

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

A magazine devoted

to the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism

EDITORIAL BOARD

MAX WEISS, *Editor*; V. J. JEROME, *Associate Editor*

ALEXANDER BITTELMAN, HENRY WINSTON

VOLUME XXVI, NO. 5

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

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

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JOSEPH WEYDEMEYER

Pioneer of American Socialism

By KARL OBERMANN

THE STORY of one of the great pioneers of socialism in the United States.

JOSEPH WEYDEMEYER, fighter for democracy in Germany in the Revolution of 1848, friend and correspondent of Karl Marx, came to the United States in 1851.

JOURNALIST, trade union organizer, political leader, commissioned by Lincoln as a colonel in the Northern Army in the war against slavery, Joseph Weydemeyer was in every activity a champion of the American people, and a consistent fighter for socialism.

THIS IS THE first study of the founder of Marxism in the United States. Published by International Publishers, it fills a long-standing gap in American historical writing.

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UNITED LABOR ACTION CAN HALT REACTION

(MAY DAY APPEAL BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY TO ALL WORKERS, TO ALL LIBERTY-LOVING AMERICANS.)

MAY DAY GREETINGS:

May Day this year must be a powerful demonstration of *United Labor Action*.

United Labor Action in defense of the trade unions facing the greatest challenge since the days of the open shop and government strikebreaking by injunction.

United Labor Action in defense of the living standards of the people facing the sharpest attack from Big Business and the grim prospect of a developing recession and unemployment.

United Labor Action to safeguard our civil liberties and democratic rights periled by the big monopolies who aim to take our country on the path of reaction and fascism.

United Labor Action in defense of the rights of the Negro people menaced by the growth of discrimination and violence incited by monopoly reaction and its Southern Bourbon allies.

United Labor Action against the infamous Truman Doctrine of American imperialist expansion which drives toward world domination and endangers world peace.

United Labor Action to help rally all the people in a great democratic coalition to halt the drive of reaction; to assure our country and its people steady progress toward greater economic security and well-being; to preserve and extend our rights and liberties; to realize a just and durable peace.

* * * *

May Day, born in the great struggle of the American labor movement for the 8-hour day in the United States, has for the last 57 years been observed the world over as a day of international working-class solidarity.

This year, the working class all over the world is stronger, more powerful, and better organized than ever before. The World Federation of Trade Unions, of which the C.I.O. is an affiliate, embraces more than 70 million workers in more than 50 countries.

Through their great trade unions and powerful workers' political parties—the Communist and Socialist parties—the working class has become the directing influence in the governments of many countries. It leads broad peoples' coalitions in the reconstruction of their countries devastated by the fascist invaders.

The working class in the Socialist Soviet Union, in power now for nearly three decades, has already demonstrated the capacity of the working class to lead the whole people to economic security, democracy, national freedom, and the defense of peace. The workers in the new people's democracies which emerged from the war and the resistance movement, especially in eastern Europe, exercise new influence and power. In the colonial countries as well, the working class is playing the leading role in the struggle of oppressed peoples for freedom and independence.

When we American workers gather in our meeting halls, when we march in the streets of the many cities of our country on this *May Day* we will be marching side by side with the workers of all lands in that spirit of international comradeship to which President Lincoln paid tribute when he declared that "the strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation, should be one uniting all the working people, of all nations and tongues, and kindreds."

* * * *

In the United States the trade unions have become powerful organizations embracing more than 15 million workers. In our country, too, the labor movement is in the forefront of the struggle to defend the well-being and liberties of the people, expressing their will for friendship and peace with all freedom-loving peoples.

In our country, too, the reactionary forces confront a working class determined to safeguard its gains and to make new advances. The working class demonstrated its ability to do this in last year's great wage and strike struggles and is demonstrating it anew in the struggles now in progress. It is ready to carry this fight forward. This is indicated in the current wage negotiation.

This is why Big Business is resorting to greater use of its control of Congress, of both major parties, and of the Truman Administration in order to try to lower the living standards of the people, to weaken and smash the trade unions through anti-labor legislation, while it arrogantly refuses to meet the wage demands of the workers and continues to manipulate the skyrocketing of prices, thus hastening the outbreak of a new economic crisis.

This is why the reactionaries of both major parties in Congress—through the Hartley and Taft bills—are rushing legislation to outlaw nationwide collective bargaining as well as the closed shop and union shop. That is why they are out to reintroduce the hated injunction and to restrict the right to strike. This is why they are out to register the unions and interfere in their internal affairs. This is why they are out to abolish the Wagner Act, the Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Law, and to reduce the trade unions to the status of company unions.

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This is also why Big Business, organized in the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, working through the House Un-American Committee, is gunning for the Communist Party. Is it not clear that those who want to outlaw the closed shop and union shop also want to outlaw the Communist Party? That those who want to restrict the rights of the Communists also want to restrict the rights of the unions? That those who press for the registration of the unions also press for the registration of Communists?

The Communist Party is being attacked because it is a working-class political party, because it has always fought on the side of labor and the people, because it stands in the forefront of the people's struggle against reaction.

We Communists openly proclaim our socialist aims. We are convinced that the majority of our countrymen will also learn, on the basis of their own experience, that only the socialist reorganization of society can put an end, once and for all, to poverty, unemployment, crisis, and war. This better and more progressive America toward which we and millions of our fellow Americans strive will be built only by the American people, led by labor, and on the foundation of a stronger American democracy.

But the Communist Party is being attacked *today* because it fights *today* for the program that the great masses of American people also fight for *today*.

Those who are out to smash the labor movement hope to do this by dividing the labor movement on the issue of Communism.

The attack against the rights of the Communists is, in fact, an attack upon the civil liberties of all the people and, especially, all minority groups. Those who organize the Hitlerite attack against the Communists are defenders of the Jim-Crow system of segregation and discrimination against the Negro people. They are responsible for the disfranchisement of millions of citizens through the poll tax and for the spread of lynching and anti-Semitism.

* * * *

But Big Business and its reactionary political spokesmen can be defeated. They are but a handful. We, the people, are many and strong. The workers, by their united action, can win to their side the working farmers, the Negro people, the white collar and professional workers, the small businessmen—all those who suffer at the hands of Big Business.

All that is necessary is that labor movement together with all other progressives recognize the danger, know who the enemy is, unite, and fight.

This is why on this *May Day* the workers of the A. F. of L., the C.I.O., the Railroad Brotherhoods and other independent unions in union with all

anti-fascists should demonstrate their united will and strength. This same united action is required before *May Day* and on every *May Day*. This unity must be expressed in each factory, in each industry, in each community, in every state and nationally. Unity of labor, unity of labor and the people, the united struggle of the people can and will defeat reaction and fascism.

This unity is needed in the major wage battles now coming to a head.

This unity is needed in the fight against high prices and profiteering.

This unity is needed in the fight for a people's tax program.

This unity is needed in the fight for adequate housing, health and social security.

This unity is needed to defend the welfare of the veterans.

This unity is needed to defend the trade unions.

This unity is needed to defend the rights of the Communists and the Bill of Rights.

This unity is needed to fight for the rights of the Negro people and against anti-Semitism.

This unity is needed to secure a durable and just peace, based on American-Soviet-British friendship and cooperation.

This unity is needed to build a broad democratic coalition for independent political action as an alternative to both major parties which are controlled by the trusts.

Only in this way can the people register their will in the 1948 elections.

May Day must be a giant demonstration of United Labor and People's Action.

NATIONAL BOARD, C.P.U.S.A.
William Z. Foster, Chairman,
Eugene Dennis, General Secretary.

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THE "FOREIGN AGENT" LIE

By EUGENE DENNIS

April 4, 1947

Mr. Thomas C. Clark
U.S. Attorney-General
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Clark:

I read in the *New York Times* of April 2 that Mr. J. Parnell Thomas, chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, addressed a letter to you on April 1.

I notice that Mr. Thomas therein requested that the Department of Justice "take immediate steps to prosecute the Communist Party and its officials for failure to comply with the McCormack Act and the Voorhis Act."

You will observe that Mr. Thomas makes this request on April 1, April Fool's Day. True, many Americans are inclined to take anything Thomas says with many grains of salt on all other days as well. But this, Sir, is a serious matter.

Therefore, Mr. Attorney-General, let us get down to cases.

Anyone who is not historically illiterate knows that the Communist Party of the U.S.A. is an American political party. It is a working-class

political party which was born of America's common people and whose ultimate objective is socialism. In its antecedents it existed in the United States before the American Civil War and played a patriotic and heroic part in that conflict, as recognized by President Lincoln.

Further, the Communist Party is an independent organization making its own decisions, according to its own understanding, to promote the welfare and progress of our country and people. And now, as always, the Communist Party owes its first and only allegiance to the sovereign power that resides in the American people.

As you know, there were Communists in the United States prior to the formation, in 1919, of the Communist International.

The Utopian Communist, Robert Owen, addressed one of the sessions of the United States Congress in the early part of the nineteenth century. William Sylvius, the great American labor leader of the 1870's, was one of the founders of the American Communist movement. And Colonel Joseph Weydemeyer, a foremost American Communist and lifelong friend of Marx, served the Union Army under Lincoln.

On the occasion of his re-election to the Presidency, Abraham Lincoln exchanged fraternal greetings with the first Communist International, whose chairman was Karl Marx.

You are also familiar with the fact that up to 1940 the Communist Party

of the United States, in the form in which it then existed, was affiliated to the Communist International. During this period the Communist Party, which at all times made its own independent decisions, publicized its fraternal relations with that organization. In November, 1940, the Communist Party dissolved its connection with the Communist International and publicly stated its reasons for doing so.

Likewise you know that in 1943 the Communist International itself was dissolved by the unanimous vote of the remaining affiliated parties.

The American Communists were not then subject to either the McCormack or the Voorhis Act. Obviously, then as now, neither the program nor the activity of the Communist Party comes within the scope of these Acts.

What is there today that would indicate that President Roosevelt was wrong when he persistently refused Mr. J. Edgar Hoover's request to include the American Communists either under the McCormack or the Voorhis Act?

Of course, some very un-American gentlemen assert that we American Communists are "foreign agents" because in our general approach to questions of foreign policy our views coincide with the position taken by anti-fascists of other lands. It so happens that other patriotic Americans have taken a position similar to ours. This was true at times of the stand taken by the late President Roose-

velt, who believed that the interests of the United States are served by friendly and not hostile relations with the Soviet Union.

I grant you that on more than one occasion the position of the American Communist Party on foreign affairs has in one or another aspect coincided with the foreign policy advocated by the U.S.S.R. So what? It was in each instance in accord with the interests of the United States and all democratic peoples. Whereas, at this moment, the foreign policy of the present administration and of the Hoover-Vandenberg Republican leadership has in one or another aspect paralleled that of the British Tories—which is *not* in the interests of the United States.

What is important is not whether our position on this or that question may have coincided with the position advocated by some other organization or government. What is important—in fact, what is basic—is whether or not the position that we American Communists have taken on foreign, as well as domestic policy, has protected and advanced the genuine national interests of the American people.

Can any honest American deny that we Communists were correct and acted as real patriots when in the past, as today, we promoted American-Soviet friendship? When we fought to end the shipment of oil and scrap iron to militarist Japan? When we came to the aid of Republican Spain? When we struggled for

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collective security, for quarantining the fascist aggressors? And now, when we bend every effort to ensure Big Three unity and the fulfillment of the Teheran, Yalta, Moscow, and Potsdam accords?

Moreover, Mr. Attorney-General, no matter how strongly many Americans may disagree with the position and program of us Communists—every forthright American knows that we Communists joined hands with our fellow Americans and mobilized everything to help guarantee victory over the enemies of our country, the fascist Axis. Whether it was the 15,000 American Communists who served our country loyally and ably on the battlefields, or the additional thousands who fought on the production line, our war record is the record of patriots.

You must admit, Mr. Attorney-General, that if we American Communists are to be classified as "foreign agents," then, too, all adherents of F.D.R.'s progressive policies, of American-Soviet understanding, and Big Three unity, must be equally branded as "subversive."

For many years the American Federation of Labor was affiliated with the International Federation of Trade Unions. Likewise, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, in full accord with the interests of the American working people, is affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions. The Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. maintain international affiliation. Many millions of our fel-

low Americans who adhere to the Catholic religion also maintain a world-wide affiliation.

No honest man calls these organizations "foreign agents" because of their fraternal bonds of international affiliation, or because this relationship brings them into contact with citizens of other countries who hold diverse political opinions.

Today, as in the past, we American Communists are in profound agreement with Lincoln, who said that "the strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation, should be one uniting all working people, of all nations and tongues and kindreds."

Further, Mr. Attorney-General, if you were to concur in Mr. Parnell Thomas' suggestion, you would, perforce, find it essential to renounce the definition of democracy recently enunciated by Secretary of State Marshall. For you will recall that Mr. Marshall outlined certain democratic rights which in his judgment are applicable for all Germans, including for anti-Nazi Germans of Communist persuasion. Mr. Marshall could recommend this only because the Communist Party of each land is of native origin and comes into being as a result of the specific conditions of social development in its country. And Mr. Marshall did not, and could not, advocate that even German Communists should be registered as "foreign agents."

However, Mr. Attorney-General, I wish to remind you that there are

foreign agents and fifth columnists in almost every part of the globe.

We Americans are painfully conscious of this fact and this curse. For we are saddled with the giant U.S. trusts whose first allegiance is to monopoly profits and, not least of all, to their profitable cartel arrangements with the I. G. Farben industry and their Japanese partners.

We are mindful, too, of the various foreign agents, certain Americans who represent, in the United States, the fascist interests of Franco Spain, monarchist Greece and Chiang Kai-shek in China.

I submit, Mr. Attorney-General, that the American people really want to know the score about our un-American and pro-fascist monopolists—the real foreign agents, the real instigators of America's fifth columnists, *i.e.*, the big corporations who are the paymasters of the K.K.K., the Gerald L. K. Smiths, American Action, Inc., the lynchers, the anti-Semitic gangsters, and the professional anti-Communists.

I submit, Mr. Attorney-General, that all unbiased evidence will show that just as Thomas Jefferson was labeled a Jacobin, a "foreign agent"—so today we American Communists are being labeled foreign agents because we too believe in and fight for "liberty and justice for all."

In conclusion, I respectfully call to your attention the enclosed statement which I endeavored to submit on March 26 to the House Un-American Committee

I also enclose for your information the Constitution of the Communist Party of the United States.

I trust, Sir, that if you are taking Mr. Thomas' un-American recommendation under advisement, you will bear in mind the viewpoint expressed by President Truman in his letter of February 28, 1947, to ex-Governor Earle, in which he (Mr. Truman) states:

People are very much wrought up about the "Communist bugaboo," but I am of the opinion that the country is perfectly safe so far as Communism is concerned. . . .

May I remind you, Mr. Attorney-General, that the oath and obligation of your high office require that you defend and uphold the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights. This means that it is your duty to help preserve the inalienable democratic rights of the whole American people, including American Communists, trade unionists, and the Negro people.

Respectfully,

EUGENE DENNIS,

General Secretary, C.P.U.S.A.

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CHALLENGE TO THE LEGALITY OF THE THOMAS-RANKIN COMMITTEE

By EUGENE DENNIS

April 8, 1947

Hon. J. Parnell Thomas
Chairman, Committee on
Un-American Activities
Old House Office Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

This is to inform you that I shall not attend the meeting of your committee on April 9, 1947.

I wish to make it clear that I have no intention thereby to ignore the authority of any lawful Congressional body.

For the reasons here set forth it is my opinion that the Committee on Un-American Activities is not a lawful Congressional committee and therefore is not a body which may lawfully subpoena witnesses. This opinion is based upon the advice of legal counsel whom I have consulted, to whom I have stated all pertinent information in my possession, and upon whose advice I am relying. From its very inception the Committee on Un-American Activi-

ties has acted with a wanton disregard for the Constitution and laws of the country and the American traditions of fairness and decency. As a result it has drawn the condemnation of outstanding citizens and caused the late President Roosevelt to characterize its behavior as "sordid." The illegality of its acts has become a scandal so notorious as to create a public duty not only to challenge those acts individually, but to establish through due process of law and public opinion the fundamental illegality of the existence of the so-called committee.

I do now challenge the legality of that committee for the following reasons:

I.

First, the resolution under which the committee claims its authority is so vague as to fail to conform to the legal principle that delegated authority must be exactly defined. The committee has *no* authority from the House of Representatives because it has been given *no limitation* of authority. By its acts it has remained within no limits appropriate to a committee of the House, but has arrogated to itself the arbitrary power of a Star Chamber in violation of the Constitution of the United States. The term "un-American" appears in no statute or other legislation. It appears in no executive or administrative regulation. It has been defined by no judicial decision and is unknown to the law. But if it has no legal meaning, the term

"un-American" in the everyday language of the people could mean only something opposed to the liberties of the people and the spirit of the Bill of Rights of our Constitution. But your committee forbids such an interpretation by being itself the violator of the Constitution.

The Communist Party of the United States is a purely American political party. It is the party of the American working class. It is more American than the political parties that serve the narrow interests of wealthier classes. Our American trade unions also were once denounced as of European origin and foreign to America, but they are native organizations serving the interests of 60,000,000 American wage workers and the backbone of our American democracy. So also the American Communist Party is native to this country and necessary to its democratic life, as measured by the only real test, which is loyalty to our country and its people.

II.

Secondly, having abandoned the field of legislative inquiry in which alone Congress could delegate power, this committee has taken upon itself a police authority. And, at that, it is a police authority alien to the American concept of democracy, a lawless police authority, the prohibition of which is the very soul of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution. The so-called committee assumes the functions and prerogatives of a grand jury while in doing so it surpasses

all restrictions placed by law upon a grand jury. Claiming an authority not strictly defined, it acts as a grand jury would if it had no obligation of due process. It assumes much of the function of a criminal court without the obligation to be just or to grant equal protection of the law, smearing and ruining the characters of men and women without according them even the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses or to make a statement in their own defense against defamation.

