled Russian literature. . . . We do not want utilitarianism. We do not write for propaganda. Art is real, like life itself, and like life itself, it is without purpose and without meaning, it exists because it cannot not exist.

Such is the role which the "Serapion brothers" relegate to art, taking from it its ideological content, its social significance, proclaiming the ideological emptiness of art, for

art's sake, art without purpose and without meaning. This is indeed the preachment of rotten apoliticism, philistinism and vulgarity.

What conclusion follows from this? If Zoshchenko does not like Soviet ways, what is your bidding: that one adapt himself to Zoshchenko? It is not up to us to reconstruct our tastes. It is not up to us to reconstruct our way of life and our social order for Zoshchenko. Let him reform. But he does not want to reform—let him get out of Soviet literature. In Soviet literature there is no place for rotten, empty, ideological and vulgar works.

This then was the point of departure of the Central Committee in adopting its decision on the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*.

I pass on to the question of the literary "creative genius" of Anna Akhmatova. Recently her works have been appearing in Leningrad journals along the lines of "extended reproduction." This is just as surprising and unnatural as if someone were now to start republishing Merezhkovsky, Viacheslav Ivanov, Mikhail Kuzmin, Andrei Belyi, Zinaida Hippus, Fedor Sologub, Zinovieva Annibal, and so forth, and so on, *i.e.*, all those who have always been considered by our advanced public opinion and literature to be representatives of reactionary obscurantism and renegacy in politics and art.

Gorky in his time said that the decade 1907-1917 deserved to be called the most disgraceful and most untalented decade in the history of the Russian intelligentsia, when after

the 1905 revolution a considerable part of the intelligentsia turned away from the revolution, slid into a swamp of reactionary mysticism and pornography, proclaimed ideological emptiness as their banner, covering up their renegacy with the "beautiful" phrase: "And I burned everything to which I bowed, and bowed to what I burned." This was the decade in which there appeared such renegade works as *The Pale Horse* of Ropshin, the works of Vinnichenko and other deserters from the camp of revolution to the camp of reaction, who hastened to uncrown those high ideals for which the best, the advanced part of Russian society was fighting. There swam into view the symbolists, imagists, decadents of all hues, who repudiated the people, proclaimed the thesis "art for art's sake," preached ideological emptiness in literature, covered their ideological and moral corruption by chasing after beautiful form without content. All of them were united by animal fear of the approaching proletarian revolution. Suffice it to recall that one of the biggest "ideologies" of these reactionary literary currents was Merezhkovsky, who called the approaching proletarian revolution the "approaching lout" and greeted the October Revolution with zoological malice.

Anna Akhmatova is one of the representatives of this ideologyless reactionary literary swamp. She belongs to the so-called literary group of acmeists which in its time emerged from the ranks of the symbolists and is one of the standard bearers of

empty, ideologyless aristocratic-salon poetry, absolutely alien to Soviet literature. The acmeists represented the extreme individualist tendency in art. They preached the theory of "art for art's sake," "beauty for beauty's sake," they did not want to know anything about the people, its needs and interests, about social life.

In its social sources this was a nobility-bourgeois current in literature at that period when the days of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie were numbered and when poets and ideologists of the ruling classes were striving to seek shelter from a hostile reality in heights beyond the clouds and mists of religious mysticism, in wretched personal experiences and digging in their own petty little souls. The acmeists, like the symbolists, decadents and other representatives of decaying nobility-bourgeois ideology, were preachers of decadence, pessimism and belief in another world.

The subject matter of Akhmatova is individualistic throughout. The range of her poetry borders on squalor—the poetry of a frenzied lady, dreaming between the boudoir and the chapel. Basic with her are amorous-erotic motifs, intertwined with motifs of sorrow, yearning, death, mysticism, a sense of doom. The feeling of being doomed—an understandable feeling for the social consciousness of a dying group; gloomy tones of death-bed hopelessness, mystical experiences coupled with eroticism—such is the spiritual world of Akhmatova, a splinter from the world of the old nobility culture,

the "good old times of Catherine," that has passed into eternity, never to return. Not exactly a nun, not exactly a harlot, but rather nun and harlot, with whom harlotry is mixed with prayer.

But I swear to you by the garden of angels

By the miraculous ikon I swear
And by the smoke of our flaming
nights. . . .
(Akhmatova, "Anno Domini.")

Such is Akhmatova with her little, narrow personal life, her insignificant experiences and religio-mystical eroticism.

Akhmatova's poetry is altogether remote from the people. This is the poetry of the ten thousand-strong upper crust of old nobility Russia, the doomed, for whom by this time nothing remains, except to sigh over "the good old days." Landlord country seats of the days of Catherine, with avenues of age-old lime trees, with fountains, statues and stone arches, hot houses, love bowers and shabby coats of arms on the gates. Nobility Petersburg; Tsarskoe Selo; the railway station in Pavlovsk and other relics of nobility culture. All this has vanished into the past, never to return! For the splinters of this remote culture, alien to the people, preserved by some miracle to our times, there is now nothing left to do but to shut themselves in and live by phantasies. "All is despoiled, betrayed, sold out"—thus writes Akhmatova.

Concerning the socio-political and literary ideals of the acmeists one of

the eminent representatives of this group, Osip Mandelshtam, wrote, not long before the revolution:

Their love for the organism and organization the acmeists share with the physiologically brilliant middle ages. . . . The middle ages, determining in its own way the specific worth of a man, felt and recognized him for everything, quite independently of his merits. . . . Yes, Europe has gone through a labyrinth of open-work-delicate culture, when being in the abstract, unadorned personal existence was valued as a feat. Hence the aristocratic intimacy that links all people and is so alien to the spirit of "equality and brotherhood" of the great revolution. . . . The Middle Ages is dear to us because it possessed in the highest degree the sense of border and partition. . . . The noble mixture of rationality and mysticism, and the sensation of the world as a live equilibrium, relates us to this epoch and prompts use to draw strength from works that arose on the romance soil of about the year 1200.

In these utterances of Mandelshtam are unfolded the hopes and ideals of the acmeists. "Back to the middle ages"—such is the social ideal of this aristocratic-salon group. Back to the monkey is the antiphonal cry of Zoshchenko. Needless to say, the acmeists and the "Serapion brothers" derive their genealogy from common ancestors. For both acmeists and "Serapion brothers" the common progenitor was Hoffmann, one of the founders of aristocratic-salon decadence and mysticism.

Why was it suddenly necessary to popularize the poetry of Akhmatova? What relation has she to us,

the Soviet people? Why must one offer a literary rostrum to all these decadent and profoundly alien literary tendencies?

From the history of Russian literature we know that more than once or twice have reactionary literary currents, including both symbolists and acmeists, tried to declare campaigns against the great revolutionary democratic traditions of Russian literature, against its advanced representatives; have tried to deprive literature of its high ideological and social significance, to lower it to the swamp of ideological emptiness and vulgarity. All these "fashionable" currents vanished into Lethe and were thrown into the past together with the classes whose ideology they reflected. All these symbolists, acmeists, "yellow shirts," "jacks of diamonds," "nothingists"—what remains of them in our native Russian, Soviet literature? Exactly nothing, although their campaigns against the great representatives of Russian revolutionary-democratic literature—Belinsky, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevsky, Herzen, Saltykov-Shchedrin—were planned with great uproar and pretentiousness and their collapse was equally spectacular.

The acmeists proposed: "To introduce no corrections in existence and undertake no criticism of it." Why were they against introducing any corrections whatever in existence? Because they liked the old nobility, bourgeois existence, whereas the revolutionary people were getting ready to disturb this existence of theirs. In October, 1917, both the ruling

classes and their ideologists and songsters were shaken out into the trash pit of history.

And suddenly in the twenty-ninth year of the socialist revolution there reappear on the scene some museum rarities from the world of shadows who begin to teach our youth how one must live. Before Akhmatova the gates of a Leningrad journal are opened wide and she is freely provided with the opportunity to poison the consciousness of the youth with the baneful spirit of her poetry.

In one of the issues of the journal *Leningrad* there was published something in the order of a résumé of works written by Akhmatova in the period from 1909 to 1944. There, along with the other rubbish, is one poem written in evacuation during the Great Patriotic War. In this poem she writes about her loneliness, which she was obliged to share with a black cat. The black cat looks at her, like the eye of the century. The theme is not new. Akhmatova was writing about the black cat even in 1909. Moods of loneliness and futility, alien to Soviet literature, link together the whole historical path of Akhmatova's "creative genius."

What has this poetry in common with the interests of our people and state? Exactly nothing. Akhmatova's creative genius is a matter of the distant past; it is alien to modern Soviet actuality and cannot be tolerated in the pages of our journals. Our literature is not a private enterprise calculated to please the varied tastes of a literary market. We are not at all obliged to provide space in

our literature for tastes and tempers that have nothing in common with the ethics and qualities of Soviet people. What in the nature of instruction can Akhmatova's works give to our youth? Nothing, besides harm. These works can only sow despondency, low spirits, pessimism, the inclination to turn away from the burning questions of social life, to leave the highway of social life and activity for the narrow little world of personal experiences. How is it possible to turn over to her the upbringing of our youth? And yet Akhmatova has been published with great readiness, now in *Zvezda*, now in *Leningrad*, has even been put out in separate collections. This is a crude political error.

In view of all this, it is no accident that in Leningrad journals there have begun to appear the works of other writers who have started to slide down to the position of ideological emptiness and decadence. I have in view such works as those of Sadofev and Komissarova. In some of their poems Sadofev and Komissarova have begun to sing in harmony with Akhmatova, have begun to cultivate the moods of despondency, yearning and loneliness so beloved of Akhmatova's spirit.