III.

Thirdly, this committee does not devote itself to any purposes which Congress could delegate, but arrogantly asserts and pursues purposes and objectives having nothing to do with the legislative functions of Congress, in violation of the laws of the United States.

The committee of which you have long been a member and are now chairman, has for many years habitually and purposefully violated the laws of the United States and its Constitution. It has done so to accomplish purposes which are not and could not be legitimate purposes of Congress in forming and delegating authority to a committee. The purposes openly pursued by your committee are:

a. To establish a blacklist of all persons of opposing political opinion, *i.e.*, of persons of democratic political outlook, or identified with any organization defending the constitutional rights and civil liberties of

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our country. One example is the American Labor Party of which the late Franklin D. Roosevelt was the candidate for President.

You compiled a blacklist in violation of a federal statute and did so by illegal raids, unlawful arrests, and illegal searches and seizures. You did so by abstracting names from nominating petitions in violation of law, and from petitions to Congress in violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution, and from the subscription lists of newspapers and periodicals of political views opposed to your own, in defiance of the postal laws of the United States. Nor is this to be denied, for Congressman Mason, one of the members of your committee at the time, said on the floor of Congress on May 17, 1946, speaking of such organizations:

Their records were available, and the Dies Committee did subpoena and seize records of many of these organizations. As a result of that, they compiled a card system of un-American activities and of people engaged in un-American activities of more than 1,000,000 separate indexed cards. (*Congressional Record*, p. 5313.)

In a recent decision, the District Court of the District of Columbia, disclaiming any general criticism of your committee, characterized some of its acts as "misrepresenting . . . its power under the subpoena and its power to act as a committee of the House," and as "representations and actions amounting to duress and coercion . . ." On

that occasion the Court pointed out that the official record of the remarks of the chairman of the time, Martin Dies, confirmed in effect the statement that the committee made use of "the coercive influences of illegal processes and the exercise of representations and actions indicating legal authority" which it did not possess. The Court said, "Of course, the Committee had no such power; the exercise of such power was purely arbitrary." It pointed out that a man whom the Committee sought to convict of contempt was present before the Committee "only by virtue of the coercive influence of illegal, arbitrary power." (*U.S. v. James H. Dolsen*.)

b. To make use of such blacklist by placing it at the disposal of private employers, in violation of law, as shown by the demand by the then chairman that employers utilize such blacklist for the discharge of men and women from employment. All of this is outside of the legislative function of Congress.

c. To intervene in the affairs of trade unions with the same coercive power to influence the choice of one union as against another as a bargaining agent preferred by the employer in defiance of federal law. All of this is outside the legislative function of Congress.

d. To intervene with the pretended authority of Congress, and with the usurped police power of virtual arrest and lawless seizure, in the national and state elections, in the

effort to defeat candidates and political policies representing the "New Deal" tendencies. This was done, for example, in Minnesota to defeat a candidate for governor, and in California to defeat candidates for governor and United States Senator, respectively.

e. To employ on the government payroll one or more agents of subversive fascist, Nazi, and anti-Semitic organizations, conducting simulated "investigations," so as to build up and utilize such Nazi, fascist, and anti-Semitic organizations against the trade unions and political movements of labor and progressive groups, especially attempting to stimulate such fascist organizations as a lawless force to be used against the Communist Party. All of this was evidenced in the so-called examination of the fascist leader of the "Silver Shirt Legion." He testified: "I thought Mr. Hitler had done an excellent job in Germany for the Germans." He testified further that he was promoting his fascist organization by preaching the "sterilization of Jews," that the Jews "are 98 per cent Communist," that he "founded the Silver Legion in 1933, contiguous to the appearance of the so-called New Deal of the Democratic administration . . . to propagandize exactly the same principles that Mr. Dies and this committee are engaged in prosecuting right now; in other words, antagonism to subversive influence in the United States."* One of the booklets he attempted to

circulate in 100,000 copies was a work written by J. Parnell Thomas, then a member of this committee and now its chairman.

f. To use the pretended authority of a committee of Congress to influence the foreign policy of the United States by baiting and branding as "subversive" and "un-American" those Americans who support the policy of adherence to the United Nations. By means of fantastic slanders borrowed from the Nazi party of Germany, this committee has sought to foment hatred of other nations, and particularly the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in the interest of the reactionary political trends toward abandonment of the policies of collective peace adopted by this country under the leadership of Roosevelt.

IV.

Fourthly, the composition of this committee is contrary to law, in that it does not consist solely of persons lawfully holding membership in the House of Representatives of the United States. At least one person is acting as a member of the committee who is not duly and lawfully seated as a member of the House of Representatives. It is an established principle of law that a taint of illegality in a body vested with public authority, even if long tolerated, becomes intolerable and of great importance when by its actions the rights and liberties of men and women are placed in jeopardy.

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gality in its origin, invokes criminal law to inflict penalties upon men and women for failure to comply with arbitrary commands, unlawful searches and seizures, bodily kidnaping, libel and property damage, solely under the cloak of authority purportedly derived from Congress, then the victims have the right, and the public authority has the duty, to scrutinize with cold logic the claims of authority of such a committee.

On this ground, too, I challenge this committee's authority. I deny its claim to be a lawfully constituted committee of the House of Representatives of the United States. I challenge its right to call and question witnesses or to perform any of the functions of a lawfully constituted committee of the House of Representatives. John E. Rankin, acting as a member of your committee, is not a lawfully elected, nor duly seated member of the House of Representatives of the United States. He holds his seat in Congress in violation of the Constitution and beyond the power of the House under Article I, Section 5, of the Constitution to "be the judge of the election, returns, and qualifications of its own members." Congress has unquestioned authority to be the judge of those matters under Article I, Section 5, of the Constitution. But it has no right to qualify as representatives from a state a larger number of persons than apportioned to

that state under other provisions of the Constitution.

Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution says:

But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of Electors for President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a state, or the members of the legislature thereof, is denied to any of the . . . * inhabitants of such State, being 21 years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such . . . * citizens shall bear to the whole number of . . . * citizens 21 years of age in such state.

I dispute the lawfulness of the tenure of a seat in Congress and therefore membership in this committee by John E. Rankin.

At the opening of the Eightieth Congress, the House of Representatives had authority to seat whatever person or persons it might itself judge to be duly elected and qualified as a representative from Mississippi. It has such authority independently of the judgment of any other authority, *provided* only that the *number* seated should not exceed the limitation fixed by Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The House of Representatives went beyond its authority in seating

* Record of the Un-American Committee, volume 12, pp. 7207-7208.

* The word "male" was eliminated by the Woman Suffrage amendment.

seven persons as representatives of the State of Mississippi.

The total number of inhabitants of Mississippi "21 years of age, and citizens of the United States," at the time of the election of November, 1946, was in excess of the number 1,195,079 which was the number found by the Census of 1940. Allowance being made for voluntary abstentions from voting, no less than 750,000 would be the normal number of citizens of Mississippi who would actually cast their votes in an election in which the right to vote was neither "denied" nor "in any way" abridged. But only 46,493 votes were cast in Mississippi in that election.

Thus well above 700,000 citizens of Mississippi of voting age failed to vote for reasons that cannot be assumed to be voluntary.

The 14th Amendment was proposed by Congress and ratified by all of the Northern states and 12 Southern states. Its purpose was to remove from American life the disfranchisement of the people by which Rankin now sits in the House and Bilbo is striving to be seated in the Senate. Its first section determined, and removed from the jurisdiction of Congress and the states, the status of citizens as "all persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to its jurisdiction." Its second section equally determined as a matter of Constitutional law, and for the purpose of removing the matter from the power of Congress, that

when the right to vote is denied "or in any way abridged," "the basis for representation therein shall be reduced" in the same proportion.

The Constitution declared that this reduction shall take place even if the abridgement of the right to vote is entirely *legal*, that is, if the right is "in any way abridged." This provision has the sole purpose of preventing the seating of persons in the House of Representatives of the United States whose "election" was accomplished by barring citizens from the polls as in the case of the disgraceful fraud (regardless of whether it be a "legal" fraud) by which Rankin was allegedly elected. It applies to "sophisticated" methods of disfranchisement, as it is put by *American Jurisprudence* (Vol. 18).

The second section of this Amendment has the express purpose of protecting the right to vote of the Negro people of the South. Its method is to prohibit the seating of more than a reduced number of persons who might claim seats in Congress on otherwise "lawful" certificates of election from states in which the Negro people were denied the vote. This was recognized by the United States Supreme Court which said:

We doubt very much whether any action of a state not directed by way of discrimination against the Negroes as a class, or on account of their race, will ever be held to come within the purview of this provision. It is so clearly a provision for that race and that emergency, that a strong case would be necessary for its application to any other.

(Slaughter decision)

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(Slaughter House Cases, April 14, 1873; decision written by Mr. Justice Miller.)

The subsequent drive against the Constitution of the United States succeeded by means a number of crimes. These included murders of no less than 4,000 Negro citizens partly under the aegis of the Ku Klux Klan of which Theodore G. Bilbo is now an open and boastful member, and by the support of which more than 100,000 citizens were disfranchised in the First Congressional District of Mississippi in order to bring about the "election" of John E. Rankin by 5,429 votes.

There is no serious denial that the Constitution is flagrantly violated in the seating of seven alleged representatives of Mississippi in the House of Representatives, or that the Congress itself has no power to seat more than a reduced number.

The general cynicism that has been assumed in the civic and political corruption personified by John E. Rankin is depicted in so well recognized an authority as the *Encyclopedia Americana*. It states that "such amendments as have been added to the Constitution to promote equality of electoral qualifications have not been rigorously enforced by the central government. Such amendments are almost the biggest blind spots of Congress and the national administration." It undertakes to explain the habitual and overt violations of the 14th Amendment as "inevitable," saying:

Suffrage qualifications have been laid

down by the nation which are contrary to the *mores* of large elements of its population.*

The *mores* (that is, the customs) here referred to are the customs by which the men of the Bilbo and Rankin political type systematically and by organized violence and conspiracy prevent the majority of the population of several Southern states from exercising the right to vote. They are the customs, in accord with which five Negroes were murdered by the supporters of Talmadge in Georgia in 1946 in the regular process of suppressing the Negroes' right to vote. The *Encyclopedia* apologetically explains that "Shrewd, or politically minded, executives and congressmen long ago realized that such rules were impracticable, hence unenforceable." It fully admits that such states "are open to the definite penalty of the 14th Amendment," but it adds that "it seems tacitly understood that no serious effort will be made to enforce the amendment strictly."

This authority says that the Constitution, insofar as this provision is concerned, is "allowed to slide gently into the discard in fairly strict accord with the warnings of the sociologists."*

The "sociologists" in this case are, for example, Bilbo, who openly declares "I am a member of the Ku Klux Klan" and speaks on the Senate floor of "N—rs" and "Kikes" and

* John W. Tait, Ph.D., Kansas Wesleyan University, in *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1946, Vol. 10, pp. 72-73.

"Dagoes" and advocates the disenfranchisement of further millions of Americans, and Rankin, under whose guidance this committee conducts an "investigation" allegedly for legislative purposes of Congress by enquiring "how many Jews there are in the Communist Party."

Practically all the 550,000 Negro citizens of Mississippi of voting age remained away from the polls under threats of murder made by the leader of the Democratic Party of Mississippi and its candidate for United States senator. He openly spoke of murder as a means he favored for keeping the Negro citizens from voting.

The interpretation of the United State Constitution upon which the election of Messrs. John E. Rankin and Theodore G. Bilbo to the House and Senate in 1946 depends is the Dred Scott Decision of 90 years ago. According to this decision Negroes were "so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect," and Negroes living in the South were not included in the words "people" and "citizens." The purpose of the 14th Amendment is to make that interpretation forever impossible.

I speak as a Communist in defending the Constitution against you who are subverting it.

But I think I am expressing here the point of view of all of those who defend the rights guaranteed to the American people by the United

States Constitution. It is the point of view of those who, in these dangerous times in which we live, wish to preserve our civil liberties as a means of solving the grave problems of our nation in accord with its great progressive traditions, its Constitution, and its democratic institutions.

Yes, we, the American Communists, together with a legion of other patriotic Americans, will carry this fight to the people as a struggle to preserve the character of this nation as a democratic Republic. We will carry on this fight in the spirit of the American Constitution.

We are confident that we will win this fight, and that the Gestapo which you seek to implant in the American system in place of our constitutional liberties will go down as an ugly memory along with the Alien and Sedition Laws which once menaced Jefferson with arrest, and threatened the party he founded with suppression as a "foreign agent."

Your un-American assaults upon the Constitution will be rejected by the American people as were the similar deeds of A. Mitchell Palmer and his assistant, J. Edgar Hoover, who, after World War I, tried as you do to destroy the great American trade unions and the political rights of labor, the farmers, and the Negro people.

Yours truly,

EUGENE DENNIS
35 East 12th Street
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THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE

By JOSEPH STAROBIN

THE TRUMAN DOCTRINE is already proving to be a very important turning point in American politics, the most vital feature of which is that all the fundamental questions of direction in domestic and international affairs have been brought before a wider section of our people in clearer, more active terms than ever before.

The question of "where America is going," or "where America is being taken" presses itself more insistently. The debate in Congress and in the press is only a pale reflection of the fears and doubts, the groping for answers to fundamental questions that affect all classes.

The debate is not ended by Congressional votes. The conflict over American foreign policy is so deep, and interlinks domestic and foreign policy so profoundly, that it cannot be resolved by rushing measures through Congress. The March 31 deadline came and went, but the "collapse" which the President and the press shouted about did not take place in Greece or Turkey. There is, however, a real deadline for the American people; the issues raised by the Truman Doctrine will run over into 1948. Our people will have

the opportunity within the next 18 months to make decisions which can save us—and much of the world—from disaster.

UNABASHED IMPERIALISM

The doctrine of unabashed imperialism projected by President Truman on March 12, is a logical development of the Democratic Party's systematic betrayal of the 1944 campaign platform; it flows from the "get tough" program of the biggest monopoly capitalists, expressed in the bipartisan cooperation of Senator Vandenberg and former Secretary of State James Byrnes—but it is more than that, too.

The Truman Doctrine is an attempt to make a big new advance for American imperialism. Hoping to frighten the weaker states into complete dependence on the United States, American monopoly seeks, in the form of an anti-Soviet coalition, to make big, new inroads into the British and the French empires; at the same time, American monopoly seeks to take up positions from which to pressure the Soviet Union, with the possibility of eventual attack. In the process, American monopoly wants to entrench itself in the rich oil preserves of the Near East and through control of this oil to gain a stranglehold over its own allies which depend on it.

The Truman Doctrine is intended to prevent the stabilization of the new Europe, as reflected in the January 19 victory of the Polish gov-

ernment and the inauguration of the new French Republic, governed by the three-party coalition. The bolstering of fascism in Greece is a signal for fascist, anti-democratic conspiracies throughout Europe, especially in western Europe. The building up of a strategic position in southeastern Europe is an advance indication of the American support that will be forthcoming to every counterpart of the Greek monarchists in other countries. And the tightening of American imperialist domination in Greece is an indication of what other peoples must be prepared to pay if they permit a Greek-type of development in their own lands.

The Truman Doctrine was intended to cancel out the strengthened position of the Soviet Union after the last General Assembly meeting in New York and the successful writing of the peace treaties for the Balkan countries, Finland, and Italy. It was intended to frighten the Soviet Union on the eve of the decisive bargaining over the future of Germany. The Truman declaration was a signal that every effort would be directed toward hampering the reconstruction of the U.S.S.R., and that every effort would be made to take advantage of the Soviet Union's difficult postwar situation.

The domestic objectives dovetailed with the objectives abroad. The Doctrine was expected to strengthen the President himself within the ranks of

the big bourgeoisie and advance his candidacy within the Democratic Party. It was intended to secure partisan initiative in the furtherance of the reactionary bipartisan foreign policy. By creating an atmosphere of a crusade for the defense of the nation against "Communism," the monopoly capitalists thought to cripple the labor movement's struggle for higher wages and in defense of their unions; labor was to be prevented from expressing itself on foreign affairs, and the Communists and the Left generally were to be isolated on issues of foreign policy to assist the weakening of the trade unions on bread-and-butter problems. The Doctrine was intended to provide the atmosphere for pushing through the huge military budget while forcing through anti-labor legislation—and all of this was in anticipation of the popular struggles against inflation which were bound to intensify with the expected economic crisis.

These were the intentions and calculations. But the Doctrine has also had the effect of awakening counter-tendencies, at home and abroad. Some of these tendencies have already developed to a surprising extent. We are only beginning to see their impact.

FALSE ARGUMENTS

It takes no special powers of analysis to debunk the arguments which have been advanced for the Doctrine itself. Though it rests on enormous falsehoods, and has been

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presented with deceptive hysteria, the Doctrine's unofficial spokesmen have been very frank with their explanations. The facts have accumulated swiftly to contradict the reasons offered for the new policy and to clarify its real purpose. No wonder that the Gallup Poll found 56 per cent of our people favoring aid to Greece through the United Nations on March 28 and 63 per cent two weeks later—the more the explanations, the deeper the opposition among the broad masses.

For example, the idea of extending huge gifts to Greece and Turkey (no one bothers to insist that the \$400,000,000 will be repaid) on the grounds that these countries are democratically governed did not stand up very long.

The very inclusion of the Turkish police state along with Greece made it impossible for anyone to argue that we are coming to the rescue of democracy. As for the character of the Greek government, the more it is explored, the more Americans have learned a few indisputable facts which only the Left had exposed before. William L. Shirer, in the *New York Herald-Tribune* for April 20, discovers, upon discussion with non-Communist American intelligence officers who were in Greece during the war that:

... as for the Greek parliament neither the Center nor the Left is represented in it. There are men prominent in the Greek government who collaborated with the Nazis and others

who did nothing to oppose them. Army leadership has been recruited almost exclusively from the Royalists, most of whom regard even a conservative Republican as a "Communist." Quisling forces formed by the Germans to fight non-collaborationist Greeks have been incorporated into the new Greek Army. The police force in Greece is substantially the same one that served the dreaded Metaxas dictatorship and later the Germans.

The idea that the Truman program represents economic assistance to war-ravaged nations on the verge of collapse is also no more than official mythology. Turkey cannot be classified as war-ravaged; she was a war profiteer. Henry Wallace originally made this charge; in the *New York Times* for April 20, Raymond Daniell documents it with the fact that Turkey has a favorable trade balance of 200,000,000 lira, has increased her gold reserve from twenty-five tons to more than 200 tons in the war years. The fact that she insists on maintaining an army of 750,000 men which heavily drains her economy does not, of course, mean that she merits the type of aid which perpetuates this militarization; a policy of friendship with her neighbors could make such an army unnecessary.

As for Greece, it is now a matter of record that her corrupt rulers have run through five or six hundred million dollars' worth of economic assistance, which has given these same ruling circles fantastic luxur-

ies. The Greek regime, as Daniell reported, has refused to institute elementary income taxes, or import controls. Greece's upper classes have exported \$50,000,000 for safe re-investment in the United States; and if it is true that a case can be made for Greece's economic rehabilitation, certainly her present rulers cannot be entrusted with that project.

To top it off, the United States is not proposing economic help in the main. Under-Secretary William L. Clayton has testified that at least five-eighths of the \$250,000,000 will go for military equipment, doubling the Greek Army to 200,000 men and rebuilding those types of transport which facilitate military activity.

The notion that the United States is generously answering an appeal for help from Britain in assuming these "responsibilities" in the eastern Mediterranean is just public-relations hogwash from Washington.

While it is clear that British imperialism sought American assistance in keeping Greece in a reactionary vise, the British Foreign Office was surprised by the sweep of the American embrace, for there is no record of a request from Britain, or for that matter from Turkey, for the kind and scope of the American program. The supposed British withdrawal from Greece, described in our press with such fake pathos, is not a withdrawal at all, for it seems that British fiscal, military, and legal missions are remaining. The withdrawal of

British bayonets was relegated from the March 31 deadline to "as soon as practicable." The portrait of Uncle Sam as Sir Walter Raleigh gallantly assisting British royalty out of the Greek quagmire needs considerable re-touching. Britain's crisis is a real one; British economic strength is not adequate, even with all the willingness of her Social-Democratic leaders, to hold the Empire together on the old basis in the face of tremendous movements for national liberation in almost every part of the world. But there is no evidence that the British are giving up their positions in the eastern Mediterranean; at most they are using the cry of help in Greece to get the United States to pay for some of the costs in the hope of gaining time to contest the tightened American grip. Certainly, Britain is not yielding position in the strategic zone of her empire; American arguments to this effect are simply a case of the wish being father to the thought.

AN ATTACK ON THE U.N.

The most revealing deception, however, revolves around the relation between the Truman Doctrine and the United Nations. On this point, every attempt to repair the official embarrassment before our own people has only exposed the real hostility of American imperialism to the very foundations of the United Nations.

In the first phase of the debate, it was argued that the United Nations

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could not act in Greece at all. Then it was discovered that a subcommittee of the Food and Agriculture Organization has actually made a study of Greek conditions since last Spring, and brought in a proposal for assistance to the extent of \$100,000,000, which, it is claimed, could triple Greece's national income.

Then it was argued that the U.N. did not have military power to stop the fighting in Greece and "restore order." But a subcommittee of the Security Council has been sent to investigate the so-called border fighting on the initiative of the United States. The State Department has never explained why this commission, which is certainly partial to American influence, could not report to the Council whether Greece was actually in danger, and propose that the Council take action. As for the argument that the U.N. could not act in time, at least eight weeks will have passed since Truman's speech; several months have gone by since the first reports from the special ambassador to Greece, Paul Porter. Who can say that the United Nations could not have acted more quickly than the American Congress?

Finally, in response to terrific public questioning and a sharp query by the U.N.'s Secretary-General, the State Department was forced to admit that the U.N. had really been by-passed. The Vandenberg amendment and the speeches of Senator Warren Austin were a confession in themselves.

The simplest thing would have been for the United States to bring its complaints before the Security Council; instead Senator Vandenberg gave the U.N. one of the most cynical insults it has yet sustained. He proposed that the United States would desist from its unilateral course on a double condition: that two-thirds of the General Assembly and a simple majority of the Security Council would request it, and, second, that a program of aid to Greece and Turkey identical with that proposed by the United States should already be in force.

This is nothing less than a project to undermine the U.N. entirely. What does it mean to propose a simple majority in the Council? It means to abandon the principle of unanimity among the great powers, and use the Greek issue as a lever for so doing. By treating a substantive question as a procedural one, Vandenberg discloses how much he wants to get around the hard fact that the Soviet Union is a member of the United Nations. Senator Harry Byrd went to the logical conclusion of this idea when he burst out with the project of a "showdown with Russia" that would oust her from the U.N. entirely.

Vandenberg's second condition—that the U.N. must accept the American policy and must have already put it into effect before the United States desists from its course—boils down to a crude ultimatum, the unilateral dictation by the United

States. The United Nations becomes an adjunct of the State Department. The United Nations is treated as an agency without a policy of its own, which we are committed to uphold; the United Nations becomes, in Vandenberg's proposal, the property of American imperialist policy-makers. This is not the way to uphold the U.N.; it is the way to kill it.

NOT A PATH TO PEACE

One other aspect of the Truman Doctrine needs discussion before we go back to examine its impact on the domestic and international scene. This is the argument that a "firm" stand against Communism is a path to peace, an argument which recognizes in a distorted way the universal desire for peace, the popular fear of war and opposition to war.

Commentators like Walter Lippmann have tried their best to dress up the Truman Doctrine by admitting that it militarizes Greece and Turkey, but claiming that this is only for the purpose of securing a "peaceful settlement" from the Soviet Union. To read Lippmann, one would think that the Soviet Union is dead-set against a settlement and has to be brought round by a display of American military and air and naval power at the Dardenelles.

The inherently war-like character of the Truman Doctrine was, of course, shown by Under-Secretary Dean Acheson's hesitation in saying flatly that the State Department's policy was a policy of peace. Senator

Arthur Vandenberg was more candid when he called it the "better of calculated risks." Lippmann's elaborate thesis of securing an "equilibrium of power" is also a fancy way of admitting that war, not peace, is inherent in the Truman course.

If it were a question of a real settlement between the Soviet Union and the United States, it might logically be asked why Lippmann does not propose a return to the series of wartime settlements of Teheran, Potsdam, and Yalta? Lippmann himself in his *U.S. Foreign Policy* was prepared (in 1944) to grant what he himself considered legitimate Soviet security interests in eastern Europe.

The Truman Doctrine aims to nullify these very security interests, and that is why the new equilibrium which Lippmann pretends to seek is no more reliable a path to peace than the older ones which American imperialism disavowed. By dominating Greece and Turkey, the United States is proposing to take up positions for outflanking Yugoslavia and Bulgaria and driving toward Rumania. Combined with the current pressure on Hungary, it is plain that the United States does not want a settlement; it wants to make an incursion into eastern Europe, to reduce the Soviet Union's security interests that were previously recognized, and to deal with the U.S.S.R. as a secondary state in her pre-1939 position.

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cessfully reduced in this way, would the new equilibrium mean anything, we might ask Lippmann? Would not this only intensify the imperialist appetites of American monopoly-capital, exactly as every forward step of Nazi imperialism created no new equilibria, but simply a point of departure for new aggression?

The Truman Doctrine is similar to the "get tough" policy, of Vandenberg and Byrnes, which also promised our people that if only the United States were tough enough, the outcome would be peace, and not war. Actually the Vandenberg-Byrnes policy led to the discovery of new "crises" and the Truman Doctrine; all such policies are simply a one-way street, inevitably making for new demands on the American people. And as the new policy fails to accomplish its ostensible purpose, our rulers will come back to our people and ask us to go deeper and more quickly into the quagmire which American imperialism is itself creating on the thesis that there is no turning back.

DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL OPPOSITION

The Truman Doctrine, said Henry Wallace in his address of March 31, must have the effect of "uniting the world against us and disuniting the American people." In this brief phrase, Wallace has glimpsed the fundamental truth that the consequences of the Truman Doctrine are

likely to work out exactly contrary to the expectations of its authors.

Already, we are witnessing in the international field a developing opposition to the United States policies. At the Moscow parley, for example, the Truman Doctrine did not have the anticipated effect of frightening the Soviet Union. The Soviet task was certainly made more difficult, but the Soviet leaders have stood firm on a program for a democratic Germany—economic unity, political centralization, reparations out of production, and special four-power controls for the Ruhr. If our senators thought that the U.S.S.R. would be panicked by the impact of the Truman Doctrine, they were mistaken.

International reaction has, of course, rallied to the State Department. Francisco Franco, the hated murderer of his people, considers that the United States is finally embarking on a course which he blazed in 1936; Winston Churchill recognizes and admits his own contributions to the Truman policy a year ago; Premier Shigeru Yoshida of Japan is encouraged to feel that the conquerors are taking over where the conquered left off. A whole series of the most discredited fascist and pro-fascist circles have been quick, and even supercilious, in applauding the new American course.

But in Britain, France, and a series of other countries, the Truman Doctrine has been received with caution, coolness and opposition. We shall see reflections of the growing

antipathy to American policy (even from those who depend on American loans) in places like Geneva where the preliminary international trade organization conference is meeting, and wherever the hard material interests of the nations come up against each other.

In Britain, the semi-official welcome for Henry Wallace spoke eloquently for the British people; the Cooperative Party, one of the Labor Party's important constituent bodies, went on record at a recent convention against the Truman Doctrine and for a new British foreign policy; many British unions are equally outspoken. The increasing rumors of Ernest Bevin's dismissal from the Foreign Office reflects the opinion in London that the American advance "across the throat of the British Empire" will undermine Britain's recovery and ultimately the Empire itself. The left-Laborites like Zilliacus and Crossman have expressed themselves in vigorous and picturesque terms. The Communist Parties of the British Empire, following their remarkable conference in February, have declared their purpose:

To organize entirely new relationships between the peoples of Britain and the Dominions and the colonial peoples still fighting for their freedom and independence from British imperialism, so that we may pool our common resources for the betterment of our peoples, win democratic self-government for all Empire peoples, and

national freedom from any plans of world domination by American imperialism or by any bloc of Anglo-American reaction.

BRITISH REACTION

The forces at work within the Anglo-American relationship are of course complex and contradictory. The main body of the Tories are attracted toward the brutish anti-Communism in the United States just as they were attracted, and sought to use, Nazi Germany. And they see in the United States a source of support in the coming attempt to overthrow the Labor Government.

But there is a real enough tactical division. Some Tories, represented by the former colonial secretary, Leopold Amery, fear the price which the Empire will have to pay in return for American imperialist aid; others like Churchill are prepared to pay the price, and even accept for a time, the position of a junior partner.

The Social-Democrats like Bevin, Atlee, and Morrison are equally fascinated by the anti-Communist possibilities of American support; they see the prospect of maintaining with American help a basis for reaction in western and southern Europe. At most, their calculation is that the United States will help rebuild Britain's shattered economy and that Britain, once her economy is rebuilt, will be able to escape the consequences of dependence on America's reactionary ambitions.

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On the British Left, there is a growing realization that the more reactionary American policy becomes, the more anti-British it will become also. With reliance upon American imperialism, the worldwide effects of American economic policy and approaching crisis will make recovery for Britain impossible. The Left therefore seeks an alternative; the British Communists have pointed the way by urging a decisive break in principle with imperialism, simultaneous with the establishment of a new relationship among the peoples now in the Empire and a new solidarity with the Soviet Union and the European democracies. And the more the British people seek to resist being used for anti-Communist crusades by Wall Street, the more Britain will begin to be considered over here in the category of an unreliable, "crypto-Communist" nation scheduled for rescue by the Yankee Saint George.

Other nations—especially France and in Scandinavia—are reacting in a similar way. Sweden's decision to institute strict import controls, following on the Swedish trade agreement with the Soviet Union, was a clear case of desiring to escape too intimate an involvement with the American imperialist economy.

The Truman Doctrine, far from making friends for the American people, must inevitably build up hostile attitudes against us. Interventionism, now applauded by former isolationists like Charles Lind-

bergh, is bound to have the effect of isolating us.

DOMESTIC ALIGNMENTS ON THE ISSUE

At home, the Truman Doctrine has set off very important political changes, the full effects of which are still to be seen.

The Truman Doctrine has the united support of the main body of the Democratic and Republican leadership in Congress. All but a few of the Democratic senators have gone along with it, while in the G.O.P. the most effective backing has come from Senator Arthur Vandenberg. But it should be noted that Thomas E. Dewey, Alf Landon, and, finally, Senator Robert Taft also came to Truman's support.

This range of unity showed that the Administration is putting forward a program which expresses the general aim of American imperialism. It demonstrates to the nation and to the world that with respect to the aims of American monopoly capital the two major parties in the United States are practically indistinguishable. Thus, the Truman Doctrine confirms the analysis made by American Communists well over a year ago that U.S. monopoly capitalism is united on a program of imperialist expansion.

On the other hand, it is well to keep in mind the stresses and strains within this united front of reaction. The differences do not arise from fundamental principle, but the dif-

ferences are present; and, in the face of popular skepticism and increasing popular opposition, the coming crisis, and the 1948 election campaign, these differences are bound to play a role.

One consequence of the Truman Doctrine is that while Truman saw a partisan advantage in sponsoring it, he must accept the fullest responsibility for being its author. Truman has actually set the foreign policy for both the Democrats and the Republicans; but it remains to be seen whether monopoly capital will consider Truman, or perhaps a Vandenberg, the better defender of its interests in the next election campaign.

There is, however, a significant section of American capital, with many spokesmen in Congress, who have opposed or seriously questioned the Truman Doctrine from another angle. These are represented by Joseph P. Kennedy, the former ambassador to Britain; Ernest Weir, of the National Steel Company; Senator Harry Byrd among the Democrats; and Senator Chapman Revercomb among the Republicans.

Such circles are among the most virulent American imperialists. Their differences with Truman stem from special and differentiated group interests within the American imperialist camp. The Kennedy-Weir approach is just as reactionary as the Vandenberg - Dewey - Landon position.

But as the cost of expansion increases—already all foreign policy

commitments since August, 1945, have cost sixteen billion dollars—these tactical differences may become more substantial. It is a feature of American imperialist expansion today that in its first phases it cannot bring profits to many sections of business, while it demands a high level of the national debt and a high level of taxes. The seed-bed of world domination has to be fertilized with large expenditures, on which the money-return for the bourgeoisie as a whole will not be visible for a long time. And the division of the returns is bound to be unequal. The huge cost and precariousness of this imperialist adventure preclude the likelihood of added bribes to the aristocracy of American labor on the style which bought off the aristocracy of labor in Britain during the last century, for example. A large section of small and middle business has nothing to gain in Greece and Turkey, while it must shoulder, along with the working people, the major share of the costs. Only a handful of monopoly concerns—in the oil industry and the war industries—can see any immediate benefits from the Truman Doctrine, or are powerful enough to shift the burden of it to other groups. This is bound to produce opposition to the new course, no matter how inconsistent and unprincipled.

In the light of this, the support for the Truman Doctrine among American Social-Democratic leaders stands out as a gross betrayal of the interests

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of the American people of world peace. The Dubinsky forces and the A. F. of L. top leadership have shown their subservience to American imperialism in the time-honored traditions of all Social-Democrats. Even here, however, the sense of inevitable frustration and the general impact of popular disapproval caused vacillations in the middle class groupings which the Social-Democrats infiltrate. Charles Bolte, the A.V.C. leader, reports in the *Nation* for April 12, that in voting support for the Truman plan, many A.D.A. figures did so "holding their noses."

But the most dramatic internal consequence of the Truman Doctrine was its impact on the Wallace forces inside the Democratic Party, and the considerable mass of independent opinion, working-class and middle-class, which looks to Wallace for a lead.

Here it must be admitted that only a small section of the American labor movement has expressed itself clearly against the Truman Doctrine. A few unions of the C.I.O. and the people's organizations on the Left have spoken plainly. But the bulk of the labor movement, while its members comprise the skeptical, reluctant majority on which the Truman Doctrine is being forced, has not spoken up and given a clear lead to the rest of the country.

Though the main feature of the present situation is the lack of enthusiasm, the doubt, the skepticism, and increasingly open opposition

among broad masses for the Truman Doctrine, Wallace himself has passed over from criticizing the course of U.S. imperialism to an open and organized struggle against it. By his speeches before visiting Europe, and by his courageous stand while in Europe, and now with his projected "campaign tour" of the mid-west and the far-west, Wallace is not only expressing this deep-going doubt; he is also organizing the masses against the imperialist course.

This is why Wallace has been attacked with such ferocity in Congress and in the press: for the attack upon him is an admission of the popularity of the views which he voices, an admission that the ruling circles fear not only criticism, but above all, organization of the people against them.

Reaction recognizes that even though Wallace still speaks within the framework of the Democratic Party, and disavows any practical plans to organize a third party, the impact of his activity leads in the direction of a third party. For if the resentment which Wallace voices does not make an impression within the decisive leadership of the Democrats, and the self-appointed role of Tom Clark in answering Wallace shows this to be the case, then the movement for peace, the movement against imperialism, must take a form that rises above the two major political parties. Wallace himself recognizes this when he stresses that when a third party comes, it

will come from the people themselves.

By going abroad, in response to semi-official invitation from Britain and France, Wallace was able to debate the Truman Doctrine on the real level of international relations; the response which he received abroad shows what powerful forces are accumulating in western Europe against the Truman Doctrine, and how eagerly the whole world is awaiting an alternative to the Truman-Vandenberg policies.