There is no need to say that such moods or the preaching of such moods can have only a negative influence on our youth, can poison their consciousness with the rotten spirit of ideological emptiness, apoliticalness, despondency.

And what would have happened if we had brought up our youth in

the spirit of despondency and unbelief in our cause? In that case we would not have been victorious in the Great Patriotic War. Precisely for this reason the Soviet state and our Party with the aid of Soviet literature have brought up our youth in the spirit of cheerfulness, of confidence in its own powers, and precisely for this reason we overcame the greatest difficulties in the building of socialism and achieved victory over the Germans and Japanese.

What follows from all this? From this it follows that the journal *Zvezda*, having inserted in its pages, along with fine, sanguine works with ideological content, works that are ideologically empty, vulgar, reactionary, became a journal without direction, became a journal that helped enemies to corrupt our youth. But our journals have always drawn their strength from their sanguine, revolutionary direction, not from eclecticism, not from ideological emptiness and apoliticalism. The propaganda of ideological emptiness was given equal rights in *Zvezda*. More than that, it has been ascertained that Zoshchenko acquired such power in the Leningrad writers' organization that he even yelled at those who disagreed with him and threatened to write up critics in one of the periodicals. He became something on the order of a literary dictator. He was surrounded by a group of worshippers building his glory.

The question arises, on what basis? Why did you permit this unnatural and reactionary business?

It is not accidental that in the lit-

erary journals of Leningrad one began to be infatuated with the base contemporary bourgeois literature of the West. Some of our writers began to look upon themselves not as teachers, but as pupils of bourgeois-philistine writers, began to take on a tone of obsequiousness and worshipfulness before philistine foreign literature. Is such obsequiousness becoming to us, Soviet patriots, to us, who have built the Soviet social order, which is a hundred times higher and better than any bourgeois social order? Does it become our advanced Soviet literature, the most revolutionary literature in the world, to bow low before the narrow philistine-bourgeois literature of the West?

A big shortcoming in the work of our writers is also withdrawal from contemporary Soviet themes, a one-sided infatuation with historical themes, on the one hand, and, on the other, an attempt to occupy oneself with vacuous subjects of a purely diverting nature. Some writers, in justification of their neglect of great contemporary Soviet themes, say that the time has come when one must give the people empty, diverting literature, when one cannot pay heed to the ideological content of works. This is a profoundly untrue notion of our people, their demands and interests. Our people are waiting for Soviet writers to comprehend and generalize the tremendous experience gained by the people in the Great Patriotic War, for them to portray and generalize the heroism with which the people now work on the restoration of the national econ-

omy of the country after the expulsion of the enemy.

A few words on the journal *Leningrad*. Here, Zoshchenko's position is even more "stable" than in *Zvezda*, as is also Akhmatova's position. Zoshchenko and Akhmatova have become an active literary force in both journals. Thus the journal *Leningrad* is responsible for opening its pages to such vulgarians as Zoshchenko and such salon poetesses as Akhmatova.

But the journal *Leningrad* has made further errors.

Take, for example, the parody on *Evgeni Onegin*, written by one Khazin. This thing is called "The Return of Onegin." They say that it was frequently performed on the boards of the Leningrad platform. It is incomprehensible why the people of Leningrad allowed their city to be defamed from the public rostrum, as was done by Khazin. For the sense of this whole so-called literary "parody" does not consist in empty grimaces in connection with the adventures of Onegin on his appearance in contemporary Leningrad. The sense of the lampoon composed by Khazin is that it tries to compare our modern Leningrad with the Petersburg of the Pushkin epoch and prove that our age is worse than the age of Onegin. Glance at even a few lines of this "parody." Everything in our modern Leningrad displeases the author. He snorts with malice and slander against the Soviet people, against Leningrad. How different the age of Onegin—a golden age, in the opinion of Khazin. But now

—housing control, ration cards, permits appear on the scene. Girls, those unearthly ethereal creatures, in whom Onegin delighted before, have now become traffic regulators, repair Leningrad houses, etc., etc. Permit me to quote only one passage from this "parody":

Now in the tram sits our Evgeni
The gentle, O the poor dear man!
Such forms of rapid locomotion
His unenlightened age knew not.
Some fate looked out for our Evgeni,
His foot alone was somewhat trampled.
And then just once a belly poke
Delivered with the words: "You fool!"
He, mindful of the ancient custom,
Thought by a duel to end the feud.
He felt his pocket. . . . But a thief
His gloves some time before had pilfered.
And so for lack of such as these
Onegin had to hold his peace.

There you see what Leningrad used to be and what it has now become: nasty, uncultured, crude, and what an unsightly appearance it presents to poor dear Onegin. This is how Leningrad and the people of Leningrad are presented by the vulgarian Khazin.

There was a wrong, vicious, rotten idea in this slanderous parody!

How is it possible that the editorial board of *Leningrad* should overlook this malicious slander against Leningrad and its excellent people?! How is it possible to let Khazin into the pages of Leningrad journals?!

Take another work—a parody on a parody of Nekrasov, put together in such a fashion as to constitute a direct insult to the memory of a great

poet and public figure, such as Nekrasov was, an insult over which any enlightened person should feel indignant. Yet the editorial board of *Leningrad* readily gave room to this dirty concoction in its pages.

What else do we find in the journal *Leningrad*? A foreign anecdote, flat and vulgar, taken, evidently, from old hackneyed anecdote collections of the end of the last century. Can it be that the journal *Leningrad* has nothing to fill up its pages with? Can it be that there is nothing to write about in the journal *Leningrad*? Take even a theme like the restoration of Leningrad. In the city magnificent work is going on, the city is healing the wounds inflicted by the blockade, the people of Leningrad are full of the enthusiasm and pathos of postwar restoration. Has anything been written about this in the journal *Leningrad*? Will the people of Leningrad wait indefinitely for their laborious feats to find reflection in the journal's pages?

Take another theme, the Soviet woman. Surely one cannot cultivate among Soviet men and women readers the shameful views inherent in Akhmatova on the role and vocation of woman without giving a really truthful general notion of the modern Soviet woman, of the Leningrad girl, of the woman heroine, particularly those who bore on their shoulders the enormous difficulties of the war years, and now labor self-sacrificingly on the solution of the hard tasks of restoring the economy.

As we have seen, the state of affairs in the Leningrad section of the

Writers' Union is such that at the present time there are plainly not enough good works for two literary-artistic journals. That is why the Central Committee of the Party decided to close the journal *Leningrad*, so as to concentrate all the best literary forces in the journal *Zvezda*. This of course does not mean that under appropriate conditions *Leningrad* will not have a second or even a third journal. The question is decided by the quantity of good works of high quality. If a sufficient quantity of them appears and there is no room for them in one journal, it will be possible to create a second and a third journal—only let the production of our *Leningrad* writers be good in respect to ideology and artistry.

Such are the crude errors and shortcomings that have been uncovered and recorded in the ruling of the Central Committee of the Communist Party relative to the work of the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*.

What is the root of these errors and shortcomings?

The root of these errors and shortcomings lies in the fact that the editors of the journals named, who play an active role in our Soviet literature and also are leaders of our ideological front in *Leningrad*, have forgotten some fundamental postulates of Leninism on literature. Many writers, including those who work in the capacity of responsible editors or occupy important posts in the Writers' Union, think that politics is the business of the government and the Central Committee. As for writers,

it is not their business to occupy themselves with politics. A person wrote well, artistically, beautifully—give the work a start, regardless of the fact that it has rotten passages that disorient our youth and poison it. We demand that our comrades, both those who give leadership in the literary field and those who write, be guided by that without which the Soviet order cannot live, *i.e.*, by politics, so that our youth may be brought up not in a devil-may-care, unideological spirit, but in a vigorous and revolutionary spirit.

It is known that Leninism embodies in itself all the best traditions of the Russian revolutionary democrats of the 19th century and that our Soviet culture arose, developed and reached its flowering on the basis of the critically reworked cultural heritage from the past. In the sphere of literature our Party, through the words of Lenin and Stalin, has more than once recognized the enormous significance of the great Russian revolutionary-democratic writers and critics—Belinsky, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevsky, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Plekhanov. Beginning with Belinsky, none of the best representatives of the revolutionary-democratic Russian intelligentsia recognized so-called "pure art," "art for art's sake," but were the spokesmen of art for the people; of its high ideological content and social significance. Art cannot be separated from the people's fate. Remember Belinsky's famous "Letter to Gogol," in which the great critic, with all the passion that was inherent in him, lashed Gogol for his

attempt to betray the cause of the people and go over to the side of the tsar. Lenin called this letter one of the best products of the uncensored press, which has preserved a tremendous literary significance even for the present time.

Remember the literary-publicist articles of Dobroliubov, in which the social significance of literature is demonstrated with such power. All our revolutionary-democratic publicists are saturated with mortal hatred of the tsarist order and permeated with a noble striving to fight for the basic interests of the people, for their enlightenment, for their culture, for their liberation from the bonds of the tsarist regime. A fighting art, conducting a struggle for the best ideals of the people—this was the conception of literature and art held by the great representatives of Russian literature. Chernyshevsky, who of all utopian socialists came closest to scientific socialism and from whose works, as Lenin pointed out, "there breathed the spirit of the class struggle," taught that the task of art is, besides perception of life, closest to scientific Socialism and to teach people to evaluate correctly the various social phenomena. His closest friend and collaborator, Dobroliubov, pointed out that "it is not life that proceeds according to literary norms, but literature adapts itself to trends of life," and energetically propagandized the principles of realism and nationality in literature, considering that the foundation of art is actuality, that the latter is the source of creative genius and that art has an

active role in social life, in forming social consciousness. According to Dobroliubov, literature must serve society, must give the people answers to the sharpest questions of contemporary life, must be abreast with the ideas of the epoch.