By going abroad, Wallace exposed the virtual censorship to which he had been subjected at home; by going abroad, he pointed up, to the very countries that are to be saved "from Communism," the real essence of the Truman Doctrine; and by the same act, Wallace showed millions of Americans that the true policy of American leadership lies today in an anti-imperialist direction.

In the longer run, the importance of the Wallace initiative will depend on whether it goes to its logical conclusion—the organization of a third party of the common people. It will also depend on whether Wallace couples his attack on foreign policy with a clearer and more concrete stand on the domestic issues—the threat of crisis and inflation, the anti-labor legislation, and the witch-hunt against progressives and Ameri-

can Communists in the government, the trade unions, and popular organizations. Wallace's general stand is known on these issues; he has the great opportunity of linking his foreign policy position with these problems in a new and dramatic way.

Our people are today more prepared to see the connection between a wrong foreign policy and a ruinous domestic policy.

They are more prepared to seek new roads for their defense and advancement—roads which lead outside the two major parties.

Our people are seeking leadership today, seeking answers to their questions, seeking an alternative to the anti-popular policies which they feel that both major parties are following.

The Truman Doctrine has had the effect of stimulating all these moods and desires. It lays the basis for a wide democratic unity on a platform of anti-imperialism abroad and progressive advance at home, the platform associated with Roosevelt and today symbolized by Wallace.

The struggle for such a platform, and a line-up of forces capable of realizing it, has begun. The sooner it makes headway in a serious way, the more probably we can reach a favorable decision on America's destiny in 1948.

STALIN'S REPLY TO PROFESSOR RAZIN

(Translated from the *Bolshevik*,
No. 3, February, 1947.)*

DEAR COMRADE RAZIN:

I have received your letter of January 30 [1946] concerning Clausewitz and your short theses on "War and Military Art."

1. You ask: "Have not Lenin's statements evaluating Clausewitz become outdated?"

In my opinion the question is wrongly posed.

From such a posing of the question, it might be thought that Lenin had analyzed the military doctrine and military works of Clausewitz, given them a military evaluation and left us a heritage of a series of guiding propositions on leadership. Such a posing of the question is wrong because such "propositions" by Lenin on the military doctrine of Clausewitz and his works do not exist.

Lenin differed from Engels in that he did not consider himself an expert in military affairs. It was not only in the past before the October Revolution that he did not consider himself an expert in military affairs, but also later after the October Revo-

lution up to the very end of the Civil War. During the Civil War, Lenin gave us, who were then the still young comrades of the Central Committee, the task of "studying military affairs absolutely thoroughly." As for himself, he frankly told us that it was already late for him to study military affairs. This also explains why, in his comments on Clausewitz and observations on Clausewitz's book, Lenin does not touch upon purely military questions such as questions of military strategy and tactics and their mutual relationship or the mutual connections between the offensive and the retreat, defense and the counter-offensive and so forth.

What was there in Clausewitz, then, that interested Lenin, and why did he praise him?

He praised Clausewitz above all because, without being a Marxist, Clausewitz, who in his day enjoyed the authority of an expert in military affairs, confirmed in his works the well-known Marxist proposition that there is a direct connection between war and politics, that politics give birth to war, that war is a continuation of politics by violent means. Lenin required the support of Clausewitz in this matter in order once more to convict Plekhanov, Kautsky, and others of Social-Chauvinism, of Social-Imperialism.

He further praised Clausewitz because Clausewitz confirmed in his works the proposition, which is correct from the Marxist point of view,

* Reprinted from *World News and Views*, No. 11, March 29, 1947.

that in certain unfavorable conditions, the retreat is as legitimate a form of struggle as the offensive. Lenin required the support of Clausewitz here in order once more to convict the "left" Communists who did not recognize the retreat as a legitimate form of struggle.

It follows that Lenin approached the works of Clausewitz not as a military man, but as a politician and was interested in those questions in Clausewitz's work which demonstrate the connection of war with politics.

Thus when critically evaluating the military doctrine of Clausewitz, we, the heirs of Lenin, are not bound by any directions from Lenin which limit our freedom of criticism.

It follows from this that your estimation of Comrade M's article which criticizes Clausewitz's military doctrine as "an anti-Leninist sortie" and as a "revision" of Lenin's estimation, is wide of the mark.

2. Should we criticize the essence of Clausewitz's Military Doctrine?

Yes. We should. From the standpoint of the interests of our work and of the military science of our time, we are bound to criticize not only Clausewitz, but also Moltke, Schlieffen, Ludendorff, Keitel, and other exponents of the military ideology of Germany. In the last thirty years Germany has twice unleashed bloody war against the world and both times she has been beaten. Is this accidental? Of course not. Does this not mean that not only Germany

as a whole, but also her military ideology could not stand the test? Undoubtedly it does. Everybody knows with what respect the military men of the entire world, including even our Russian military men, regarded the military authorities of Germany: Is it necessary to finish with this undeserved respect? It is necessary. Well, for that you must have criticism and particularly from our side, from the side of the victors over Germany.

So far as Clausewitz in particular is concerned, he is, of course, outdated as a military authority. Clausewitz was in fact a representative of the *manufacturing* period of war. But now we are in the *machine* period of war. Undoubtedly the machine period calls for new military theoreticians. It is ridiculous to take lessons now from Clausewitz.

It is impossible to move forward and to advance science without subjecting outdated propositions and the judgment of well-known authorities to critical analysis. This applies not only to authorities in military affairs, but also to classics of Marxism. Engels once said that General Barclay de Tolle was the only Russian Commander of the period of 1812 who merited attention. Engels, of course, was mistaken, for Kutuzov as a Commander stood indisputably head and shoulders above Barclay de Tolle. But even in our time you can still find people who will support this mistaken opinion of Engels *à haute voix* [out loud]. In our criti-

cism we must not be guided by individual propositions and opinions of the classics but by that famous direction once given by Lenin:

We do not by any means look upon the theory of Marx as something final and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it only laid the cornerstone of the science which socialists *must* advance in all directions, if they do not want to lag behind events. We think that the *independent* elaboration of Marx's theory is especially necessary for Russian socialists since this theory provides not only the general guiding principles which in *detail* must be applied in England in a manner different from that applied in France, in France in a manner different from that applied in Germany, and in Germany in a manner different from that applied in Russia.*

Such an approach is even more obligatory for us in relation to military authorities.

3. As for your short theses on "War and Military Art," I can only make some general remarks about their schematic character. In the theses there is too much philosophy and abstract propositions. The terminology of Clausewitz con-

cerning grammar and the logic of war grates on the ear. The question of a Party approach to military science is too primitively posed. The dithyrambs in honor of Stalin grate on the ears and simply make one uncomfortable to read them. There is no section on the *counter-offensive* (not to be confused with the counter-attack). I am speaking of a counter-offensive after a successful enemy offensive which, however, has not produced decisive results, and in the course of which the defense gathers its forces, passes to the counter-offensive, and inflicts a decisive defeat on the enemy. I think that a well organized counter-offensive is a very interesting form of offensive. As an historian you should interest yourself in this matter. The old Parthians knew already of such a counter-offensive when they drew the Roman General Crassus and his troops deep into their country and then struck with a counter-offensive and destroyed them. Our genius, General Kutuzov also knew of this very well when he destroyed Napoleon and his army with the help of a well prepared counter-offensive.

J. STALIN,

February 23, 1946.

* V. I. Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism*, International Publishers, pp. 64-65.

THE MATURING CRISIS AND THE PEOPLE'S FIGHT AGAINST THE MONOPOLIES*

by ALEXANDER BITTELMAN

OUR ECONOMIC ANALYSIS and forecast of October, 1946 (see *Political Affairs*, November, 1946), are being confirmed. The cyclical economic crisis continues to mature and may break in 1948 or even sooner. Yet the really sharp break may still be delayed by the successful outcome of the present wage movements, that is, if labor wins a wage increase of no less than 20 per cent without price increases. The maturing of the crisis may also be retarded by large-scale war preparations which, however, would deeply aggravate the course of the crisis when it breaks.

Less likely is a major upswing in foreign trade and investments—in time, that is, to affect materially the maturing of the crisis—but it is not excluded.

It is already possible to indicate some special characteristics—new characteristics—in the course of the maturing of the present cyclical crisis. *It is maturing very unevenly as between various departments of the national economy.* The elements of crisis are growing most rapidly in certain consumer goods and servicing industries, such as woolen textiles, ladies' garments, furs, shoes, dairy products and other foods, hotels and restaurants, and various

branches of commerce (retail and wholesale). Here we find a definite retardation, a slowing up of activity and considerable lay-offs of varying duration. The second department of economy showing a distinct growth of elements of crisis is the one embracing the production of producer's durable goods, *i.e.*, the capital goods industries. There we find both a rapidly falling rate of growth as well as signs of retardation. The department of economy which as yet shows no visible signs of maturing crisis is the one embracing the production of consumers' durable goods (refrigerators, radios, autos, etc.) and the industries producing steel and rubber. But here, too, it is generally agreed that we are rapidly approaching the so-called point of saturation of the home market.

What follows from this uneven course of the maturing crisis is, first, that its actual sharp outbreak may be delayed, that the maturing of the crisis may be more protracted; and, secondly, that the course of the crisis itself, when it breaks, will be much more protracted and painful than otherwise. It is clear that this new feature in the maturing of the present cyclical crisis—an upward trend in some branches of the economy accompanied by a downward trend in other branches—results primarily from the fact that *the coming*

* A Report on the economic situation to the April 16, 1947, meeting of the National Board of the C.P.U.S.A.

crisis matures in the process of transition from a war to a peace economy and in the surroundings of a most complicated and unprecedented world economic and political situation. This fact will no doubt impart many new features to the development of the crisis itself. It is also clear that certain sections of American labor are already feeling certain incipient crisis effects, even before the crisis breaks, due to the uneven course of its maturing. This is also true for certain groups of farmers (dairy farming), in which elements of crisis are growing much faster than in agriculture as a whole where an agrarian crisis is in the making. The continuing lag in the building industries is also having a depressing effect upon the entire economy.

We should also note the generally downward trend on the Stock Exchange which continues to reflect the crisis in the making. In passing, it is necessary to observe that subsequent events have fully confirmed our analysis in October of the Stock Exchange crash of September, 1946. We said then that it reflected the maturing economic crisis and that it was precipitated at that particular time by the big investors and speculators for political purposes, *i.e.*, to embarrass the Administration on the eve of the elections and to aggravate economic difficulties for the benefit of the Republicans. Even the Federal Reserve Board of New York, in its *Monthly Review*, November, 1946, finds it necessary to say the fol-

lowing about the September crash:

It is noteworthy that these small security holders stepped up their purchases of stocks during the sharp decline of prices in September of this year, while larger traders accelerated their selling. (My emphasis—A.B.)

TRUMAN'S ECONOMIC STATEMENTS AND PRICE MANEUVERS

We must examine the meaning and effects of Truman's latest statements about the economic prospects, prices, and wages. In his Jefferson Day speech and subsequently in his April 8 press conference, Truman expressed, on the one hand, extreme optimism on the economic outlook, ridiculing the forecasters of depression; on the other hand, he stated his "anxiety" over rising prices. He added that, if business does not bring prices down, wages will have to be brought up. Still later it was intimated from the White House that business does not have to fear the anti-trust laws if businessmen want to enter into agreements ("collusion") for the reduction of prices.

What is it that lies behind these statements and gestures? First, it is undoubtedly the realization that the economic situation is deteriorating, that a crisis is in the making, despite the official optimism to the contrary. Secondly, it is a genuine fear of the impending wage struggles, the fear of strikes in most of the basic industries in the coming weeks and months. The fighting temper of the telephone strikers, a relatively

fresh and politically untrained section of organized labor, has given Truman a glimpse into the militancy and determination that is crystallizing among the older and more experienced labor organizations. Thirdly, as a result of the foregoing, Truman must have felt the need of doing something to dissipate the tension that is mounting in the wage movements and in the growing resentment of all the people against the monopolies and monopoly prices. Hence, we have his statements and gestures, which are calculated to place the President in the so-called "middle of the road" on the question of wages and prices *while actually impeding* labor's current struggles for wage increases by helping to create an atmosphere of expectation of coming price reductions to make wage increases "unnecessary."

There is no ground for any expectations of a general and substantial price decrease through the operation of *economic* factors at the present time short of the actual outbreak of the coming crisis, even though partial and mainly token price reductions may take place here and there. Only by political means, by government action of a democratic character and with the active support of the people, can a general price reduction be effected at present. The possibility of such action is clearly not imminent. It is not in the immediate situation. Hence, the central importance of general and substantial wage increases *immediately*. Only this will meet the burning needs

of labor. Only this—a general wage rise of no less than 20 per cent—can materially augment mass purchasing power and thus tend to retard the maturing of the crisis.

It is thus high time to demand of the Truman Administration that it speak out unequivocally on the question of wages and prices. The people, headed by labor, should demand of Truman *active support* and not gestures and maneuvers, for immediate substantial general wage increases without price increases.

GROWING ELEMENTS OF CRISIS

Both industrial production and unemployment are growing. The March industrial production index of the Federal Reserve Board stood at 184, compared to 174 last September. Employment in March stood at 56 million, compared to 58 million in September, a *rise* of ten index points in production and a *drop* of 2 million in employment.

The basic explanation for this lies in the new features of the maturing crisis—in its unevenness. Most of the layoffs occurred in certain consumer goods and servicing industries, as already discussed above. But an additional and important explanation lies in the extraordinary growth of speed-up in the basic industries—which enables the capitalists to get more production with fewer workers.

The official report of unemployed is kept deliberately low. It is supposed to be about 2,340,000. But this falsified number is arrived at only by

the operation of a new and purely fictitious concept of who is to be considered unemployed, namely, only those who are "permanently" unemployed and who are seeking employment "actively." The real number of unemployed can be estimated as being no less than 6 million and probably closer to 8 million.

This spells the destruction of billions of dollars of mass purchasing power. But this is not all. The rising cost of living, driven up by the monopolies and speculators, is doing its share for the destruction of mass purchasing power and the reduction of labor's living standards.

According to the figures of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the consumers price index stood at 133.3 in June last year. It was over 156 in March this year, a rise of about 18 per cent. The truer figure, as given by Philip Murray, is a rise in the cost of living in the last nine months of 20 per cent. This means a corresponding decrease in labor's living standards *in the face of continually rising monopoly profits* which, in the first quarter of 1947, beat even the unprecedented record of high monopoly profits in 1946. These facts confirm to the hilt the facts of the Nathan Report and its recommendation of a 25 per cent general wage rise without price increases.

What is happening to mass purchasing power and to the people's living standards can also be seen from the course of individual savings and indebtedness. Individual savings in 1946 were less than one half of

1945 (\$15,800,000,000 in 1946 compared to \$37,600,000,000 in 1945). The proportion of income saved is reaching the low pre-war levels, and most of the savings are those of the well-to-do. Individual indebtedness is rising, having increased \$5,300,000,000 in 1946. There is also an increase in consumers' buying credit. Ten per cent of all retail sales in 1946 were on credit, while total outstanding consumers' credit at the end of 1946 was 10 billion dollars, an increase of more than 3 billion over 1945. Department stores report collections on charge accounts are now running about 20 per cent behind last year.

We must note right here that these 10 billion dollars of outstanding consumers' credit may prove to be the ruin of the country's entire credit structure at the first serious break of the coming economic crisis.

Another development which may contribute much to the maturing of the crisis is the downward trend in the new capital issues by corporations for the mobilization of new money. It ran at the rate of a quarter billion dollars per month in 1946 but dropped to 178 million in January, 1947, and has not recovered much ground since.

FOREIGN TRADE AND INVESTMENTS

The course of foreign trade and investments is very uncertain and far from promising. Exports in 1946 amounted to about 13 billion dollars but "three-quarters of this sum was financed by gifts and loans" (*News-*

week, April 7, 1947). The outlook for 1947 is about the same, with extreme pessimism expressed by most capitalist analysts for 1948. When this is related to the practically doubled production capacity of the United States and the unprecedented rate of capital accumulation seeking vainly for new large-scale investment opportunities, which we analyzed in October, we can see the tremendous factors making for the coming economic crisis.

British markets will not soon be opened for real large-scale American trade and investments. Says the *Wall Street Journal* in a letter from London: "Many American exporters have abandoned hope of getting their products back into the British market for years to come." The British government is in no apparent hurry to relax the trade restrictions in the Dominions and Empire. Besides, new tendencies and movements seem to be rising in the British Dominions, among the democratic forces of their peoples, to be on guard against the economic and political encroachments of Wall Street imperialism which seeks to inherit and dominate the British Empire. The peoples of the Dominions seem to be getting ready to protect their economic and political independence from the real threat of domination by the monopolies in the U.S.

Even worse is the outlook for large-scale American trade and investments in China, India, and in Asia generally. Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary war in China, inspired and

supported by American imperialism, creates no basis for foreign trade and investments. In India, the national liberation movement of the people shows no inclination to accept Wall Street domination as a substitute for that of London's City. On the contrary, the democratic forces of India seem quite aware of the ambitions of American imperialism for world mastery, and seem determined to defend themselves from this new danger as they strive to liberate themselves from British imperialism. This, too, is not a very favorable situation for large-scale American exports and investments in India and in other parts of Asia. In the Middle East the situation is not as clear, but also not very promising for large-scale foreign trade.

As far as Europe is concerned, the promulgation of the so-called Truman Doctrine has quite obviously introduced new and disturbing factors, militating against the economic recovery and stabilization of the countries of western Europe, antagonizing the peoples of eastern Europe, and thus *worsening the general situation* from the standpoint of American trade and investment in Europe. The Dulles plan of erecting a so-called western European federation, with a revived German imperialism as its base, and directed against European democracy, national independence, and the Soviet Union, is not only a fantastic and unrealizable business, but very hurtful to the prospects for American trade in the immediate situation.

What about Latin America—the area which Wall Street imperialism considers its private preserve? The peoples and nations of Latin America want to industrialize and modernize their economies. They seek economic betterment and independence, and in doing so they come into sharp collision with the policies of American imperialism to keep them economically weak and dependent. The outlook there is for growing struggles of the peoples against Wall Street domination. It remains to be seen how much U.S. foreign trade and investment opportunities will be able to grow in such conditions.

Even at the World Trade Conference in Geneva, called to draft a charter of the projected International Trade Organization, this fear of American imperialist encroachment upon other nations' economic independence (and political, too) finds a partial expression. In one day, April 13, five countries voiced these fears at the Geneva Conference. In reply to a grandiloquent speech of Clair Wilcox, the American delegate, appealing for free trade and reduction of tariffs (what will the Republicans say about the tariff part?), the delegates from India, Chile, Lebanon, Syria, and Brazil all stood up and said that they want to industrialize themselves and, therefore, will have to have tariffs for protection. *They are all naturally very anxious to do business with the United States, as are all other nations, but are determined to protect and build up their national indepen-*

dence which Wall Street imperialism is threatening. So true is this that even the government delegate from Brazil, certainly no democrat or progressive anti-imperialist, is reported to have said "that an increase in the purchasing power of a primary producing country like Brazil, which is a prerequisite to the increase of its imports, depends on a diversification of production. Since this means industrialization, Brazil must reserve its right to protect its new industries, he said, particularly as it did not raise duties during the war" *New York Herald-Tribune*, April 15, 1947).

There is also another major angle bearing on the outlook for foreign trade. It is the hostility and opposition of the U.S. monopolies to the various nationalization movements in the European countries.

It is claimed by the spokesmen of the monopolies that the nationalization of various branches of industry, or banking and commerce, is an obstacle to so-called free trade. The real reason for this hostility to nationalization is that it helps the European peoples—in the measure in which the nationalization is thoroughly democratic and genuine—to protect their economic (and political) independence from the encroachments of Wall Street imperialism. It also helps them to democratize their own countries by curbing or eliminating altogether the power of monopolies in their economies and governments.

It is also claimed by the American monopolies that by fighting for their version of "free" trade and opposing nationalization abroad, they are opposing socialism, "regimentation," and "totalitarianism," and championing "individual" enterprise and "democratic" capitalism. This is an obvious fraud which does not fool the European peoples but only antagonizes them, and therefore hurts the prospects for American foreign trade, even though it encourages the reactionary circles in Europe.

While it is true that the American monopolies fear very much the eventual victory of socialism in Europe and in the whole world, a victory which they are determined to resist and prevent by all means, this is not their *immediate* but rather long-range concern, belonging to the basic and final objectives of monopoly strategy. In the present world situation, American monopoly reaction combats and opposes nationalization abroad because it presents an obstacle to imperialist economic penetration by Wall Street, because it enables the European countries to deal economically with the U.S. monopolies on a more equal footing, and because it is a means of democratizing Europe and rooting out fascism completely. That all these developments lie on the road to socialism and are preparing the road for it, is beyond doubt; but it is not socialism. It is a weapon of defense of national independence primarily against Wall Street imperialism, of democratization, a means of *promot-*

ing a speedy economic recovery from the devastation of war.

This last point is of capital importance for American foreign trade, because the faster the European countries, and all the others, move toward economic recovery, the better will be their position to buy from the United States on a really large scale and to pay for their purchases. But to achieve this recovery in the shortest possible time and to establish livable conditions for the masses of the people, the war-devastated countries *must have nationalization*. This is the very basis of agreement among the progressive and democratic and anti-fascist forces of Europe. Consequently, by opposing and seeking to undermine nationalization in Europe, the American monopolies and the Truman Administration are not only fighting European democracy and helping fascism; they are also undermining and obstructing the economic recovery of Europe and are thus hurting the development of American foreign trade.

That is why, we repeat, the outlook for a real upswing of large scale foreign trade, commensurate with the production capacity and market needs of the United States, is not good. The outlook is about the same for the export of capital, that is, for foreign investments.

Looking again at the current wage movements from the standpoint of retarding the maturing and outbreak of the economic crisis, it is impossible to over-emphasize the burning need of substantial wage increases *at once*,

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without price increases. At the moment, this is the major democratic means of delaying the outbreak of the inevitable cyclical crisis and of softening its impact upon the masses when it comes. But to achieve these ends, *the wage increases must not only make good the rise in the cost of living, but must also provide a margin above that*, since it is from this margin that the needed *additional* purchasing power can come.

THE WAYS AND POLICIES OF MONOPOLY REACTION

Following President Truman's gestures on prices and wages, a considerable discussion took place, in which the apologists of the monopolies once more restated their case. Opinions against wage increases were expressed by Senator Taft and his Congressional economic experts, by Bernard Baruch, by the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber Commerce, and, of course, by the capitalist press. Unfortunately, not enough has been said by leaders of labor for the people's case.

A summary of the newest arguments of the monopolies as to why they can do nothing about prices, is given by Arthur Krock as follows:

(1) the Government farm subsidy program that artificially holds up food prices, which are the chief burden on the consumer; (2) uncertainty over immunity from criminal anti-trust prosecution if business tries to lower prices; (3) new wage demands pending and those to be expected on the encouragement given by the President;

(4) the upward pressure on the price ceilings by the high costs of government and the Administration's opposition to economy and to tax relief (*New York Times*, April 13, 1947).

Noteworthy here is not the fraudulent nature of the whole argumentation about the new wage demands and tax relief. Everybody knows that corporation profits are running at two and three times the best pre-war rate, and that the present taxation laws are making gifts to the monopolies of hundreds of millions of dollars. What is important is the attempt to create a rift between labor and the farmers by blaming high prices on agriculture, and to secure new "immunities" for the monopolies from the anti-trust laws, as though they did not already have enough immunity.

These are real dangers. For the exceptional rise in agricultural prices, the responsibility lies not with the mass of the farmers, nor especially with the government's subsidy program. The latter benefits the food trusts, speculators, and large farm-capitalists more than the mass of working farmers. Even so, it is not this program that is primarily responsible, but the cattle and beef trusts, the standard foods monopolies, the grain speculators, the large banks, the dairy and milk trusts. These are the forces that are robbing the people. But the apologists for these monopolies are trying to shift the blame to the farmers and to arouse labor and the city middle classes against the masses of the

farmers on the price issues just as they have tried to arouse the farmers against labor on the wage issues. This must be exposed and resisted, especially since the building up of the anti-imperialist and anti-fascist coalition of the American people demands the closest collaboration between labor, the farmers, and the city middle classes. It is this collaboration that the monopolies seek to prevent. Labor, the farmers, and the city middle classes can and must work together *against monopoly prices on all commodities* and for the protection of all other economic interests—*e.g.*, taxation—of the people against the offensive of the trusts.

The monopolies and their hangers-on realize, of course, that the inflationary prices carry certain dangers to the national economy. The way they propose to meet these dangers is *at the expense of the American people at home and of other peoples abroad*. The economic home policy of monopoly reaction is to deflate the income of labor, of the working farmers, and of the city middle classes, but to maintain and raise their own profits. Reduce the living standards of the people—this is the way of the monopolies at home to combat inflation and the coming crisis. Abroad, the U.S. monopolies seek economic power and privileges at the expense of other nations and peoples. Establish the world domination of the American trusts—this is the way of the U.S. monopolies abroad to combat and meet the coming crisis. But the net effect of these

reactionary and imperialist policies is not to solve the inflation problem or to delay the coming crisis, but to aggravate the inflationary dangers and to hasten the maturing of the crisis.

We spoke before about the domestic *economic* policies of the monopolies. These are inseparably connected with their domestic *political* policies. The whole reactionary drive in the United States—the attacks on the trade unions and labor's civil rights, the anti-Communist hysteria and the attacks on our Party, the rising tide of persecutions against the masses of the national groups and the foreign-born, the growth of anti-Semitism, and especially and most importantly the intensified national oppression of and discrimination against, the Negro people—all this is not only a means of promoting the drive of Wall Street imperialism for world domination *but also of reducing the living standards of the American people at home*. For example, the attack on the unions, the Hartley Bill and the Taft proposals, are designed to cripple the unions in their efforts to maintain and improve labor's living standards as well as to weaken a serious opponent—the organized labor movement—of Wall Street's drive for world domination.

We should add in passing that there is a very close connection between Baruch's defense and championship of Wall Street's atom-bomb diplomacy of intimidation of other peoples and nations and his latest domestic proposal to lengthen the work week to 44 hours as a means of meet-

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ing the inflationary dangers. This arrogant and selfish proposal of the speculators and monopolists would achieve only this: it would intensify capitalist exploitation, raise profits, increase unemployment, reduce the working people's standard of living, decrease mass purchasing power, and hasten the outbreak of the crisis. *But it would not decrease prices.* Besides, if we need more labor to produce more goods, why not call back to work the nearly eight million unemployed? Why lengthen the work week and create more unemployment? But this is monopoly's way to meet present economic difficulties and the maturing crisis.

The monopolies and their apologists are also carrying on an intensive "ideological" campaign on the major economic issues. More or less typical of the line of the monopolies is the position expressed by Professor Slichter of Harvard and Allan H. Temple, Vice-President of the National City Bank in the *New York Times* of April 13. These two are outright apologists and defenders of the monopolies. Both proceed from the assumption that economic depressions and crises are not the result of the working of the economic laws of capitalism, which will disappear together with capitalism, but rather laws of nature, to be with us forever and ever. Both deplore high prices but seek solutions along the lines of deflating the incomes of labor, the farmer, and small businessmen. Both oppose government action to protect the masses of the people,

and seek to infuse a fatalistic attitude toward the inevitability of a depression as something that is not only decreed, so to speak, from above but is also necessary for the healthy functioning of our society.

This is typical monopoly apologetics even though it is dressed up by Professor Slichter in the language of economic analysis. Popular versions of the same stuff are given the American masses by the capitalist press every day. Consequently, it is imperative that the labor movement, especially the Communist Party, present to the masses, in popular and attractive form, the real truth of the origin of economic crises and how to meet them from the standpoint of labor and the people. Never before was the soil so favorable for the spread of Marxist education among the broadest circles of the American people.

Then we must also meet another ideological line of a bourgeois character on the question of the coming crisis. It is the position of Professor Alvin H. Hansen, well-known economist, follower of the late Keynes in economics, and supporter of the progressive Roosevelt policies. In the cited issue of the *New York Times*, Professor Hansen proceeds from the assumption that depressions and crises are not inevitable under capitalism even though the economic laws of capitalism periodically produce elements of crisis. These elements of crisis, says Hansen, can be prevented from maturing and breaking out into a crisis by timely

application of certain measures by the government — in the field of taxation, public works, social security, etc. This is the theoretical assumption, the non-Marxist assumption, which Browderism has appropriated to itself and made part of its general revisionist orientation.

It is clear that we must pay considerable ideological attention to the false and misleading theoretical assumptions of Professor Hansen. They look plausible and express in theoretical form widespread illusions on the nature of economic crises. Consequently, it is essential to spread broadly our criticism of the Keynesian and Hansenian theories that economic crises can be done away with without abolishing capitalism. It is true that, in the vital matter of program to meet the economic difficulties arising from the maturing crisis, we can work and fight together with Professor Hansen on quite a number of demands, especially those relating to public works and social security. But, in order to make such common work and struggles really fruitful and productive of lasting results for the people's progressive movements, we must systematically criticize the fallacies of Professor Hansen and his school and spread Marxist theory and ideology.

A PROGRAM OF STRUGGLE

We must remind ourselves that we have a *program* for meeting the difficulties and tasks arising from the

maturing crisis and the general economic situation. It is a program of struggle to break the economic sabotage of the monopolies which restricts and obstructs full production, maintains high monopoly prices, drives down the living standards of the masses, hampers the economic restoration and stabilization of many other countries, and thus hastens the outbreak of the next economic crisis. It is a program of struggle to delay the outbreak of the crisis and to prepare conditions that will soften its impact upon the masses when it breaks. Moreover, it is a program of struggle for a number of measures that will immediately aid those sections of labor which already feel certain effects of the approaching crisis.

The specific demands of this *program to meet the needs of the masses in the maturing crisis, a program of struggle against the monopolies*, are formulated in the report of Comrade Dennis to the December, 1946, meeting of the National Committee of the Communist Party.* While continuing to unfold the struggles on individual issues arising from concrete situations, it is *the whole program* that must guide and become the property of the masses in order to promote the *joint* struggles of labor, the farmers, and the city middle classes, in order to accelerate the growth of the counter-offensive of the people against the trusts.

* Eugene Dennis, *The People Against the Trusts*, New Century Publishers, pp. 32-34.

THE NEGRO VETERAN FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM!

By HOWARD JOHNSON

AT THIS CRUCIAL MOMENT in our country's history, the vigor with which the Negro veterans are organizing and fighting for freedom is serving to give great strength and inspiration to the general struggle for security, democracy, and peace.

The movement of the Negro veterans is of such key importance that complete clarity as to its direction and problems is demanded of every Communist and of the progressives generally. Only on the basis of correct and full understanding can their work, either as direct participants in the veterans movement, or in support of it, be of greatest service.

In assessing the work of Communists generally, an underestimation of the importance of the veterans movement is revealed. This is even more apparent with regard to the Negro veterans movement, the subject with which this article will deal.

How is this underestimation expressed? It is expressed in:

1. A lack of understanding of the special problems of the Negro veteran and their political implications.

2. A tendency to leave the solution of the problems of the Negro veteran to the general veterans organizations such as the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Veterans Committee, etc.

3. A failure to give proper attention to the development of the Negro veterans movement.

For this reason I will deal with three main questions:

1. The special problems of the Negro veteran.

2. Why the major veterans organizations are incapable of solving the Negro veteran's problems.

3. The Negro veterans movement.

I. THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF NEGRO VETERANS

1,154,000 Negro veterans have returned from war, battle-hardened, battle-scarred, more mature politically, and more passionately progressive than any other section of the veterans of World War II.

What has greeted the Negro veteran on his return home? The veteran generally has found his dream of low-cost postwar housing, a steady job at good wages, and full opportunity to use the G.I. Bill of Rights to be just "dreams." But the Negro veteran has found any such dream to be a "hallucination" of the wildest kind.

Nearly 75 per cent of these Negro veterans have returned to the South. These men learned leadership under enemy fire and acquired the many varied skills necessary to run an army. They have not returned to ac-

cept the humiliating, degrading life of the Negro in the South before the war.

The Negro veteran faces special problems. Not only does he face the problem of readjustment to civilian life; he also faces the problem of being recognized as a citizen of the United States.

What is the character of the special problems of the Negro veteran?

1. *Job discrimination.*

The death of F.E.P.C. left the doors wide open for industry to return to the prewar policy of denying Negroes skilled work or any work at all. Seniority provisions affect the Negro adversely since he was the last hired in industry.

Even in government agencies, such as the Veterans Administration and the U.S. Employment Service, rank discrimination prevails. A survey reveals that of 1,700 veterans employed in the Veterans Administration in one Southern state, only seven are Negroes. Yet Negro veterans are over one third of all Southern veterans.

2. *Unemployment compensation.*

In the South, Negro veterans who reject jobs at slave wages are denied, by Negro-hating officials, readjustment insurance guaranteed to veterans under the G.I. Bill of Rights.

3. *Housing.*

The high cost of present housing is far beyond the reach of the average Negro veteran. The Negro family's income averages less than \$750 a year. Banks and mortgage agencies

refuse loans to Negroes, thus making the G.I. Bill ineffective. Restrictive covenants confine Negroes to the worst slum areas in the nation. The National Urban League's report on housing and business loans states: "... loans to Negro veterans are almost out of the question."

4. *Education.*

The majority of colleges and universities actively discriminate against Negroes. Chapter and verse could be repeated *ad infinitum*, but one example, of a school considered among the best, will suffice. The University of Pennsylvania, with a student body of 9,000, has only 46 Negro students! Of what avail is the G.I. Bill of Rights here? Of 100,000 Negro veterans applying for educational benefits, only 20,000 have been registered in colleges.

5. *Civil Rights.*

Throughout the nation the militancy of the Negro veterans and their unanimous demand for justice and equality have been met with a campaign of terror, intimidation, and brutality unprecedented in American history. Over 40 Negro veterans have been lynched since V-J Day. Wrists have been chopped off, eyes gouged out, genitals burned off, to force Negro veterans to return to their prewar status.

These are not problems faced by white veterans; nevertheless they are of burning importance to white veterans and the whole democratic movement.

If we examine one aspect of vet-

erans benefits, the special problem confronting Negro veterans can be clearly seen.

One of the democratic achievements of the war was the Terminal Leave Pay Bill which eliminated the caste system whereby only officers were entitled to receive terminal leave with pay, upon discharge, according to the number of days' leave missed because of overseas service, etc.

According to this bill the average veteran (former enlisted man) is due from \$100 to 500 in back pay. Over 50 per cent of all veterans have filed for payment and are receiving it. Only one per cent of Negro veterans have filed claims according to General Bradley's assistant, James Allbright. This means that over 1,000,000 Negro veterans have from 100 to 500 million dollars due them. This will be lost if not filed for by September 1, 1947.

The reason why Negro veterans are not getting this money is tied up with the plantation system in the South. The county, state, and federal agencies in the South, in their customary role as tools of the plantation owners and poll-taxers, are making it difficult, to put it mildly, for Negro veterans to get the necessary information and facilities for filing claims. With over 700,000 Negro veterans in Southern states, over 250 million dollars are involved and the bulk of the Negro veterans in the nation are affected.

In the majority of cases the amount

due Negro veterans is equal to one to two years' average yearly income for Negro rural families! What would not the receipt of this one veterans benefit mean in breaking the ties of debt bondage which is one of the main means of shackling the Negro people to the land in the plantation areas!