Marxist literary criticism, the continuator of the great traditions of Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Dobroliukov, was always the champion of realistic, socially directed art. Plekhanov did a lot of work to expose the idealistic, anti-scientific notion of literature and art and defend the positions of our great Russian revolutionary democrats, who taught that one should see in literature a powerful means of serving the people.

V. I. Lenin was the first to formulate with utmost precision the attitude of advanced social thought to literature and art. I remind you of Lenin's well known article "Party Organization and Party Literature," written at the end of 1905, in which he showed with characteristic force that literature cannot be non-partisan, that it must be an important component part of the general proletarian cause. In this article by Lenin are laid all the foundations on which the development of our Soviet literature is based. Lenin wrote:

Literature must become partisan. To counterbalance bourgeois mores, to counterbalance the bourgeois entrepreneurial, commercial press, to counterbalance bourgeois literary careerism and individualism, "gentleman's anarchism," and the drive after gain—the socialist proletariat must put forward the principle of *Party literature*, develop this

principle and bring it to life in the most complete and integral form possible.

What constitutes this principle of Party literature? Not only the fact that for the socialist proletariat the literary cause cannot be an instrument of gain to persons or groups, it cannot in general be an individual cause, independent of the proletarian cause as a whole. Down with non-partisan writers! Down with supermen writers! The literary cause must become *part* of the general proletarian cause. . . .

And further on in the same article:

To live in society and be free of society is impossible. The freedom of the bourgeois writer, artist, actress is only a disguised (or hypocritically masked) dependence on the money-bag, on the bribe, on the salary.

The Leninist point of departure is that our literature cannot be apolitical, cannot be "art for art's sake," but is called upon to fill an important vanguard role in social life. Hence the Leninist principle of partisanship in literature—a most important contribution of V. I. Lenin to the science of literature.

Consequently, the best tradition of Soviet literature is a continuation of the best traditions of Russian literature of the 19th century, the traditions created by our great revolutionary democrats—Belinsky, Dobroliubov, Chernyshevsky, Saltykov-Shchedrin—carried further by Plekhanov and scientifically elaborated and grounded by Lenin and Stalin.

Nekrasov called his poetry "the muse of vengeance and sorrow." Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov

looked upon literature as a sacred service to the people. Under the tsarist regime the best representatives of the Russian democratic intelligentsia perished for these high and noble ideas, went into penal servitude and exile. How is it possible to forget these glorious traditions? How is it possible to neglect them, how possible to permit Akhmatovas and Zoshchenkos to propagate surreptitiously the reactionary slogan "art for art's sake," and, taking cover behind a mask of ideological emptiness, to get in ideas that are alien to the Soviet people?!

Leninism recognizes that our literature has enormous significance for social transformation. If our Soviet literature were to permit a reduction of its enormous educational role—this would mean development backward, a return "to the stone age."

Comrade Stalin called our writers engineers of human souls. This definition has deep meaning. It speaks of the enormous responsibility of Soviet writers for the education of the people, for the education of the Soviet youth, for not tolerating wastage in literary work.

To some it seems strange that the Central Committee adopted such severe measures on a literary question. We are not used to this. They think that if wastage is permitted in production or if a production program for articles of mass consumption or a wood storage plan is not fulfilled—then to pronounce a reprimand for this is a natural thing, but if wastage is permitted with respect to the edu-

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cation of human souls, if wastage is permitted in the business of educating the youth, here one must be tolerant. Whereas actually, is not this a more bitter fault than the non-fulfillment of a production program or the disruption of a production assignment? By its decision the Central Committee has in view the bringing of the ideological front into line with all the other sectors of our work.

* * *

In the recent period big breaches and shortcomings have been exposed on the ideological front. Suffice it to remind you of the backwardness of our film art, of the littering of our theatrical-dramatic repertoire with bad-quality productions, not to speak of what went on in the journals *Zvezda* and *Leninrad*. The Central Committee was obliged to interfere and introduce decisive corrections. It did not have the right to soften its blow against those who forget their obligations toward the people, toward the education of the youth. If we want to turn the attention of our activists to questions of ideological work and introduce order here, give clear direction in the work, we should be sharp, as befits Soviet people, as befits Bolsheviks, in criticizing errors and shortcomings in ideological work. Only then will we be able to correct matters.

Other writers reason thus: inasmuch as during the war the people were starving for literature, and few books were published, it follows that the reader will swallow any commodity, even with rot in it. But actu-

ally this is altogether not so, and we cannot tolerate any literature that will palm off on us unscrupulous writers, editors, publishers. The Soviet people expect from Soviet writers genuine ideological armament, spiritual nourishment that would aid in fulfilling the plans for great construction, in fulfilling the plans for the restoration and further development of our country's national economy. The Soviet people make high demands on writers, they want satisfaction of their ideological and cultural claims. The situation during the war made us unable to secure these burning needs. The people want to comprehend the events that have taken place. Their ideological and cultural level has grown higher. They are frequently dissatisfied with the quality of the products of literature and art that we put forth. Some workers in literature, workers on the ideological front, have not understood this and do not want to understand it.

The level of the demands and tastes of our people has risen very high, and he who does not want to rise, or is incapable of rising to this level, will remain behind. Literature is called upon not only to keep abreast of the demands of the people, but more than that—it is obligated to develop the people's tastes, to raise higher their demands, to enrich them with new ideas, to carry the people forward. He who is incapable of marching in step with the people, of satisfying their growing demands, of keeping up with the

tasks of development of Soviet culture, will inevitably be retired.

Ideological inadequacy among the leading workers of *Zvezda* and *Leninograd* leads to a second big error. This is that some of our leading workers have set up as a guide in their relations with writers not the interests of the political education of the Soviet people and the political direction of the writers, but interests of personal friendship. It is said that many ideologically harmful and artistically weak works have been let through the press because of a desire not to offend one or another writer. From the point of view of such writers it is better to yield on the interests of the people, the interests of the state, in order not to offend some writer or other. This is absolutely incorrect and politically erroneous. It is just like exchanging a million for a penny.

In its decision the Central Committee of the Party points out the very great harm involved in substituting relations of friendship for relations of principle in literature. Relations based on friendship rather than principle among some of our writers have played a profoundly negative role, have led to the lowering of the ideological level of many literary works, have facilitated the admission into literature of persons alien to Soviet literature. The absence of criticism on the part of leaders of the ideological front in *Leninograd*, on the part of leaders of *Leninograd* journals, the substitution of relations based on friendship for re-

lations based on principle at the expense of the people's interests, has done great harm.

Comrade Stalin teaches us that if we want to preserve cadres, to teach and educate them, we should not be afraid of offending anyone, we should not be afraid of principled, bold, frank and objective criticism. Without criticism, any organization, including a literary organization, can decay. Without criticism, any disease can be driven deeper in and it will be harder to deal with it. Only bold and open criticism helps our people to improve themselves, rouses them to march ahead, to overcome shortcomings in their work. Where there is no criticism, staleness and stagnation take root and there is no room to move ahead.

Comrade Stalin frequently points out that a most important condition of our development is the necessity for every Soviet person to take stock of his work every day, fearlessly check on himself, analyze his work, courageously criticize his own shortcomings and errors, consider how to achieve better results in his work, and continuously work on his own improvement. This applies to writers as much as to any other workers. He who is afraid of criticizing his own work is a contemptible coward, not deserving of respect from the people.

An uncritical attitude to one's own work, substitution of relations with writers based on friendship for relations based on principle are widespread also in the administration of

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the Union of Soviet Writers. The administration of the union and in particular its chairman, Comrade Tikhonov, are guilty of the same mishap as those disclosed in the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*, are guilty not only of not impeding the penetration into Soviet literature of the harmful influences of Zoshchenko, Akhmatova and other un-Soviet writers, but even of conniving at the penetration into our journals of tendencies and mores alien to Soviet literature.

Among the shortcomings of the Leningrad journals a certain role was played by the system of irresponsibility that evolved in the leadership of the journals; the situation on the editorial boards of the Leningrad journals was such that it was unknown who was responsible for the journal as a whole and for its departments, and there could be no elementary order. This shortcoming has to be corrected. This is why the Central Committee in its ruling appointed an editor-in-chief to the journal *Zvezda*, who is to be responsible for the direction of the journal, for the high ideological and artistic qualities of the works placed in the journal.

In journals, as in any business, disorder and anarchy are intolerable. There must be a clear-cut responsibility for the direction of the journal and the content of published materials.

You must restore the glorious traditions of Leningrad literature and the Leningrad ideological front. It is bitter and offensive that the journals

of Leningrad, which were always seed-beds for advanced ideas, advanced culture, became a refuge for ideological emptiness and vulgarity. One must restore the honor of Leningrad as an advanced ideological and cultural center. One must remember that Leningrad was the cradle of the Bolshevik Leninist organizations. Here Lenin and Stalin laid the foundations of the Bolshevik Party, the foundations of the Bolshevik world outlook, Bolshevik culture.