Hence, the mere right to receive existing benefits due Negro veterans immediately involves a political struggle for citizenship and economic rights against the poll-taxers and their allies.

Much publicity has been given to the horrible lynchings that have taken place in the past 18 months. An analysis of two of these crimes will serve to highlight the political implications of these horrors.

Everyone remembers the two Negro couples lynched in Monroe County, Georgia. What are the facts behind this mass murder? Loy Harrison, the landlord of one of the victims (George Dorsey), had paid \$600 bail to deliver him from jail where he had been imprisoned on a minor charge. Two hours later Harrison drove his tenant and the other friendly couple to the scene of the lynchings. Harrison's tenant and their friends were killed and Harrison, as landlord, took over his tenant's crop for the year. Further facts show that Dorsey was able, with his army savings, to raise his crop debt-free. The sale of that crop, worth \$1,800, would have enabled him to become independent. But he

was lynched, and Loy Harrison made \$1,200 from this death.

The same factors operated in the Minden, Louisiana, lynching of John Jones. Jones had started a legal review of a lease. His grandfather, illiterate, had signed this lease with the Louisiana Oil Company to take oil, from the land Grandfather Jones owned, for \$1.50 per month. Five wells have been producing oil from this land for 25 years; and John Jones, back from the wars, decided to fight this robbery. He was lynched. A Federal District court dismissed the trial of the lynchers who had been identified by Albert Harris, a survivor of the lynching. And one of the lynch mob had been identified as an agent of the Louisiana Oil Company!

Hence, as both cases reveal, the slightest attempt to change the status of the Negro is met with all the violence of a ruthless system of national oppression. This national oppression is the source of super-profits for the plantation owners who, in the main, are absentee owners and directly tied up with Wall Street.

The violence of the oppression in this period is due to the designs of American finance capital against all democracy in the United States.

Capital in America cannot carry out its plan to smash labor and the democratic movement in this country as long as the Negro nation in its southern "rear" is able to achieve even a single advance. That is why the Negro veterans, particularly in

the South, who are demanding their rights and winning the support of entire Negro communities, are met with a violence and brutality equal to the inhuman savagery of the Nazis.

Reaction understands well the role that 1,000,000 Negro veterans play in the very forefront of the political struggles of the Negro people and the people as a whole. The typical Negro veteran has returned to a backward, rural environment. He has returned with a heightened political consciousness and militancy derived from the armed struggle against fascism and from contact with other peoples all over the world. These peoples did not have the same white-supremacy outlook that the Negro is familiar with in the U. S. The Negro veteran knows his position has been improved as a result of the war. Veterans benefits earned during the war give the Negro veteran an added opportunity to contribute to the advancement of the Negro liberation movement. Next to the Negro trade unionists, the Negro veterans represent the most powerful and dynamic force in the Negro people's movement. That is why the special problems of the Negro veterans are of immediate and direct concern to the developing people's coalition, to labor, and especially to the Communists.

Marxism - Leninism warns us against a static approach to Negro veterans. There is a tendency in our Party to apply mechanically policy

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on veterans in general to Negro veterans in particular. Thus, many Party forces expect the Negro veterans to move into struggle in the same way as white veterans, adopting the same organizational forms, etc. These comrades ask, "Why don't we urge the Negro veterans to give up their organizations and simply join the Legion, V.F.W., or A.V.C.? Why the concern about U.N.A.V.A.?"

This is a denial of the national character of the Negro veterans movement and a vulgarization of Marxism-Leninism which holds that the national struggle will develop its own national forms of policy and organization.

We have established the basic Marxist approach to the Negro question in the U.S. as a national question. Therefore, we must encourage and support those organizations of the Negro people engaged in the national liberation movement, from the United Small-Business Man's Association, to the National Association of Negro Trade Unionists. It goes without saying, therefore, that we encourage and support the development of Negro veterans organizations.

Those who oppose Negro veterans organizations deny the right of those veterans to form organizations devoted to their special national interests. It is basic to Marxism that special problems require a special approach and that national problems require a national approach. This

leads us to a consideration of the attitude of the major veterans organizations and why they are incapable of solving the special problems of Negro veterans.

II. THE MAJOR VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS AND THE NEGRO VETERAN

The attitude of the major veterans organizations toward the Negro problem is indicated by their attitude toward veterans problems in general.

The American Legion, the V.F.W., and, with increasing similarity, the Amvets, follow a reactionary policy toward veterans problems. With a fair degree of accuracy, these three organizations can be placed in the same category. They are all led by the bourgeoisie and side with reaction on most issues. Dominated by fascist-minded Big Business elements, these organizations come out for policy truly in the interests of veterans and the nation only when the voice and organization of the rank and file members are heard in forceful opposition. In most instances the top leadership of both the Legion and the V.F.W. echo the policies of the N.A.M. and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The Legion and V.F.W. endorse and encourage segregation and discrimination against Negro veterans. Their policy is lily-white and anti-Negro, both in the North and in the South, from the post level up to the "king-makers."

The Legion, for example, or

ganized the disgraceful drive to remove the names of the heroic Nisei fighters from the Honor Roll in Wood River, Oregon. At its last national convention in San Francisco, Negroes were conspicuous by their absence. Not a single Negro spoke or was elected to any leading post. Not satisfied with that, a mob of Legionnaires left the convention to attack and beat up Negro veterans who were picketing outside the convention hall against Jim Crowism. Not a mumbling word of disapproval was voiced by the convention leadership.

Throughout the country, the Legion leadership is closely tied up with the Ku Klux Klan and other fascist, anti-Negro outfits. The Legion bears the greatest responsibility for the continued bias against Negro veterans services within the V.A.

While the appointment of General Bradley as Veterans Administrator was regarded as a step forward from the Legion-dominated General Hines in the Veterans Administration, Edward Odum, leading American Legion member, exercises a decisive reactionary influence on V.A. policy toward Negroes. Odum's attitude was a main factor in the denial of accreditation to the United Negro and Allied Veterans of America. This was a blow to the fight of Negro veterans for adequate representation in the V.A.'s administering of services. There is not a single Negro service officer in the entire V.A. set-up nationally. The Legion and

V.F.W. have determined who shall be service officers.

Negroes have a voice only within the narrow framework of Jim-Crow posts, with no influence from the county level up.

Thus, while more than five million white veterans have joined the American Legion and V.F.W. because of possibility of better procurement of services, the main trend among Negro veterans has been away from the Legion and V.F.W.

Since V-J Day, thousands of Negro veterans have disaffiliated from the Legion. In Winston Salem, N. C., a Legion post of 3,000 Negroes disaffiliated because of dissatisfaction with Legion policy. This has been duplicated in numerous other cases.

Because of these rumblings among its Negro membership and the growing influence of U.N.A.V.A., the Legion high command recently gave five of its state departments the "right" to issue charters to Negro posts. This move is clearly an attempt to head off the growing independent Negro veterans movement and to keep the Negro veteran in "safe" organizations.

Because of these policies, the bulk of Negro veterans want no part of the Legion. Does this mean that we should support a mass withdrawal of the Negro veterans still in the Legion and V.F.W.?

No, we urge the Negro veterans still in the Legion to combine with the progressive white veterans in struggle against the reactionary pol-

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icies of the Legion leadership. At the same time, Negro posts in the Legion should unite with independent Negro veterans groups and U.N.A.V.A. to fight for the general demands of Negro veterans. Since all veterans can join any number of veterans organizations, Negro Legionnaires should join the only national Negro veterans organization, U.N.A.V.A., in view of the special services and program of action it offers.

The same holds for Negro members of the V.F.W., Amvets, Disabled American Veterans, and the Army and Navy Union.

The question around which the greatest unclarity exists is the relationship of the American Veterans Committee to the Negro veterans movement. The A.V.C. can be viewed much more positively, despite weaknesses flowing out of the middle-class and Social-Democratic influenced forces in its national leadership. Its National Planning Committee has issued strong statements against Jim-Crowism, discrimination, and lynching. A pamphlet has been issued on Negro veterans problems nationally. Generally, A.V.C. welcomes the Negro veteran into its ranks.

However, A.V.C. has not developed any sustained struggle on a national scale for the demands of Negro veterans. Only in a few localities and isolated A.V.C. chapters are any real contributions being made to the progress of Negro veterans. Ex-

amples of this are the joint activities of the University of Chicago chapter of A.V.C. and the South Side Council of U.N.A.V.A.; the struggle against theater discrimination by the New York Theater Chapter of A.V.C.; and the anti-Bilbo campaign of the Negro-led Jackson, Miss., A.V.C. chapter. In New York, the State Councils of A.V.C. and U.N.A.V.A. are planning joint actions on legislative questions.

Through such joint activity the relationship between A.V.C. and U.N.A.V.A. can be more clearly defined. It is to be hoped that the progressive unity forces within A.V.C. will be able to continue and extend these actions despite the disruptive, paralyzing role of the Social-Democratic group in its National Planning Committee.

Is A.V.C., however, the organization to meet the special needs of the Negro veterans? The answer is, categorically, *No!*

John Gates, in discussing the A.V.C. convention, stated:

While the A.V.C. is oposed to discrimination, it conducts no major or consistent struggle for the extremely pressing needs of the Negro veteran. At Des Moines, the convention forced the arrest of a restaurant proprietor who had refused to serve a Negro delegate, but it then spoiled the victory with a statement absolving the City of Des Moines of any responsibility for the discrimination against Negroes. This was no service to the Negroes who live in Des Moines and who will continue to be discriminated against long after

the convention has gone. The superficial approach of the A.V.C. to Negro veterans, in effect denying their special problems, proves the wisdom of those veterans who formed the United Negro and Allied Veterans of America.*

Further, Negro veterans are shy of Red-baiting. The anti-Communist resolution passed by the National Planning Committee of A.V.C. is a direct blow at the struggle for Negro rights, at democratic thought in America, and at an organization that has been in the forefront of the fight for Negro rights in the U.S.—the Communist Party. It is significant that the only Negro veteran, a Republican, on the National Planning Committee, joined with a minority in opposing this resolution. This is an accurate reflection of the attitude of the Negro veterans.

The Red-baiting of the Social-Democrats and other anti-Communists has diverted the attention of A.V.C. from organization of struggle for the rights of all veterans to paralyzing, disruptive debate on whether Communists have the right to be part of A.V.C.

If A.V.C. is able to overcome this internecine warfare provoked by reaction, it will make a contribution to the progress of all veterans, Negro and white.

The typical attitude of the Red-baiters in A.V.C. is that of Daniel James, a close friend of Gus Tyler, one of the ideological leaders of reactionary Social-Democracy in

A.V.C. and a stooge of David Dubinsky.

James, a leader of the Metropolitan Area Council of A.V.C., in a letter to Negro veterans, exclaims in horror: "I have for some time watched with *alarm and fear* the growth of purely or *nearly* all-Negro veterans' organizations." (Author's emphasis.)

Mr. James surely does not mean that he resents the fact that Negro veterans organized spontaneously against the reign of terror in the South. Only the Klan could fear that.

Mr. James surely cannot mean that Negro veterans should wait supinely to be cursed, spat upon, discriminated against, and lynched, until such time as A.V.C. has gotten around the schematic hurdle of being "citizens first, veterans second," and perhaps Negro veterans, third. No, he cannot, because he contradicts himself by pointing out as examples of good organizations, the N.A.A.C.P. and the National Urban League, "as organizations which depend on inter-racial support." Yet he fails to mention that these are "nearly" all-Negro organizations which were formed to struggle for the rights of the Negro people as a whole.

Why is it that liberals of this type have no complaint against other special forms of veterans organizations, such as the Disabled American Veterans, the Marine Corps League, the Navy Union, the Jewish War Vet-

* *Political Affairs*, August, 1946, p. 737.

erans, and the Catholic War Veterans, all of which were formed on the basis of special problems or special interests?

To begin with, their position is a denial of the fact that Negro veterans have special problems. Secondly, it flows out of middle-class, humanitarian illusions that the Negro question in the U.S. will be solved by the intervention of intellectuals "pure in heart" and of "respectable station." Thirdly, it is based on middle-class lack of faith in the Negro masses and the chauvinistic belief that the Negro cannot play a leading role in his own liberation.

Why is this so? Mr. James has no qualms about interracial organizations so long as they are dominated and guided by middle-class whites. He fears, and rebels against, the idea of an organization led by Negroes which is interracial in character. He actually means that an organization led by Negroes must be "Jim Crow" in character, despite the admittance of whites to membership. In short, he denies the role being played by the Negro people in their own liberation and exposes his own feeling (Social-Democratic feeling) on the matter.

No, Mr. James, Negro veterans have proven you wrong, as the facts cited in this article make clear. Throughout the nation Negro veterans have organized themselves, with their own leadership, in hundreds of organizations based on old outfits,

social clubs, churches, and community and fraternal groups.

What conclusion must be drawn with regard to A.V.C. and its relationship to the Negro veterans movement?

1. A.V.C.'s policy is a great advance in contrast to the approach of the American Legion and the V.F.W.

2. In the struggle for the demands of the Negro veteran, A.V.C. vacillates and hesitates.

3. The progressive forces in A.V.C., Negro and white, must strengthen the A.V.C.'s fight for Negro rights.

4. The treacherous role of Social-Democracy within A.V.C. on the Negro question must be exposed.

5. The general character of A.V.C. and the special nature of Negro veterans problems precludes A.V.C.'s becoming the organization of the mass of Negro veterans.

6. The development of the Negro veterans movement will strengthen the efforts of the progressive forces within A.V.C.

III. THE NEGRO VETERANS MOVEMENT

How then is the Negro veterans movement developing?

The most significant feature, so far, of the Negro veterans movement was the spontaneous development of organization and struggle for the rights of the Negro veteran immediately after V-J Day. In contrast to the over 5,000,000 white veterans who

joined the Legion, V.F.W. or A.V.C., only a tiny fraction of the Negro veterans entered the major veterans organizations.

How did the Negro veterans organize? They organized themselves into community, county, or state groups, independent and isolated from each other. Examples of such groups are the Georgia Veterans League, Alabama State Veterans Association, 1310th Engineers Club, and 92nd Division Association, Baptist Veterans Association, United Veterans for Equality, etc. These groups were organized around a specific issue or a many-sided program.

Singled out for attack by reaction, those groups found that in order to achieve elementary rights, such as veterans benefits, it was necessary to struggle. Throughout the South and in the industrial cities of the North, militant campaigns, picket lines, and demonstrations were organized for the right to vote, jobs, housing, and against police terror and lynching. Outstanding in these struggles was the veterans' armed defense of their community from a lynch mob in Columbia, Tennessee.

The main features of the Negro veterans movement are its militancy, its demand for immediate action, its political independence, anti-imperialist sentiment, and support for labor. The major demands of this movement are: the right to vote, housing, jobs without discrimination, guarantee of the existing veterans benefits (such as readjustment insurance—

52-20—often denied in the South), and revocation of blue (without honor) and yellow (dishonorable) discharges, often handed out *en masse* for protests against Jim Crow in the armed forces.

Out of the various struggles and organizations developing throughout the country came the demand for unifying the Negro veterans movement politically and organizationally. In a national organizing convention in Chicago, April 5-6, 1946, the Negro veterans and their white allies founded a national organization, the United Negro and Allied Veterans of America (U.N.A.V.A. for short). Some 300 delegates were present—91 from Southern states, representing the Georgia Veterans League, Alabama Veterans Association, Global War Veterans of Columbia, Tennessee; United Veterans for Equality of New York, Veterans Council of America, 92nd Division Association, and scores of independent and trade union groups. They brought into U.N.A.V.A. a cross-section of the organizations and struggles of Negro veterans throughout the U. S. The convention, reflecting the political awareness of the Negro veterans, elected to national leadership two Negro women veterans, four active trade unionists, one of them white, and veterans of all political beliefs, including a Communist.

It is significant that, of all the national veterans organizations, the first national Negro veterans organi-

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zation, U.N.A.V.A., is the only one, in addition to the A.V.C., to express 100 per cent support to labor in its program and Constitution. It is also significant that the Negro veteran, conscious of his allies, adopted a constitution calling for membership of Mexican, Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, Indian, and white veterans.

Some people have mistakenly drawn the conclusion that, because of its interracial organization, the U.N.A.V.A. is a duplicate of A.V.C. What is the difference?

U.N.A.V.A. is the organized expression of the Negro veterans movement, led by Negro veterans, to fight to solve the special problems confronting Negro veterans. Charles Bolte, National President of A.V.C., recognizes the existence of these special problems in his recent pamphlet on the Negro veteran. However, he draws the contradictory conclusion that the organizations formed by Negro veterans to fight on this special front are all a mistake.

It is apparent that the solution of the special problems of the Negro veteran requires special forms of organization. These special problems are a reflection of the national oppression of the Negro people. Therefore, the special forms of organization of the mass of Negro veterans will and must be national in form.

The only way the mass of Negro veterans will be organized and mobilized for participation will be through their own organizations.

This does not negate the Negro

veteran joining other veterans organizations, particularly the most progressive of them, A.V.C.

On the contrary, unity of the Negro veterans and unity of Negro and white veterans are two sides of the same process. The increasing strength of U.N.A.V.A. will undoubtedly contribute to strengthening Negro and white unity in this field and increase the understanding and activity of the A.V.C. in the struggle for Negro rights.

It would be a further mistake to see U.N.A.V.A. as the sole organization of Negro veterans. The N.A.A.C.P., the Negro Baptist Church, the Negro Elks, and scores of independent groups embrace thousands of Negro veterans. Negro veterans unity can be developed only through the broadest unity of action on issues. From this point of view the calling of Negro veterans groups, ranging from the Legion and V.F.W. posts to the 366th Regiment Association, to a housing conference in Harlem by U.N.A.V.A., is a step in the correct direction. Undoubtedly, similar steps will be taken on a state and national scale.

The Communists and progressives generally must also understand clearly that reaction is not static on this front. Much attention is being drawn to the vest-pocket organization of Edgar Brown, the Negro Republican lobbyist — the National Council of Negro Veterans. Undoubtedly, this organization will

play a destructive role in the crucial 1948 elections.

This threat can be fully met if the labor-progressive forces, and the Communists especially, give the fullest support and attention to the dominant progressive trends among the Negro veterans and particularly U.N.A.V.A.

How has U.N.A.V.A. developed since its first convention a year ago? In its first year, U.N.A.V.A. has grown to an organization of close to 10,000 members, with 41 chapters in 21 states, and with developing organizations in 10 additional states.

A number of major victories have been won, notably the Jackson case, in which a Negro veteran won an apartment in a previously all-white neighborhood; the Dan Hardy case, in which hospitalization and pension adjustments were won; the Chicago Airport Projects fight against denial of housing to Negro veterans; the campaigns to get jobs in Safeway Stores and the A. & P. in New York City; and the participation of 40 U.N.A.V.A. members in the testimony against Bilbo.

U.N.A.V.A. has already struck roots among the Negro people. The Fraternal Council of Negro Churches, embracing 6,000,000 Negro church-goers, and the Negro Elks, with 350,000 members, have guaranteed organizational and financial support to U.N.A.V.A.

J. Finley Wilson, Grand Exalted

Ruler of the Elks, and Reverend William Jernagin, President of the Fraternal Council of Churches, personally intervened in the fight for U.N.A.V.A.'s accreditation. Dozens of trade unions and other Negro organizations have endorsed the U.N.A.V.A.

With this accomplishment in the space of one year, U.N.A.V.A. is entering its second year, with even greater perspectives to be projected at its First Annual Convention in New York City—May 30-31 and June 1.

Coming in a period of great crisis, with reaction attacking the American people on every front, this convention is of signal importance to the labor-democratic coalition. The militant voice and activity of the Negro veterans will be an important bulwark of the people's coalition. Labor and progressives throughout the nation must give the fullest support to the activities of U.N.A.V.A. prior to and after this historic First Annual Convention of the United Negro and Allied Veterans of America.

The trade unions particularly should guarantee a large contingent of Negro and white veteran observers and delegates.

Labor must play a key role in this most important gathering of Negro veterans, a powerful ally of labor.

Forward to a mass movement of the Negro veterans!

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ON A STUDY OF MARXISM AND IDEALISM

By BETTY GANNETT

Marxism and Modern Idealism,* written in 1943 by Dr. John Lewis, now editor of the British publication, *The Modern Quarterly*, was made available to Americans last year. In this booklet, Dr. Lewis undertakes the task of refuting the irrationalist theories of contemporary philosophic idealism. The work merits serious consideration by students of Marxist philosophy.

For us in the United States this work serves to focus attention on the need of subjecting to a Marxian criticism the schools of bourgeois philosophy prevalent in the United States, pragmatism and logical positivism for instance, whose common, reactionary idealist roots and social content have not yet been definitively challenged and exposed.

Lewis makes important contributions to our understanding of the pernicious consequences of "modern irrationalism," associated with such names as Jeans, Eddington, Joad, Russell, and Santayana. Particularly valuable are his extensive discus-

sions of dualism, vitalism, and pluralism as regards their effect on both science and society, with emphasis on their fostering of superstition and supernaturalism.

The refutation of the notion of the "disintegration of matter," and the exposition of the fallacies in the vitalist's mechanistic account of cause and effect, are developed convincingly.

As to the first, Dr. Lewis summarizes the meaning of the new scientific developments in physics in two admirable pages which are well worth studying. In that connection the author states:

... all that is really meant by modern science is that the nineteenth-century view of matter, at the ultra-microscopic level, is out of date. It no longer consists of hard, indivisible billiard-ball-like atoms but of electrical phenomena. But *neither* view has got anything at all to do with *solidity on the level of ordinary experience*. On that level, matter is as solid as ever it was, it not only *appears* to be solid, it *is* solid. . . . (p. 27.)

And in his clear-cut attack on vitalism (the idealist theory that explains life and evolution by the intrusion of a vital force into the non-living), Lewis shows that Marxism offers the scientific explanation of the emergence of the new without mystical "vitalistic interference."

However, Lewis' exposition of the reactionary essence of contemporary idealism is considerably marred by the fact that he makes a number of inexplicable concessions to idealism and

* International Publishers, New York.

agnosticism on several important questions, as we shall show.

I. IDEALISM AND MATERIALISM

Lewis devotes the first two sections of his booklet to an explanation and refutation of idealism. Unfortunately, his approach in general is simply to contrast idealism with crude materialism, not distinguishing crude from dialectical materialism. Hence, for the reader, a clear exposition of the dialectical materialist foundation of the Marxist-Leninist world outlook in opposition to idealism is never fully achieved.

The relation of dialectical materialism to idealism tends instead to be placed in a one-sided way. Thus, Lewis states:

Marxism, therefore, does not flatly refute idealism as though the whole idealist movement from Descartes to Hegel had been a preposterous error. It does not brush Plato and his disciples on one side. So far from engaging in a head-on collision in the Johnsonian style, as is the manner of the crude materialist, it absorbs even while it criticizes, it includes even while it transcends the idealist philosophy. In other words, its whole attitude is dialectical. (p. 11.)

True, Marx and Engels did not discount the contributions made through idealist philosophy at certain stages of history. While sharply distinguishing themselves from idealism, showing on every occasion the fallacies of all idealist and agnostic philosophies, their reaction-

ary outcomes in social thought and class alignments, Marx and Engels were the first to acknowledge the special contributions to the development of human knowledge made by the various philosophers. But Marx and Engels, as in a later epoch Lenin and Stalin, were consistent materialists. Their philosophy did not rise "above the battle" between idealism and materialism. It was forged through participation in this battle in which Marx and Engels identified themselves with the materialist camp, and consistently advanced and developed one trend in philosophy—materialism.

Lenin emphasized this in his brilliant work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*:

The genius of Marx and Engels consisted in the very fact that in the course of a long period, *nearly half a century*, they developed materialism, that they further advanced one fundamental trend in philosophy, that they did not confine themselves to reiterating epistemological problems that had already been solved, but consistently applied—and showed *how* to apply—*this same* materialism in the sphere of social science, mercilessly brushing aside as litter and rubbish the pretentious rigmarole, the innumerable attempts to "discover" a "new" line in philosophy, to invent a "new" trend. . . *

It is, therefore, somewhat ambiguous to say as Lewis does, that Marxism was a "development rather than a wholesale repudiation of current

* V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, International Publishers, Vol. XI, p. 386.

philosophy" (p. 9), unless we stress with Lenin that Marx and Engels "further advanced one fundamental trend in philosophy"—materialism.

Further, it is erroneous to say that Marxism "does not flatly refute idealism," that it "absorbs even while it criticises . . . includes even while it transcends the idealist philosophy." Marxism would not be Marxism if it did not flatly refute the fundamental content of all idealism — the primacy of mind over matter, the denial of the existence of objective reality independent of consciousness. Even a cursory reading of Marxist writings will give proof of the unending struggle of Marxism against the fundamental premises of all idealist philosophy, including the very Hegelianism from which it extracted the "rational kernel," dialectics. Because this is not done in the booklet under discussion, the manner in which Marxism is dealt with in relation to idealism and materialism is open to the inference that Marxism absorbed the "good" while it rejected the "bad" idealism, or that Marxism is some third camp in philosophy which is a synthesis of the other two camps.

Too often we are given a blurred, undifferentiated image of materialism in Lewis' treatment of mechanistic materialism. In fact the exposition is developed in such a way that the whole idealist camp in philosophy is counterposed favorably to this limited materialism, with the inevitable result that materialism is

disparaged and idealism's "contributions" exaggerated. Thus it becomes difficult to explain how dialectical materialism is a continuation of the basic notions of the earlier materialism, on a higher plane. Indeed, it is a matter to be noted that Lewis does not use the term, *dialectical materialism*, and this failure corresponds to his tendency to confuse the issue of idealism and materialism. Passages taken at random tend to bear this out:

Idealism is a reaction from the naive belief in an abrupt presentation of physical things to the mind as if they could be known for what they are as simply as a photographic plate records a picture. (P. 10.)

The materialist . . . believing only in the physiological mechanism leading to brain events . . . sets out to prove only that mind does not exist, that there is nothing properly to be called real but matter, which is limited to predictable chemical and physiological effects. For him, if consciousness occurs at all, it is either a sort of shadow cast by the brain or in some other way consistent with the complete dependence of mind on matter. . . . This for most materialists is the conclusion of the argument and it is the classical position of what is often called mechanistic materialism but more generally known simply as the materialist philosophy. (My emphases —B.G.) (P. 20.)

The materialist has stripped the universe of mind, but he has not got rid of it. He cannot. It is, if not the skeleton, at any rate the ghost in his cupboard, and it is always plaguing him. If the physical universe is without mind, then mind must exist as a thing

in itself, and to that conclusion men will continue to come as certainly as water will come in through the holes of a sieve. They are wrong, of course, but they are forced to be wrong in order somehow to justify the indisputable evidence for the mental and spiritual elements in human life. (P. 23.)

Certainly we do not get from these statements a clear view of the transformation of materialism historically achieved at the hands of Marxism from the mechanistic to the dialectical level.

When Lewis states that "the materialist has stripped the universe of mind"; that the major hypothesis of mechanical materialism is that "matter cannot think"; and, by his undifferentiated use of the term "materialism" in this connection, that this is the view of materialist philosophy in general, he leads to dubious conclusions as to the nature of the struggle between idealism and materialism. In a critical examination of the errors of the mechanical materialists it is essential to point out that the vast majority of the 18th century materialists were agreed upon the existence of the mental element in human life. Furthermore, dialectical materialism has developed the scientific principles for the understanding of the relation of thought to being, of mind as a function of matter organized on a higher level. Any non-historical treatment of materialism only helps to sow confusion in the struggle of materialism against idealism.

It is a well-established fact that

the founders of dialectical materialism paid tribute to the early materialists of antiquity, to their path-blazing endeavors to give a materialist answer to the question: what is reality? Marx and Engels spoke in glowing terms of the profound contributions of the 18th century French materialists. Certainly Marx and Engels criticized the shortcomings of the English and French materialists, as they did those of Feuerbach, but their criticism represented not a negative attitude to that materialism, but a registration of its insufficiency. Their criticism was from the standpoint, not of idealism, nor of some "third" trend in philosophy, but of a higher and more consistent materialism—from the standpoint of dialectical materialism. That is why Lenin, when speaking of "naive realism," could say:

The "naive realism" of any healthy person who has not been an inmate of a lunatic asylum or a pupil of the idealist philosophers consists in the view that things, the environment, the world, exist independently of our sensation, of our consciousness, of our self and of man in general. . . . *Materialism deliberately makes the "naive" belief of mankind the foundation of its theory of knowledge.** (My emphasis—B.G.)

Here Lenin, far from treating naive realism with contempt, selects for emphasis that which is common to all materialism (even in its most rudimentary form) in opposition to all idealism.

* *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, pp. 135-6.

Lewis in his attack upon "naive realism" and mechanistic materialism in fact sets up a straw man. For mankind has long passed the stage when mechanical materialism was the dominant form of materialist philosophy (although, of course, there are mechanical materialists also today). The level to which materialism has reached today is that of dialectical materialism which was definitely formulated a century ago. Every limitation of mechanical materialism; its undialectical view of natural and social development; its failure to understand the real processes of change in nature and society; its disregard of the element of social practice in transforming nature and society, with the resulting outcome in idealist conclusions, were subjected to critical analysis by Marx and Engels. One cannot deal with mechanical materialism today without showing how dialectical materialism has overcome the limitations of mechanical materialism and has developed a consistent materialist world outlook, the philosophic basis of scientific socialism.

Modern bourgeois philosophers, almost without exception, ignore the contributions of dialectical materialism and, as full-fledged or quasi-idealists, continue to deal with materialism as though it were still at its 18th century stage. Precisely because of this it is indispensable to stress in counterdistinction to all idealism the historically progressive role of materialism as a whole, par-

ticularly the role of the bold materialism of the 18th century (notwithstanding its mechanistic, non-dialectical limitations) because of its insistence on the main materialist tenets, the primacy of matter, the objective existence of the world antecedent to human perception.

We have further in the booklet, as indicated by repeated statements, the implication of synthesis between materialism and idealism. Thus in reference to the development of the conflict between materialism and idealism in the 17th century, we read:

Thus there came into existence two opposing philosophies, materialism and idealism, each of which really implied the other. They were two halves of an indissoluble whole. (P. 23.)

And on the following page:

There is a sham fight on. A battle between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. It is this head-on collision between the mechanistic materialists and the idealists. It is a useless and confusing procedure. They are both right and they are both wrong.

Lewis then suggests a "dialectical" solution:

The mechanistic materialist has got to see that matter (in brains) can think. The idealist has got to see that thinking, being real enough, never takes place except in brains. (P. 24.)

For Marxists, materialism and idealism are not "two halves of an indissoluble whole," each of which implies the other. For Marxists the struggle between materialism and idealism is not a "sham battle." *It is the battle itself!* Behind this battle

stand different class groupings whose conflicting interests are expressed in conflicting ideologies which cannot be reconciled.

The struggle of materialism against idealism will not be resolved in a "new synthesis" of both. The solution will not come about by a reconciliation of materialism with idealism. The struggle will be resolved only by the destruction of the continued hold of idealism and the universal victory of scientific, dialectical materialism, finally and irrevocably, over idealism.

II. MARXIAN AND HEGELIAN DIALECTICS

"Marxism," Lewis state on page 10, "is a classical development of European philosophy, a revolutionized Hegelianism."

Can we say that Marxism is a "revolutionized Hegelianism"?

Hegel, it is well known, was the most advanced bourgeois philosopher, in fact the greatest thinker of bourgeois classical philosophy. Hegel's philosophy represented the culmination of German classical idealism. Contrary to 18th century materialism, which viewed the world as static and fixed and not in a continuous process of development, Hegel outlined the basic features of dialectics, the laws of motion in nature, society, and human thought.

But Hegel, while outlining the dialectical process, developed the laws of dialectics in an idealistic form, as the dialectical development of the

Absolute Idea, with the real world as the reflection of the Absolute Idea. As an idealist, Hegel deduced the development of nature and history from the development of the Idea, which emerges in his philosophy as the creator of nature and human history.

Hegel, in respect to method, was revolutionary because the laws of dialectics are a reflection of the dialectical processes taking place in a real world. Hegelianism as a philosophic system, however, was idealistic and reactionary, since the Absolute Idea became the veil to conceal the real development of the world. Thus despite the great depth and richness of its dialectics, Hegelianism by its irrational essence, misrepresented and distorted the actual line of development of both nature and human history.

It should therefore not be bewildering that, despite his revolutionary method in philosophy, Hegel was reactionary in politics. In his *Philosophy of Law*, for example, he finds justification for the corrupt Prussian feudal monarchy. Nor should it seem strange that fascist ideologists were quick to seize on the reactionary political implications in Hegel.

Hegel's idealism had to be discarded and destroyed in order to establish the revolutionary essence of the dialectical method. Marx and Engels, while paying tribute to the great contributions Hegel made to the advancement of human knowledge, decisively rejected Hegelian-

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ism as such, exposed the mysticism and clericalism of the Hegelian system, while utilizing to the full the "rational kernel" in his dialectics. Marx and Engels made unmistakably clear the distinction between their dialectical method and Hegel's.

"My dialectic method," said Marx, "is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, *i.e.*, the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought."*

And, in a letter to Kugelman, Marx stated, ". . . my method of development is not Hegelian, since I am a materialist and Hegel is an idealist. Hegel's dialectic is the basic form of all dialectic, but only after it has been stripped of its mystical form, and it is precisely this which distinguishes my method."**

This is quite different from saying that Marxism is "revolutionized Hegelianism." (Hegelianism connotes the whole system of Hegel's philosophy which was idealist in basis.) Rather, Marxism was a revolution against Hegelianism. The dia-

lectical method of Marxism, being inseparable from its materialist foundation, cannot be viewed as a form of Hegelianism, even revolutionized.

It is essential to understand the difference between Hegelian and Marxian dialectics, not only in order to understand the historical origin and development of Marxism, but to appreciate fully the new advance in human knowledge attained with the rise of dialectical materialism.

Such stress on this passage in the booklet seems to us necessary because of the effect of Lewis' discussion of idealism in general as the carrier of dialectics. While one finds constant references, with a one-sided emphasis, to the rigidity of the views of the mechanistic materialists, idealism is all too frequently made to stand out as critical and dynamic. Statements like the following abound:

Idealism has its origin in a more critical account of human knowledge . . . it is the first step from vulgar philistinism to a more rational and scientific understanding of man and his relation to nature. . . . Idealism is a reaction from the naive belief in an abrupt presentation of physical things to the mind as if they could be known for what they are as simply as a photographic plate records a picture. (P. 10.)

What idealism bequeathes to us as a permanent heritage, is what Lenin calls *the dialectical element in knowledge*, the recognition of the relativity of all knowledge, of the fact that it is strictly conditioned, that what we know

* *Capital*, Vol. I, International Publishers, p. xxx.

** *Letters to Kugelman*, International Publishers, 1934, p. 63.

of it *depends* on a multitude of particular circumstances. . . . (P. 15.)

The irrationalists and fictionalists have got something. They are in revolt from a much too rigid rationalism and from a naive "spot-light" view of scientific knowledge. (P. 31.)

Here the inference seems to be that the whole idealist camp of philosophy is a revolutionary dynamic force which destroys the narrowness, one-sidedness, and rigidity of the materialist camp. Idealism as a whole appears to be essentially dialectical, or at least dynamic, and all idealist philosophers, including the modern irrationalists, have "got something," and that something is their innate dialectical character.

Lewis states: "Lenin says that it is only its *one-sidedness* which vitiates idealism." (P. 10.) Are we to infer from this it is possible to eliminate the one-sidedness of idealism and develop a more rounded-out idealism which would be acceptable? Lenin says something quite different.