It is a matter of honor for the Leningrad writers, the Leningrad Party activists to restore and develop further these glorious traditions of Leningrad. The task of workers on the ideological front in Leningrad and principally of the writers, is to drive ideological emptiness and vulgarity out of Leningrad literature, to raise high the banner of advanced Soviet literature, not to let slip a single opportunity for their own ideological and artistic growth, not to lag behind contemporary subject matter, not to lag behind the demands of the people, in every way to develop a bold criticism of their own shortcomings, a criticism that is not servile, not based on cliques or friendships, but a genuine, bold and independent, and ideological Bolshevik criticism.

Comrades, by now it should be clear to you how crude was the blunder permitted by the Leningrad City Committee of the Party, especially by its propaganda and agitation department and the secretary for propaganda, Comrade Shirokov, who was placed at the head of ideological

work and with whom in the first place is lodged responsibility for the collapse of the journals. The Leningrad committee of the Party permitted a crude political error in adopting at the end of June a decision on the new composition of the editorial board of the journal *Zvezda*, into which Zoshchenko was introduced. Only political blindness can explain the fact that the secretary of the Party's city committee, Comrade Kapustin, and the propaganda secretary of the city committee, Comrade Shirokov, passed such an erroneous decision. I repeat that all these errors must be corrected as quickly and decisively as possible, so as to restore the role of Leningrad in the ideological life of our Party.

We all love Leningrad, we all love our Leningrad party organization as one of the advance detachments of our party. In Leningrad there should be no refuge for literary hangers-on and rogues who want to make use of Leningrad for their own purposes. Soviet Leningrad is not dear to Zoshchenko, Akmatova and their ilk. They want to see in it the personification of different socio-political customs, a different ideology. Old Petersburg, the Bronze Horseman as the image of this old Petersburg—that is what oscillates before their eyes. But we love Soviet Leningrad, Leningrad as the advanced center of Soviet culture. The glorious cohort of great revolutionary and democratic figures that issued from Leningrad—these are our direct ancestors, from whom we derive our generalogy. The glorious traditions of

modern Leningrad are the continuation of these great revolutionary democratic traditions, which we will not exchange for any other. Let the Leningrad activists boldly, without a backward glance, without the benefit of springs under them, analyze their errors, so as to set matters right as best and as rapidly as possible and move our ideological work forward. Leningrad Bolsheviks must once more occupy their proper place in the ranks of the pioneers and advanced workers in the cause of shaping Soviet ideology, Soviet social consciousness.

* * *

How could it happen that the Leningrad City Committee of the Party allowed such a situation on the ideological front? Obviously it was distracted by current practical work on the restoration of the city and the raising of its industry and forgot about the importance of ideological-educational work, and this forgetfulness cost the Leningrad organization dear. One cannot forget ideological work! The spiritual wealth of our people is no less important than their material wealth. One cannot live blindly, without care for the morrow, either in the sphere of material production, or in the ideological sphere. Our Soviet people have grown to such an extent that they will not "swallow" just any sort of intellectual product that might be dumped on them. Workers in culture and art who do not reorganize themselves and cannot satisfy the needs of the people can rapidly lose the confidence of the people.

Comrades, our Soviet literature lives and should live by the interests of the people, the interests of our Motherland. Literature is a cause native to the people. This is why your every success, every significant work is looked upon by the people as their own victory. This is why every successful work can be compared with a battle won or with a big victory on the economic front. Contrariwise, every failure in Soviet literature is deeply offensive and bitter to the people, the Party, the state. The ruling of the Central Committee had just this in view in looking out for the interests of the people, for the interests of its literature and in being extremely disturbed by the state of affairs among the Leningrad writers.

If people without ideology want to deprive the Leningrad detachment of workers in Soviet literature of its foundation, if they want to undermine the ideological side of their work, to deprive the creative genius of the Leningrad writers of its socially transforming significance, then the Central Committee hopes that the Leningrad writers will find in themselves the forces to set a limit to all attempts to divert the literary detachment of Leningrad and its journals into the channel of ideological emptiness, unprincipledness, apoliticalness. You are posted on the advanced line of the ideological front, you have enormous tasks of international significance, and this ought to heighten the sense of responsibility of every genuinely Soviet writer toward his people, state, and party,

and make him conscious of the importance of his duty.

The bourgeois world is not pleased by our successes both within our country and in the international arena. As a result of the second world war the positions of socialism have been fortified. The question of socialism has been placed on the order of the day in many European countries. This displeases imperialists of all hues; they are afraid of socialism, afraid of our socialist country, which is a model for the whole of advanced humanity. The imperialists and their ideological henchmen, their writers and journalists, their politicians and diplomats strive in every way to slander our country, to present it in a wrong light, to slander socialism. In these conditions the task of Soviet literature is not only to reply, blow for blow, to all this base slander and the attacks on our Soviet culture, on socialism, but also boldly to lash and attack bourgeois culture, which is in a state of marasmus and corruption.

However outwardly beautiful the form that clothes the creations of the fashionable modern bourgeois western European and American writers, and also film and theatrical producers, still they cannot rescue or raise up their bourgeois culture, for its moral foundation is rotten and baneful, for this culture has been put at the service of private capitalist property, at the service of the egoistic, selfish interests of the bourgeois upper layers of society. The whole host of bourgeois writers, film and theatrical producers is striving to dis-

tract the attention of the advanced layers in society from the acute questions of the political and social struggle and divert their attention into the channel of vulgar ideologically empty literature and art, replete with gangsters, chorus girls, eulogies of adultery and of the doings of all sorts of adventurers and rogues.

Does it become us, representatives of advanced Soviet culture, Soviet patriots, to play the role of worshippers of bourgeois culture or the role of pupils?! Certainly our literature, which reflects a social order higher than any bourgeois-democratic order and a culture many times higher than bourgeois culture, has the right to teach others a new universal morality. Where do you find a people and a country like ours? Where do you find such magnificent qualities in people as our people displayed in the Great Patriotic War and as they display every day in their labors of transition to peace-time development and restoration of their economy and culture? Every day raises our people higher and higher. Today we are not what we were yesterday, and tomorrow we will not be what we are today. We are already not the same Russians we were before 1917, and our Russia is different, and our character. We have changed and grown together with the great transformations that have radically altered the face of our country.

To exhibit these new high qualities of the Soviet people, to exhibit our people not only as it is today, but also to give a glimpse of its tomorrow, to help illumine with a

searchlight the road ahead—such is the task of every conscientious Soviet writer. The writer cannot jog along at the tail of events, he must march in the forward ranks of the people, pointing out to them their path of development. Guided by the method of socialist realism, conscientiously and attentively studying our reality, striving to penetrate deeper into the essence of the processes of our development, the writer must educate the people and arm it ideologically. While selecting the best feelings and qualities of the Soviet man and revealing his tomorrow, we must at the same time show our people what they must not be, we must castigate the remnants of yesterday, remnants that hinder the Soviet people in their forward march. Soviet writers must help the people, the state, and the party to educate our youth to be cheerful and confident of their own strength, unafraid of any difficulties.

No matter how bourgeois politicians and writers strive to conceal from their own peoples the truth about the achievements of the Soviet order and Soviet culture, no matter how they try to erect an iron curtain, through which it would be impossible for the truth about the Soviet Union to penetrate abroad, no matter how they endeavor to belittle the actual growth and dimensions of Soviet culture—all these attempts are doomed to collapse. We know very well the power and advantage of our culture. Suffice it to recall the stunning successes of our cultural delegations abroad, our physical culture parade, etc. Is it for us to bow

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If the feudal social order and then the bourgeoisie in the period of their flowering could create an art and a literature that affirmed the establishment of the new order and hymned its flowering, then we, who represent a new, socialist order, the embodiment of all the best in the history of human civilization and culture, are all the more in a position to create the most advanced literature in the world, which will leave far behind the best examples of the creative genius of former times.

Comrades, what does the Central Committee want and demand? The Central Committee of the party wants the Leningrad activists and the Leningrad writers to understand well that the time has come when it is necessary to raise our ideological work to a high level. The young Soviet generation is faced with the task of intensifying the power and might of the Socialist Soviet order, of fully utilizing the motive forces of Soviet society for a new, unheard-of blossoming of our well being and culture. For these great tasks the young generation must be educated to be steadfast, cheerful, unafraid of obstacles, ready to meet these obstacles and overcome them. Our people must be educated people of a high ideological level, with high cultural and moral demands and tastes. To this end our literature, our journals must not stand aside from the tasks of contemporary life, but must help the party and the people

educate the youth in the spirit of unreserved devotion to the Soviet social order, in the spirit of unreserved service to the interests of the people.

Soviet writers and all our ideological workers are today posted in the advanced line of fire, for in conditions of peaceful development there is no reduction, but on the contrary, there is an expansion of the tasks of the ideological front and principally of literature. The people, the state, the party want, not the withdrawal of literature from contemporary life, but its active invasion into all aspects of Soviet existence. Bolsheviks value literature highly. They see clearly its great historical mission and role in the strengthening of the moral and political unity of the people, in the welding and education of the people. The Central Committee of the Party wants us to have an abundance of spiritual culture, for in this wealth of culture it sees one of the main tasks of socialism.

The Central Committee of the Party is confident that the Leningrad detachment of Soviet literature is morally and politically healthy and will speedily correct its errors and occupy its proper place in the ranks of Soviet literature.

The Central Committee is confident that the shortcomings in the work of the Leningrad writers will be overcome and that the ideological work of the Leningrad party organization will, in the shortest period, be raised to the height that is required today in the interests of the party, the people, the state.

THE NEGRO QUESTION

THE NEGRO PEOPLE AS A NATION

A DISCUSSION ARTICLE

By JAMES S. ALLEN

IN A PREVIOUS ARTICLE* I showed that the Black Belt is not vanishing, as Comrade Doxey A. Wilkerson assumes, and that, accordingly, his "new" perspective of the Negro nation turning into a national minority is not founded upon reality. Now I wish to discuss other aspects of the "entirely new approach" suggested by Comrade Wilkerson.

I. THE "EMBRYONIC" NATION

Comrade Wilkerson starts with this premise:

The Negro people have taken on the characteristics of a nation only in rudimentary form; they are still in a very early stage in their development toward nationhood.**

From this assumption he argues that a combination of circumstances can turn this "embryonic" nation into something else—a "national minority," "one organized community within the general population," a "community of Negro Americans," "an integral part of the larger nation." Therefore, he holds, the principle of self-determination as applied

elsewhere does not apply to the American Negro people. Or, as he places it:

... we are here dealing with a nation in embryonic form, far less developed as a nation than any of the other oppressed peoples for whom Marxists justly raise the demands of self-government and independence as an expression of their inherent right of self-determination.

We will inquire into Comrade Wilkerson's interpretation of self-determination later. For the moment we are interested in his concept of the "embryonic" nation.

I wish Comrade Wilkerson were more explicit as to standards by which he measures stages of national development. As history goes, the Negro people in the United States have developed as a nation at a relatively rapid tempo. They are very young when compared with a nation like the English whose preliminary formation on a common territory extended over many centuries and who achieved national political status almost 300 years ago, at the beginning of the capitalist era. Practically all other contemporary peoples now at

* *Political Affairs*, November, 1946.

** All quotations from Comrade Wilkerson are from his article in *Political Affairs*, July, 1946.

the stage of full nationhood achieved that status only within the last two centuries. Some reached national unity, their full political cohesion as a nation, only within the last seven or eight decades, like the American nation inhabiting these United States which achieved unification only with the overthrow of the slave system as a result of the Civil War. By other means, Germany and Japan established their national unity at about the same time.

The Negro people is certainly still at a relatively young stage of development as a nation as compared with those nations which, as a result of a combination of historical factors, were able to attain national unity quickly, emerge as dominant powers in the imperialist era, themselves oppress other peoples and retard their further national development, as is the case with the American Negro people. But among contemporary nations still in the process of formation the Negro people are by no means the youngest, from the viewpoint either of the established elements of nationhood or of the level of the national movement.

Thus, if we were to choose the relative stage of *social* development as a basis of comparison among a number of oppressed peoples, the Negro people are at a higher social stage than a number of peoples in Africa who are mainly tribal and whose societies are based on hunting, pastoral, or prefeudal agrarian systems of production, although they are drawn

into capitalist relations superimposed upon the old societies by imperialism. With respect to "community of economic life" as used by Stalin in his analysis of national development, the Negro people are much further advanced than others, especially since the semifeudal Black Belt is encompassed within a very highly developed capitalist economy.

Or if we were to attempt comparison on the basis of continuity and duration of historical development, which to a large extent may determine the stability of the elements of nationhood, we will find that the Negro nation is "old" as compared with some others, for example the Jewish people in Palestine.

Jewish migration into this Arab country during the past thirty years has served the interests of British imperialism, and the present demand of President Truman for continued large-scale immigration is intended to serve American imperialist interests in the Middle East. Nevertheless, conditions have been created within the short space of three decades resulting in elements of a new Jewish nation arising within a country predominantly Arab (today, the Jews are about 32 per cent of the population). Imperialism uses this new situation to divide Jew and Arab, and thus maintain its dominance.

However, a bi-national situation has been created, which has to be solved by the progressive forces on the basis of recognition of the national rights of both Jews and Arabs

and their joint struggle for independence from imperialist powers. With respect to the specific problem we are discussing, we must also recognize that one of the basic elements of nationhood, a common territory for the Jews in Palestine, is being extended artificially, and moreover, in a form which is complex and also disadvantageous to the Arab population. Certainly, from the viewpoint of the stability or instability of basic elements of nationhood and also of the relative period over which these have arisen, the Jewish people of Palestine are more "embryonic" as a nation than the Negro people.

Should we shift the basis of comparison to the national movement itself, to the relative level of the struggle for full and equal nationhood, here too the Negro nation is not as "embryonic" as Comrade Wilkerson imagines. National movements are among the most complex developments of the modern period, and vary greatly from nation to nation, depending upon many specific conditions. They do not always present themselves in "pure" nationalist form, in fact rarely is this the case, and often they are confused by religious, communal, or racial factors. Today this is particularly true in many parts of Africa, in China, and in India, where many national groupings are only now coming to the fore, as the masses of people enter the struggle against imperialism.

In India, for example, almost a score of distinct peoples until now

considered only as linguistic-cultural groups are beginning to take national form within the general movement of India toward independence. Until recently the Moslems, for example, were aware mainly of religious and communal differences setting them apart from the Hindus, and these differences were utilized effectively by British imperialism to incite and perpetuate internal division.

Only in the course of the past five years has national consciousness among the Moslems developed in such a form as to raise national self-determination as one of the leading political problems of India. While differing with specific aspects of Pakistan (program for Moslem states) as advanced by the Moslem League, the Communists of India advocate the principle of self-determination for the Moslems on a territorial basis, although their majority areas are not contiguous, and although there is a large Moslem minority in other parts of India.

If the national movement of the American Negro people is characterized by a high level of "race consciousness," itself an outgrowth of discrimination and other white chauvinist practices, the Moslem national movement is also complicated by communal and religious enmities which have been accentuated by imperialism. In neither case do these factors obliterate the essential national character of these peoples and their basic national movement.

Finally, I will cite the organized

steps taken in the Soviet Union to speed up the development of peoples into full national status on the basis of socialism, creating conditions which enable these peoples to achieve equality with the other more fully developed nations of the U.S.S.R. Today the youngest nations in the world are to be found in Central Asia and parts of Siberia—among them, peoples lifted practically overnight out of a nomadic existence, provided with a written language and even a stable common territory, and granted regional autonomy within the Soviet republics.

Thus, Comrade Wilkerson is grievously mistaken when he says the Negro people are far less developed as a nation than other nations for whom Marxists justly demand self-determination. Furthermore, Marxists all over the world support the principle of self-determination of nations, at whatever stage of social development, and whatever the level of national maturity, even if the development of a given nation is still only "embryonic," even if the national movement is only now coming to life.

It is even incorrect to apply the term "embryonic" to the Negro people as they emerged from slavery eighty years ago. The formation of the Negro nation began under slavery, as did their national movement of liberation. The Negro people stepped directly from slavery, which they helped overthrow, into a democratic struggle such as this country

had not experienced up to that time nor has seen since.

Thus, also with respect to the national movement, which in the case of the American Negro people has always been identified with the struggle for democracy, the Negro people have a rich and long tradition. *The national movement itself, the struggle for equal nationhood no matter under what form or slogan it may develop, is an essential component of the formation of nations.*

2. SELF-DETERMINATION AND SEPARATION

From his mistaken premise that the Negro nation is so "embryonic" that its future does not "lie along the path of continued maturation as a nation," Comrade Wilkerson ends up by denying that the principle of self-determination applies to the Negro people.

In this connection, it is first necessary to rescue the principle of self-determination, as clarified and understood by Marxists, from the distortion to which Comrade Wilkerson subjects it. He argues quite correctly, citing extensive quotations from Stalin to sustain him, that each national problem must be solved in accordance with the specific circumstances of time and place. Then he proceeds to make self-determination synonymous with separatism, giving only this interpretation consistently throughout his article. Thereby, Comrade Wilkerson proves that separation, only one form of self-deter-

mination, is not uniformly applicable, which is correct. He does not prove, as he implies, that the principle of self-determination itself is not uniformly applicable to nations.

Because of his mistaken identification of self-determination with separation, Comrade Wilkerson places the question as if the realization of self-determination is an evil to be avoided at all costs. This mistake is not entirely of Comrade Wilkerson's making, since we have tended in the past to present the problem in such a way as to provide certain grounds for a separatist approach, about which more later. Fear of artificial separation of the races, of a kind of inverted Jim Crow, which no Communist can possibly wish or work for or in any way encourage, has undoubtedly influenced many to question the validity of the principle of self-determination with respect to the Negro people.

Separation is not our solution. We direct our whole struggle against Jim Crow, the present expression of separation—not chosen by the Negro people but imposed upon them with force by the dominant white nation. We neither advocate separation as a general principle nor in its specific application to the Negro people, now or for the future. As Communists, whether Negro or white, we can only welcome and encourage as a development of the highest import the strong sentiment among the Negro people for integration on a basis of equality, a sentiment which has

grown in direct proportion to the development of the Negro working class in close association with the working class as a whole. This has not always been the case, as during the years following World War I, when middle-class nationalist and separatist movements (Garveyism) reflected a broad sentiment among the Negro people, although in distorted form. And, today, side by side with greater Negro-white working-class unity than existed in the twenties, we find that the Negro people maintain and extend their own organizations and institutions in order to advance their specific aims.

Formation of separate Negro organizations can no more be interpreted as a "decision" in favor of separation than it can be said that the desire among the Negro people to achieve equal status within the country is a "decision" for integration. We cannot speak of a people having "decided" to amalgamate with the dominant nation or separate from it, when such a people do not have the freedom of choice or the possibility to exert a collective will freely, and when, moreover, many questions are constantly being decided against them by their oppressors. Individual decisions may be made, and a powerful sentiment may exist for full integration, but this is not self-determination of a nation.

Browder caricatured the whole concept of self-determination when he spoke of the Negro people having made their "decision" for amalga-

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mation, although in reality the Negro people do not enjoy the freedom to make a decision.

In fact, in the work from which Comrade Wilkerson quotes so extensively (*Marxism and the National Question*), Stalin is concerned with proving the very thing Comrade Wilkerson wants to disprove: a nation can establish its right of self-determination—its right to choose some form of regional autonomy, federation, or separation—only as it establishes *its political entity on a territorial basis*. The latter is the only form in which it can exert a political will as a people.

Throughout his book Stalin argued against a position similar to that taken by Comrade Wilkerson who speaks of a "new" perspective for the Negro people in terms of "a definite community of Negro citizens," "a self-conscious community of Negro Americans," and other phrases with which the article is replete and which he uses interchangeably with "national minority." The vague concepts underlying these phrases are very similar to the shapeless slogan of "national cultural autonomy" or "autonomous national communities" about which Lenin once said they are like a "complex of sensations' without matter."

3. NATIONAL MINORITY

Comrade Wilkerson is obligated to speak in scientific terms if he takes so serious a step as renouncing a given position as un-Marxist and

proposes a new theoretical position. Harlem, for example, is a "definite community of Negro citizens," and so is a Negro cooperative camp in a summer resort. And such communities are prone to be "self-conscious," in view of the discrimination constantly practised against Negroes. Certainly, Negroes are Americans, having been born and raised in the United States and entitled under its laws to the full rights of citizenship. But these phrases tell us nothing about the present status of the Negro as a people or the tendency of their development.

At another point, Comrade Wilkerson says the "community of Negro Americans" are developing into "an integral part of the larger nation." This would seem to imply that the American Negro people are moving toward assimilation and amalgamation with the rest of the population of the United States. But Comrade Wilkerson assures us that they are *not* moving "toward disintegration, or toward the loss of their identity (as is the case of Polish-Americans or Italian-Americans) through the process of integration and attendant assimilation." In fact, he holds:

The Negro people are building up their national organizations for ever more militant struggles *as a people*. They are becoming increasingly conscious of their oneness as Negro Americans. They are struggling with ever greater unity and power to attain their full stature as a people. The perspective

is for continued development along this line.

Still, Comrade Wilkerson cannot decide what *kind* of a community the Negro people are. He starts off by saying the Negro people in the Black Belt are a nation, and those outside the Black Belt a national minority, and then advances the thesis that the Negro people in the Black Belt are ceasing to be a nation and are also becoming a national minority. But just what he means by national minority remains puzzling, for he uses other vague phrases interchangeably, sometimes implying assimilation, at other times continued separate development as a "distinct community."

It is an inescapable impression that while Wilkerson puts so much weight upon the supposedly separatist nature of the slogan of self-determination, he himself places undue emphasis upon the oneness, the singleness, the inner cohesion of the Negro people, in direct contradiction to his own central position that the Negro people as a whole are in process of "de-evolution" from a nation to a national minority.

Along this line we will find not clarity but confusion, opening the door again to unscientific and un-Marxist concepts, such as the "race," "class," or "class and caste" explanation of the Negro question which prevailed before the Communist Party adopted a national program with respect to the American Negro.

One of the central confusions that must be cleared up in this connection is the distinction between a national minority and a nation. National minorities, such as the Irish-Americans or the Italian-Americans, possess only the *cultural* attributes of nationality which they retain from the old country. They lack precisely those elements that account for the stability of a national grouping: a common historical development upon a common territory. Thus, they are assimilated into the American nation as a whole, although they tend to retain a certain kinship with the home country and even special language-cultural organizations, especially among the more recent immigrants.

The tendency of the national minorities within the United States, which is not territorially contiguous to any of the "old countries" and therefore is not affected by the irredentism characteristic of Europe, is toward complete assimilation, and not toward greater "oneness" as a people which is characteristic of nations. Thus, in fact, the United States is the great "Melting Pot," notwithstanding the reactionary outbursts against foreign-born which dot our history and which we see today, especially in the form of anti-Semitism.

But throughout American history the Negro people have been the outstanding exception with respect to the "Melting Pot," although smaller groups have also been systematically excluded, such as Mexicans, Chinese, and Filipinos. Racial prejudices un-

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doubtedly play a significant role here, especially with respect to the Negro. However, it is necessary to understand the reason for the persistence of white chauvinism, which is not only an ideological remnant of the old slave system but is an excrescence of the very real, concrete, substantial semifeudal agrarian system that still prevails in the South—an excrescence which poisons the whole American atmosphere, and which is beneficial also to monopoly-capital as a means of splitting the workers.

Race has become an important factor in "ghettoizing" the Negro, in North and South, precisely because the "white superiority" system identifies the Negro people with the help of biological ("race") characteristics as an oppressed nation, "inferior" and "outcaste," to be restricted in whatever phase of endeavor and life from assuming a position equal to that of others. This constant discrimination against the Negro, in which by and large practically all sectors of the white population participate to a greater or less extent, also has engendered among the Negroes a sense of identification as a people, often expressed in terms of "race consciousness." As Comrade Wilkerson says, the American Negro identifies himself as part of his people, whether he lives in Detroit or in an agrarian community of the Black Belt.

It is precisely the white chauvinist system, prevalent throughout the country, a by-product of which is the greater psychological identity among

the Negro people, that has prevented the assimilation of the Negro, denying the Negro people the status of a national minority such as enjoyed by the language-cultural groups in the United States. In this sense, the Negro people cannot be designated as a national minority, the outstanding characteristic of which in the United States is the process of assimilation, historically and at present. Thus, the "new" perspective of the Negro nation turning into a national minority has no foundation in the actual position of the Negro even in the North.

In the past, we have been inclined in our theoretical presentation of the question to a rather schematic division of the Negro people into two sections—a "Negro nation in the Black Belt" and a Negro "national minority" outside the Black Belt. This is misleading and artificial, and also unnecessary from a programmatic viewpoint. It is misleading because the status of the Negro people in non-Black Belt areas is not that of a national minority in the process of assimilation, as distinguished from a Negro "nation in the Black Belt" with a separate existence. Whether as a numerical minority or as a majority, Negro people in North or South are part of the same oppressed nation.

In so far as Comrade Wilkerson objects to this schematicism, I agree with him. But he draws other conclusions that obscure the very real differences between North and South that have to be taken into account

in our immediate program as well as in our general perspective.

From the viewpoint *both* of the oppression of the Negro people and of the perspective for their liberation, it is precisely the special conditions prevailing in the South that give validity to the principle of self-determination with respect to the Negro people, while this principle does not pertain to any other nationality grouping in the United States. The principle of self-determination has no concrete meaning unless it can be applied on a territorial basis where some form of self-government can arise through which the right of self-determination, which is a *political* right, can be exercised. For this reason it makes no sense to speak of self-determination for some nebulous "community" or "national minority" distributed throughout the country, which has not the slightest possibility for consolidation as a nation.

Thus, the special situation in the Black Belt is of the greatest programmatic significance for it provided the essential elements of a solution of the Negro question in the *country as a whole*.

Nor can we avoid recognizing that the semi-feudalism of the Black Belt is a unique phenomenon, to be found nowhere else in the United States. This calls for a special agrarian program aimed at the democratic transformation of the plantation economy, and therefore at the destruction of a hotbed of reaction within the coun-

try, having political consequences on a nation-wide scale as expressed in the Bourbon wing of the Democratic Party. This special situation lies at the heart of democratizing the South, and at the same time provides the progressive movement as a whole with the most impelling reasons for supporting basic agrarian reform.

On the other hand, problems not characteristic of the Black Belt arise particularly in the North and also in the industrial centers of the South, largely outside the plantation area, where the Negro working class has developed, and where the struggle for equal rights presents itself in a different manner. Recognition of these very real differences is not dualism, as Comrade Wilkerson complains, since it is based upon a single approach toward the Negro people as an oppressed nation fighting for freedom.

4. INTEGRATION AND NATIONHOOD

It is erroneous to see a contradiction between integration, as expressed in working-class unity, and the further development of the Negro people as a nation. For the Negro worker does not by virtue of his being a worker and joining a union lose his identity as a member of the Negro nation, himself subject to many forms of discrimination practiced against the Negro people as a whole. Recognition of this by the white workers and the trade unions

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is indispensable to the extension and consolidation of unity between white and Negro workers. But recognition in some general sense is insufficient. It is necessary to see and advance the very concrete special demands of Negro workers—such as equal wages, equal opportunities for advancement, protection against lay-offs, full representation on shop committees and in union leadership. It is impossible to overlook the actual inequalities that exist in all phases of life even in the "freest" sections of the country, even within some of the progressive unions, unless we are blinded by erroneous theories about the Negro people already achieving equality.

It is also wrong to conclude that the Negro worker is becoming less conscious of discrimination against himself and the Negro people as a whole because of his participation in industry and the labor movement. On the contrary, as he identifies himself with the immediate struggles and the historical movement of the working class, he becomes more politically sensitive to the oppression of the Negro people. Political enlightenment of Negro workers as members of the working class places them at the forefront of the struggle for Negro rights and, therefore, of the national movement.

In view of Comrade Wilkerson's great emphasis upon the "oneness" of the Negro people, it is strange that he should bring as evidence against developing Negro nationhood the growth outside the Black Belt area

of the Negro working and middle classes and of Negro culture.

One of the central characteristics of a growing nation under capitalism is class differentiation within it. In the case of the Negro people this differentiation has been held back by oppression, which retarded the development of working and middle classes. While these classes were retarded, they did develop, to a significant extent only during the past three decades and under the special conditions characteristic of the country—advanced industrialization of the North as compared with the economic backwardness of the South. This circumstance creates favorable conditions, not only for greater unity between Negro and white, but also for the uprooting of the semi-slavery of the South, and therefore for the more rapid maturing of the Negro nation as a whole.

With respect to culture, I am afraid Comrade Wilkerson tends to use this word in a rather narrow sense. Certain forms of culture have had a greater development in the North due to the greater freedom prevailing there and the greater opportunities for Negro education and participation in the arts and professions. On the other hand, the most distinctive folk culture of the Negro people is a Southern product. The life and struggle of the Negro people in the South provide a constant source of inspiration in Negro literature and music. Many, perhaps most, of the Negro institutions of

higher learning are situated in the South, and have much closer contact with the mass of Negro people in the Black Belt than similar institutions in the North. But aside from this, the social and cultural development of the Negro in the North is part of the evolution of the Negro nation, and contributes to the maturing of the people as a whole, whether in North or South.

5. NATIONHOOD AND CRISIS

Comrade Wilkerson's erroneous concept of self-determination and his preoccupation with the dangers of separatism lead him into thoroughly untenable positions. One of these is that self-determination may have validity only during periods of reaction, while integration (always misinterpreted by Comrade Wilkerson as standing in direct contradiction to self-determination) supercedes the movement toward self-determination in periods of progress. Thus, Comrade Wilkerson creates a contradiction, not present in life, between self-determination and the fight for democratic rights. He writes:

Apparently on the assumption that this [reaction] is the perspective for America as a whole, and for the Negro people in particular, some observers [who?] caution against discarding the "Self-Determination in the Black Belt" program as the main theoretical approach of the Marxists to the Negro question.

And, then again, after citing some recent gains in the fight for Negro rights:

Thus, our outmoded separatist doctrine of "Self-Determination in the Black Belt" cannot now be supported on the premise of a sharp and long-sustained downward trend in the Negro freedom curve. The perspective is for quite the opposite.

Comrade Wilkerson leans to a rather utopian and one-sided concept of the present political development, and therefore in accordance with his view as quoted above he believes the "doctrine" of self-determination is already "outmoded." But quite aside from his rather loose speculations about the immediate future, is it correct to place the question in this fashion?

If a basic theoretical approach is correct, it must be correct in all passing political situations, whether the "freedom curve" is going up or going down. The latter will influence a position on this or that tactical question; it will also affect the extent of white chauvinism and of separatism, although this will also depend upon the degree of mass resistance to a downward "freedom curve" and the level of class alliances of the popular movement during the upward movement of the "curve." But does it alter the fundamental approach to the Negro people as a nation and, therefore, the validity of the principle of self-determination?

Browder thought it did. The en-

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ture perspective within which he abandoned the principle of self-determination was that the Negro question in the United States would be solved basically, was actually in the course of being solved, as a result of the wartime agreement among the Big Three which "decided for a whole period of history the question of the possibility of national unity in the United States. It determined the possibility of eliminating all the gross inequalities as they manifest themselves in the oppression of the Negro people in this country"*

Equally un-Marxist and undialectical was Browder's explanation of why the Communist Party adopted the program of self-determination to begin with:

In the late 20's and early 30's, it became clear that the whole world was heading toward a major crisis, the greatest of all history. It simultaneously became clear that the question of the future of the Negro people would be up for reexamination. It was in view of the gathering world crisis that we Communists at that time—in the early 30's—raised the issue of self-determination. At that time we necessarily faced the possibility that the Negro people, disappointed in their aspirations for full integration into the American nation, might find their only alternative in separation and in the establishment of their own state in the Black Belt. . . .

Comrade Francis Franklin was the first to perpetuate this approach

* This and other quotations from Browder are from *The Communist*, January, 1944.

in the form of a "new" theory in *Political Affairs* of May, 1946, where he was answered by Comrade Max Weiss. Is it not obvious that Comrade Wilkerson is also unduly influenced by this approach, although in some other respects his position does raise pertinent questions for discussion? It seems that Comrade Wilkerson accepts as authority Browder's history of the question, his identification of self-determination with separatism, and also his purely idealistic and fantastic concept of nationhood as a passing phenomenon, existing during a crisis and ceasing to exist when there is a progressive outcome from the crisis.

Of course, Browder did not inform his readers that the national program for the Negro people was adopted only after a very long period of discussion beginning in 1927-1928, before the economic crisis. This discussion took into consideration experiences throughout the world as well as the specific situation of the American Negro people, and rejected erroneous theories current in working-class and bourgeois-liberal circles. The full national program was adopted in 1930, but neither on the supposition that the economic crisis would lead directly into a struggle for socialist power in the United States (although Leftist notions did affect our general program then) or because the gathering world political crisis necessitated such a program for the Negro people.

Our program rested upon one cen-

tral thesis: recognition of the national character of the Negro question, the status of the Negro people in the United States as an oppressed nation. It is true that we were able to understand this in the early thirties better than previously, because at that time we were in the midst of the great economic crisis, which acted as a catalyst in the ranks of the Party, cleansing it of many opportunist ideas and utopian concepts about progressive American imperialism which had accumulated during the preceding period of expansion. But this is far from meaning that the concept of self-determination is valid only during a period of crisis.

Browder made some feeble efforts to "prove" that the basis for self-determination was vanishing. He cited some wartime progressive developments within the country which were supposed to indicate an advanced level of integration. He also cited the pre-war New Deal program, especially the extension of W.P.A. to the South. According to him, the latter was "the beginning of a deep-going change, a shaking up of the whole semifeudal system of oppression of the Negro," whereas actually the W.P.A. barely touched the plantation system and was often operated at the convenience of the plantation masters as a means of keeping a cheap labor supply at hand.

In practice, this approach led to the complete liquidation of the Communist Party in the South, to the surrender of the perspective of strug-

gle against the hotbed of reaction in the South, and toward complete underestimation of the fight for equal rights for Negroes throughout the country, including the fight against white chauvinism, in the name of the supposed integration of the Negro people into the single American nation.

We likewise find Comrade Wilkerson citing some significant victories in the struggle against discrimination to prove his "new" theory, and also resting his case heavily upon the perspective of a self-vanishing semifeudalism, which in practice, today also, would lead toward the liquidation of our struggle for Negro liberation.

6. DEMOCRACY AND THE BLACK BELT

I have already shown in the previous article that in actuality the semifeudalism of the Black Belt is not vanishing, that on the contrary semifeudal elements are even expanding side by side with the penetration of capitalist forms of exploitation. But is it correct to suppose that a successful fight for democracy in the South (including the uprooting of semifeudalism), or significant advances in that direction even during the lifetime of monopoly-capitalism, will result in "undermining" the Negro national majority, or, as Comrade Wilkerson places it, the Negro nation in the Black Belt?

We can answer this, not by speculation about the future, but by ex-

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aming the actual course of development over an historic period. For this purpose, we will take a section of the Black Belt that has shown a greater tendency toward contraction than the Black Belt as a whole. This is that region of the Black Belt which lies in northeast North Carolina, eastern Virginia and the tip of Maryland. In this region the tendency for the Negro concentration to decline extends back to 1880, twenty years earlier than for the Black Belt as a whole. Today (1940 Census) it has a total population of 1,614,373, of which 681,271 or 42.2 per cent, is Negro, as compared with 55.9 per cent in 1860. This region is formed largely around the Virginia Black Belt, which included in 1940 eighteen counties whose Negro majorities ranged from 50.2 to 77.8 per cent.

This is a unique region in many respects. The first Negro slaves to arrive in the colonies were brought here over three centuries ago, and it was here that the first slave plantations were founded upon the feudal land grants of the English King. Crop-producing plantations began to deteriorate in this region even during slavery, due to soil exhaustion, and the more lucrative profits to be obtained by breeding slaves for the fertile cotton plantations of the deep South. After the abolition of slavery, and toward the end of the century, the process of industrial development started in this region earlier than elsewhere in the South, sizable ports and commercial centers having al-

ready been founded within this Black Belt region during slavery. Besides, because of its proximity to the large industrial centers of the North, migrations began at a comparatively early date. Thus, more than other regions of the Black Belt, this area was directly subjected to the pressures of capitalist expansion, and over a longer period.

Today, unlike the rest of the Black Belt (with the exception of a small area in central North Carolina) the proportion of Negroes among all farm operators (40.2 per cent) is less than the Negro portion of the total population. Agriculture is further advanced toward a capitalist formation, also among the Negro agrarians. In 1940, almost 60 per cent of all Negro farm operators owned their land in whole or in part, as compared with about 30 per cent in the rest of the Black Belt. Naturally, the plantation (largely tobacco and some cotton) persists side by side with "independent" small farms, wage-labor farms and capitalist tenancy. But, in this region, only 29 per cent of all Negro farm operators are sharecroppers, as compared with over 48 per cent for the Black Belt as a whole.

Particularly significant for the point under discussion is the fact that the counties with a clear Negro majority are about equally divided between those in which general farming predominates and those in which tobacco and cotton (grown on plantations) are the leading crops. This

suggests that Negro landownership is a powerful factor in retaining Negro majorities on a voluntary basis, even as plantation-sharecropping formed the Black Belt on a non-free basis.

Another significant characteristic of this region is the relatively large proportion of the Negro population living in cities, which is not typical of the Black Belt as a whole, since commercial and industrial centers have grown up in the main outside the plantation area. One-fourth of the Negro people of this region live in five cities situated within the Black Belt — Richmond, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Newport News, and Petersburg (all in Virginia). Of the population of these cities, the Negro forms over one-third. While even here the Negro constitutes a much greater proportion of the population on the surrounding countryside, he has become more urban than elsewhere in the Black Belt, although other smaller sections can also be found, as in Georgia and Alabama, where a similar situation has arisen.

What has happened in the Virginia-North Carolina-Maryland region of the Black Belt shows that the growth of capitalist farming and industry does not necessarily result in the disappearance of Negro concentrations. Such concentrations persist even when semifeudalism is no longer dominant in the economy, even when semifeudalism is overshadowed by capitalist forms of development. If we keep in mind that

this has occurred in a region where democracy remains very limited and the oppressive superstructure is little changed, where organized democratic forces intervened but little, then it is possible to appreciate how popular political action can accelerate the transformation of the semifeudal economy, and change the Black Belt prison of a nation into a region of dynamic democratic progress.

It is therefore incorrect to assume, as Comrade Wilkerson does, that Negro nationhood now and in the future depends upon the continuation of the semifeudal economy of the Black Belt. It is true that the slave system "created" the Black Belt and that remnants of slavery are today the underlying cause for its persistence, which also account basically for the oppression of the Negro nation. *But the Negro nation can exist also in a state of freedom from semifeudalism and its offshoots; in fact, that is the condition for its unhampered development.*

We have no right to assume that the base of Negro nationhood will vanish to the extent semifeudalism is vanquished by democratic forces. On the contrary, the Negro people will overcome their oppression and flower as a nation when semifeudalism is uprooted in the South. Therefore, the whole perspective of the Negro people as a nation is founded on the struggle for democracy in the South, which cannot be isolated from the country-wide fight for equal rights.

7. EQUAL RIGHTS AND NATIONHOOD

Comrade Wilkerson sees a contradiction between the fight for equal rights, including the fight for democracy in the South, and the program of self-determination. From this he concludes that the growing participation of the Negro people with their white allies in the working-class and progressive movement, including even a third party, would render self-determination completely inapplicable.

The contrary is true. History has taught us, and our present political experiences teach us, that every forward step of the progressive movement, every advance toward the unity of white and Negro workers, and every democratic gain (only tentative under monopoly-capitalism, since each gain must be continually defended) makes self-determination of the Negro people more realizable. At the same time, such developments render separatism in the movement itself less operative and separation as a final choice less likely.

Again, let us turn to actual experience, and first to the great lessons of Reconstruction, the first and only time the South has had a democratic era. The high point of this democratic upsurge was the participation of the Negro people, alongside their white allies, in the struggle for Radical Reconstruction and in the democratic regimes of 1868-1875. On the decisive question, that

of distribution of the former slave plantations among the freedmen, the democratic forces were defeated. This was one of the basic reasons for the incomplete development of political democracy and for its final defeat.

Nevertheless, gigantic strides toward democracy were made, as shown by Negro self-government in many Black Belt counties, by Negro majorities in many of the Constitutional Conventions which presented the South with their first major democratic reforms, by dominant Negro representation in three State legislatures, by leading positions in the State governments passing to Negroes, and by the election of a number of Negro Congressmen.

This was representative government, within the framework of the existing structures of the separate states. The central slogans of the period around which the masses rallied were land and democracy—equal bourgeois-democratic rights. These were incompletely realized in many respects, and the Reconstruction governments were overthrown before the new democratic institutions could be firmly established. Within the limitations of the class alliances of that time, when there was no working class to speak of in the South and when the Northern working class was still in an infant stage of political development, the industrial bourgeoisie then coming to power played the decisive role on a nation-wide scale. Under these circumstances, and at a time when the

Negro people had just stepped out of chattel slavery and were already subjected to semifeudalism on the plantations, the struggle for Negro liberation did not reach beyond the stage of representative government to raise questions of some form of political entity within the region of Negro majority.

However, even during Reconstruction *there was already considerable Negro self-government on a county scale throughout the plantation region*, including all branches of power—county offices, militia, sheriffs, the first public school boards, the local judiciary; and also in non-governmental organizations of power, such as the local Republican clubs, armed defense groups, and churches. Even at that time the advance toward equal political rights as expressed in representative government could not help but bring into being the first local self-governments, because of the Negro majorities in the Black Belt.

Now, if we turn to the problem of Negro-white alliance, we find that this great democratic upsurge in the South did not come about as a result of the imposition of puppet Negro government by a victorious North, as Bourbon historians claim, nor did it arise alone from the efforts of the Negro people acting in isolation. The democratic Reconstruction regimes were coalitions within the Republican Party of the time, representing in the South an alliance between the Negro people struggling for democracy, the anti-slavery white farmers

and sectors of the urban middle class opposed to the rule of the former slavemasters, such working-class forces as existed then, and the Northern industrial bourgeoisie interested in establishing its own hegemony over the country. Even when the latter class sought and obtained an understanding with the plantation masters, the democratic governments were overthrown in most states by bloody coups only after the Southern progressive coalition had been broken by reaction, mainly by splitting the white allies from the Negro people.

Thus, coalition was necessary to establish democracy and to defend it from reaction. The firmer the coalition the greater the democratic advance, which also accelerated the growth of the Negro people as a nation, although their demands could not have been presented at that time in national form.

This lesson of coalition, emphasized by every subsequent struggle in the South into the present day, must always remain in the forefront of our program and at the heart of our tactics. But it is not true, as Comrade Wilkerson claims, that the struggle for democracy in the South (or elsewhere) stands in direct contradiction to developing Negro nationhood. On the contrary, the fight for democratic rights has been historically, and is now a necessity of Negro liberation, which can be advanced today only through alliance with the working class.

We must understand fully that the

Negro people, especially in the South, realize that an isolated movement by themselves is doomed to defeat, and they will not take a position if they can help it which would isolate them from their actual and potential white allies. Whether it be in the organization of sharecroppers or workers, in the fight for the ballot or for representation on an election ticket, they step into the forefront of the struggle most effectively when they are assured of white allies. It remains for the white workers and progressives of the South to learn thoroughly the lesson that no movement against reaction can be successful without the leading participation of the Negro people.

This identification of Negro and white in common struggle is the first necessity of political integration, which becomes more and more possible as working-class organization spreads in the South and provides the new driving force for democracy. As the Negro people enter upon this struggle, as greater agrarian and working class masses are swept into the fight for democracy, the greater will be awareness of their own rights, the greater their national consciousness. This is the experience of all national movements of oppressed peoples which start primarily as agrarian and democratic movements.

If we identify self-determination with separation, or see it as a preconceived pattern imposed by some external force upon the South instead of a development arising from

the living movement, then we will frighten ourselves with nightmares of "race" war and rout ourselves even before reaction has an opportunity to cry "Negro domination."

Self-determination will become a decisive force, as Comrade Wilkerson claims it is, only if we make the mistake of raising it as a general and abstract slogan without regard to the present stage of the struggle and the basic alliances that have to be forged to assure a democratic South.

In the past we made such mistakes, which tended to give a separatist connotation to our program and also created certain doubts and confusion. In the early thirties, for example, we included the slogan of self-determination in our programs of action, and attempted to create mass organizations on a similar basis (Presidential elections, League of Struggle for Negro Rights). We corrected this Leftist mistake, but did not make the corresponding correction in our theoretical position. This applies particularly to our assumption that complete state unity of the Black Belt in the form of a single "Negro Republic" was the only possible form under which self-determination could be exercised. This has undoubtedly contributed to encouraging the erroneous conception that separatism is the only form of self-determination, because of a mechanical approach which did not recognize the richness and variety of the living movement.

We are not at the stage where self-

determination appears as a concrete question of the day, nor are preliminary forms of self-government taking shape. In life today, the national aspect of the movement in the form of national slogans has not yet come forward. The agrarian and democratic demands of the Negro people are uppermost. A new wave of the political struggle is arising in the South, and its objective is representative government, while in the country as a whole the fight for equal rights is assuming a sharp character. Specific national slogans may arise sooner than we expect, such as self-government on a local scale, as the breadth and intensity of the movement grows.

At this time we should not attempt to prescribe the exact form, out of a variety of possible forms, in which self-government may arise. Eventually, a single Republic, based upon a coalition in which the Negro people play the leading role, may prove the most effective form. But other forms, perhaps in intermediary phases or even as a long-range solution, may also appear—such as more than one state entity, regional autonomy or autonomies, bi-national regional governments or bi-national federal representation on a territorial basis, or even other combinations which we cannot at present envision.

These questions will become clearer as the movement itself brings the shape of a solution into focus.

For the present, let us not be frightened by fears of separatism and division when the struggle against semi-feudalism and reaction involves the Negro masses on a broad scale, raising the basic democratic issues of the South, including the agrarian issues. This will also accelerate the development of the whole progressive movement, which today contains within it the basis for a much firmer coalition with the Negro people than existed in earlier periods.

Between our practice and theory there is no contradiction, as Comrade Wilkerson claims. The "practical" needs of the present struggle are to weld firmer unity of Negro and white worker and to arouse the whole progressive movement to the fight for equal rights in the country as a whole and for democracy in the South. This practice opens the way to a solution along the lines of self-determination, and in such a manner as to strengthen the forces working against separatism. The contradiction between theory and practice is to be found, not in our approach to the Negro as a nation, but in the "new" perspective proposed by Comrade Wilkerson, since it is not founded on reality.

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