Lenin stated that:

Philosophical idealism is *only* nonsense from the standpoint of crude, simple, metaphysical materialism. On the other hand, from the standpoint of dialectical materialism, philosophical idealism is a one-sided, exaggerated, *uberschwengliches** (Dietzgen), development (inflation, distention) of one of the features, sides, facets of knowledge into an absolute, *divorced* from matter, from nature, apotheosized. Idealism is clericalism. . . .**

* Extreme.—Editor.

** *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, p. 84.

Lenin maintains here that when the one-sidedness of idealism is done away with that disposes of the whole of idealism.

It is not idealism which contributes a "more rational and scientific understanding of man and his relation to nature." What idealism "contributed" was distortion, mysticism, subjective blindness which prevented the flowering of essentially materialist notions. Lewis confuses the "contribution" of idealism with the contribution made by some idealists to human knowledge. The contribution of idealists to human knowledge has paradoxically enough always been a contribution to materialism. Idealism on the other hand has always stood in the way of developing a rational theory of knowledge, for its essence is a mystical deformation of the knowledge process.

It is not idealism, not Hegelianism, which provides mankind with a scientific theory of knowledge. Only dialectical materialism, which reflects the real, and not imaginary, world in which we live; the real, and not imaginary, social processes of present-day society, can serve as a reliable guide to world humanity.

III. RELATIVISM AND THE MARXIST THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

How does Lewis deal with the Marxist theory of knowledge? It is obvious that incorrect notions of materialism and idealism influence the presentation of the problem of the

"knower and the known," the problem of the material content of human knowledge.

Dialectical materialism, contrary to idealism, asserts that mankind can achieve a positive scientific knowledge of reality. In his classic essay, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, Stalin emphasizes this when he says:

... Marxist philosophical materialism holds that the world and its laws are fully knowable, that our knowledge of the laws of nature, tested by experiment and practice, is authentic knowledge having the validity of objective truth, and there are no things in the world which are unknowable, but only things which are still not known, but which will be disclosed and made known by the efforts of science and practice. (P. 17.)

For the Marxist, as against the idealist, agnostic, and skeptic, there is no unknowable, but only a still unknown.

Lewis correctly shows that Marxism rejects the mechanistic conception that consciousness, human knowledge, can give us an exact and complete picture for all time of the world of reality. He stresses that it is impossible for human knowledge, at any given stage, to grasp in final form all the manifold interconnections and processes of the world of actuality, since the world is in constant motion and change. This is uncontested.

In a number of passages, as in the following, Lewis shows correctly the relation of relative to absolute truth:

However relative our knowledge to the conditions under which we know, whatever properties and laws we discover are really there and are as accurately recorded as the circumstances allow. The results are true as far as they go. . . . In other words each recorded observation and discovery is a step forward to absolute objective knowledge. The steps of our advancing science are partial and limited, but they advance into fuller and fuller truth. (P. 15.)

But there are other passages in the booklet which not only contradict this fundamentally correct postulate, but in fact negate it, tending to question the authenticity of what we already know and stressing the relativity of all human knowledge.

Thus Lewis says:

... both modern science and modern philosophy are at one with Marxism in stressing *the great variability and the infinite potentiality of things*, which are not neat bundles of fixed qualities, but everchanging complexes with explosive possibilities and a great range of properties, only few of which we at present know.

So that we no longer say: This is a hard, square, red object, but: This is an object which to me, in this particular light, at this particular temperature, from here is a square, red object, and, in relation to what I am scratching it with, it is hard. (P. 16.)

And further:

"So far as I know," we must always say, "such and such is the case, or such and such are the properties of this thing." Every statement of knowledge must be thus *qualified*. We can no longer say that we know anything *un-*

conditionally. Knowledge we see, is not a "reading off" of the specification of an object, but a statement of the result of a particular relationship between the knower and the known at a particular moment and under the unique conditions of that moment. Knowing is a two-way business in which the way I approach what I know, what I do in order to find out what it is, the conditions of my knowing, are quite as important as what the object is in itself. (P. 17.)

This is a purely relativist position. It bolsters skepticism and subjective waverings and is a far cry from the words of Lenin that the Marxist theory of knowledge correctly reflects the objective laws of social development.

To begin with, one is impelled to question the statement that Marxism and modern (!) philosophy "are at one in stressing the great variability and the infinite potentiality of things" and stop with that. To the extent that contemporary bourgeois philosophers are compelled (in the face of the progress made by natural science in this age of great scientific discoveries) to admit change in nature and society, they tend to stress the impossibility of a scientific knowledge of the laws of movement in the natural and social realms. It is precisely relativism and skepticism which enable bourgeois philosophers to admit processes while denying the possibility of an authentic knowledge of such processes.

This crisis in bourgeois science was long ago noted by Lenin. Bourgeois

philosophy cannot accept the inevitable social consequences of the scientific findings for our day. It dare not face or show the true laws of motion of capitalist society. That would demand a recognition of the inherent contradictions of capitalism, the impossibility of resolving these contradictions within the framework of capitalism, the recognition of the necessity and inevitability of socialism. Therefore, bourgeois philosophy finds refuge in skepticism and agnosticism, in relativism and pragmatism, in the "as far as I know" concept, which denies the possibility of knowing the world and gives no basis for drawing conclusions for the solution of the problems confronting society.

Marxism has nothing in common with this "modern philosophy." It does not subscribe to the "as far as I know" position. Engels in his *Dialectics of Nature* dealt with the complete absurdity of such reasoning when he said:

The number and succession of hypotheses supplanting one another—given the lack of logical and dialectical education among scientists, easily gives rise to the idea that we cannot know the *essence* of things. . . . In the first place, this assertion that we cannot know the thing in itself . . . passes out of science into fantasy. In the second place, it does not add a word to our scientific knowledge, for if we cannot occupy ourselves with things, they do not exist for us. And, thirdly, it is a mere phrase and is never applied. Taken in the abstract it sounds quite

sensible. But suppose one applies it. What would one think of a zoologist who said: a dog *seems* to have four legs, but we do not know whether in reality it has four million legs or none at all. Or if a mathematician who first of all defines a triangle as having three sides, and then declares that he does not know whether it might not have 25? That 2×2 *seems* to be 4? But scientists take care not to apply the phrase "the thing in itself" in natural science, they permit themselves this only in passing into philosophy. This is the best proof how little seriously they take it and what little value it is itself. If they did take it seriously, what would be the good of investigating anything? (Pp. 159-160.)

Lewis tends to create doubt in the authenticity of our knowledge precisely because he confuses dialectics with relativism. The total impact of his emphasis is the exaggeration of one aspect of human knowledge—its limited and relative character—into an absolute principle, that all knowledge is relative. Lewis does not show that that which limits the extent of knowledge is the level of social practice (a historically determined level of production, which is constantly expanding) and not non-knowability of the essence of things as a principle. That is why Lewis concludes we cannot say we know anything unconditionally, we must always qualify our knowledge by "as far as I know."

For Lewis, the relativity of all our knowledge is the dialectical element in knowledge. Thus he says:

What idealism bequeathes to us as a permanent heritage, is what Lenin calls *the dialectical element in knowledge*, the recognition of the relativity of all knowledge. . . . (P. 15.)

This is a misreading of Lenin.

For Marxists, Lenin emphasized, "relativism is only a moment of dialectics," not its essence. According to dialectics, every truth is relative to its epoch, time, and place; but every relative truth, if it corresponds to objective reality, is a component part of objective knowledge, of absolute truth. The dialectical element in knowledge is not its relativism, but the relation between relative and absolute truth.

Marxism categorically rejects the assertion that all knowledge is relative, because that would be tantamount to saying that no knowledge is possible. For relativism as the basis of the theory of knowledge negates the progressive development of knowledge by denying the absolute kernel of knowledge contained in preceding views, on which new knowledge is developed.

While Marxism does not hold to the mechanical materialist concept of knowledge as ready-made and unchangeable, neither does it accept the subjective idealist concept that since the world is in a state of flux, therefore all knowledge is relative. Marxism views the theory of knowledge as a dialectical process which, on the basis of human practice, advances constantly from lower to higher stages of knowledge, "from incom-

plete, inexact knowledge to more complete and more exact," securing an ever deeper and closer understanding of the universal, mutual connections and processes in the world.

As Lenin showed:

The distinction between subjectivism (skepticism, sophistry, etc.) and dialectics, incidentally, is that in (objective) dialectics the difference between the relative and the absolute is itself relative. For objective dialectics there is an absolute even *within* the relative. For subjectivism and sophistry the relative is only relative and excludes the absolute.*

Lewis, too, often makes the relative only relative and that which is absolute also relative.

Lewis does not always avoid the pitfalls of subjective idealism and skepticism because of these inconsistencies. In his definition of knowledge he presents many contradictory conclusions, both affirming and denying the objectivity of things and the reality of the world outside of human consciousness.

The foundation of the materialist theory of knowledge is the fact that the world exists independently of our consciousness. What is the relationship of our consciousness to the external world? It is that our consciousness reflects the world through the action of man upon the world. Lewis shows the "axiom of independent reality," a reality existing independently of the human mind

and the "knowledge of it." But there are other formulations which have idealist connotations.

Starting from the correct position of refuting the view that reality is a finished structure, standing over against a passive observer, Lewis says:

Knowledge . . . is an organic relation and a relation of selectivity and activity, not a bare contemplative reflection.

But because the mechanical universe of naive science does not exist there is no need to abandon the objectivity of things and the reality of laws. (P. 32.)

The conclusion here stated is, of course, correct; but it is weakened by what follows:

But reality is not overthrown by its relational character but is so constituted. . . . Once it is seen that reality can be truly if imperfectly known only as a construct in which mind and nature are partners, then we shall see that while our claims to know may be modest, they may nevertheless be firm. (P. 32.)

"Relational" in this connection means the interplay of subject and object in cognition. Of course, knowledge of an object must involve the relation of the knower to the known. But that does not mean that the existence of the object ceases to have its independence, and itself becomes relational. Furthermore, if Lewis means that in order to know objective reality, certain categories (not imaginary "constructs," but the theoretical expression of actually existing laws of development) are necessary, and that these categories are pro-

* *Selected Works*, Vol. XI, p. 82.

duced by man's mind, not independently of nature, but as the result of man's activity upon nature, in that sense only can one say that mind and nature are partners in producing the category by means of which reality is truly, though still imperfectly, known. But these formulations as they exist in the text lend themselves to an interpretation that reality itself is a relational construct of the mind and nature, and that therefore without mind reality would not be. This assumption is at bottom a concession to subjective idealism.

The relationship of knower to known, the relationship of our thought to the world, is definitively answered by Marxism. Knowledge and experience in the Marxist sense are not terms applied to the experience and knowledge of separate individuals but of social categories—of society, of social practice. It is not what "I directly experience" but what is experienced by society through the aggregate of social individuals which forms the sum total of the knowledge of mankind today. It is in social production that man transforms the objects of nature to meet his requirements, thus extending his knowledge of objective reality. Thus, the relationship of knower and known is the result of the practical relationship of man and nature. It is this relationship also by which the unknown becomes progressively known to man.

That is why Marxists are not rela-

tivists, not skeptics. Marxists have complete confidence in the limitless possibilities of knowledge, in the continuous process of science. That is why Marxists also have complete confidence in the inevitable victory on a world scale of dialectical materialism, the philosophic foundation of the Marxist world outlook which will arm the working class with the knowledge to lead all humanity to become master of its fate in a world at last free.

* * *

We have selected certain aspects of Dr. Lewis' booklet for discussion, since these are fundamental to an understanding of the present-day conflict between materialism and idealism, to an understanding of the principles of dialectical materialism. In the treatment of materialism and idealism, Marxian and Hegelian dialectics, relativism and the theory of knowledge, we are dealing with basic aspects of the Marxist world outlook. In the ideological struggle against the fashionable bourgeois philosophies of today it is essential that Marxists deepen their mastery of these scientific principles.

In our present celebration of the centenary of Marxism, we are certain that the discussion engendered by Dr. Lewis' work will help stimulate fruitful contributions to the study of dialectical and historical materialism as applied to the American scene.

CRUCIAL ISSUES FACING THE I. L. G. W. U.

By ROSE WORTIS

Considerable public interest was aroused by the recent elections held in New York by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

This interest was only partially due to the fact that this union is the fifth largest in the A. F. of L., with a membership close to 400,000, about 182,000 of whom are in New York State where they consist mainly of workers of Italian, Jewish, Negro, Spanish, and Puerto Rican extraction.

The interest was mainly due to the fact that the I.L.G.W.U. exerts an influence in the labor movement far beyond its numerical strength. For years it has been a battleground between the Left-progressive forces, on the one hand, and, on the other, the diehard reactionary, Social-Democratic group led by David Dubinsky, the *New Leader*, and the Jewish *Forward* group, supported by their collaborators in the A. F. of L. Executive Council—Matthew Woll, George Meaney, etc.

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

In this union, the membership finds itself under a considerable handicap in having its voice heard

both before and during election campaigns. To secure themselves against effective criticism, David Dubinsky, the union's president, and his supporters had amended the union's constitution to outlaw any organized expression of opposition to their policies. These bars are lifted only three months before union elections, which take place every three years!

The pre-election period in the I.L.G.W.U., therefore, is one of heated discussion among the workers on the basic problems affecting their union, its relations with the employers, and its role in the labor and progressive political movement.

The contending forces in the recent election were the powerfully entrenched Dubinsky machine, supported by unlimited finances, and the rank and file groups organized shortly before the elections. These groups, among whom are the Communists, consisted of rank and file workers in disagreement with the policies and the leadership now dominant in the union. In some locals, such as Local 117 (Cloak Operators), the group included outstanding Right-wingers who are in disagreement with some of Dubinsky's policies. These former administration supporters believe with the progressives, that the union leadership should include all constructive elements, irrespective of political views, and not continue as the monopoly only of those who accept the policies and dictates of Dubinsky.

The rank-and-file groups ran partial slates, and only in 14 of the most important locals. The official tally

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shows that they received 17,181 votes in these locals, against the administration vote of some 77,000.

The central issue advanced by the rank and file forces was the need for the unity of all workers to preserve and advance labor's gains in the face of the offensive of the open-shoppers, and for a basic change in the union's present reactionary course on foreign policy. To realize such a program, the rank and file proposed a united leadership to consist of able workers, regardless of political views. They put up partial slates and repudiated the unfounded charge that they were seeking control or a majority of the posts to be filled.

Dubinsky and Co. made "Communism" the issue. Their election material rivaled the wildest tirades of the Rankins, Thomases, and Hearsts. They charged that the progressives were working under direct orders from Moscow to capture control of the union and to use it to advance the ambitions of "a certain country to get bases in the Dardenelles, in Spitsbergen, a large part of Korea, a part of the South Pole, a free hand in Europe and a voice in the affairs of America." (Declaration of the administration group of Local 117.)

Another favorite argument advanced by the administration forces was that the Left-wing, if it won the election, would not be allowed to take office, that Dubinsky would carry through another mass expulsion that would result in a repetition

of the internal division and strife of 1925-33. This argument carried much weight, especially among old-timers who know how unscrupulous Dubinsky is.

On trade issues the administration modestly took full credit for wartime prosperity in the industry! It presented no program to meet the problems of the industry, no perspectives. The only extent to which it dealt with industrial problems was to incorporate demagogically in its program the main economic planks advanced by the rank and file groups, striving to prove thereby that on trade union issues there were no real differences. Its bankruptcy was laid bare in an editorial in *Justice* dealing with the industrial situation, which had only this to say: "We must keep our fingers crossed."

Throughout the election campaign, the leadership carefully concealed its reactionary policies in relation to the labor movement as a whole, and spoke piously of world peace.

Dubinsky attached much importance to these elections, especially in New York City, the main center of the industry.

His central objective was to exploit the present anti-Red hysteria to wipe out or at least greatly reduce the Left-wing vote. To him the possibilities seemed very promising. To begin with, the I.L.G.W.U. had experienced a period of prosperity during the last few years. The earnings of the workers, especially with the

long hours of overtime, were comparatively high. Because of the backlog of consumers' purchasing power, employment during 1946 was at its highest peak. Furthermore, the many basic unsolved problems in the industry—the organization of the chain stores and mail order houses, overlapping of work between the I.L.G.W.U. and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, wage differentials between New York and out of town, etc.—had been deliberately pushed to the background during the war by the union leadership.

Dubinsky therefore took personal supervision of the election campaign. He brought into line some of the dissatisfied Right-wingers aspiring for office. All Right-wing groups were united in a holy crusade against the "Communists."

Here was one more chance for Dubinsky to emerge as the champion Red-baiter, to show the world how to deal with the "Red menace." The entire staff of the local unions, the Joint Boards, and the National Office were mobilized for the job. The machinery of the union, including the mailing lists from the National Office, was placed at the disposal of the administration groups in violation of the union constitution. The demands of the rank and file that the election be supervised by the Honest Ballot Association, that voting machines be installed, and that there be no interference by the administration and no use of union machinery for partisan purposes,

were rejected by the General Executive Board.

Every trick in the book was used to thwart the will of the membership, as the post-election statement issued by some of the leading rank and file candidates makes clear.

For example, Dubinsky devised an ingenious method to prevent the election of leadership representing various groupings: he instituted a system of bloc voting instead of balloting for individual candidates on the basis of merit.

In a number of locals (such as Local 48, Italian Cloak Operators), the ballots were not numbered or counted before the voting started. There was no system of identifying voters, thus opening the way for repeaters (Local 22, Dressmakers). In Local 20 (Raincoat Makers), voting was carried on in the shops for a period of three days, although the constitution provides for a one-day election. In Local 35 (Cloak Pressers), business agents took the ballots from hundreds of workers and voted for them.

The job of piling up a large vote was done so thoroughly that some locals counted more ballots than they have members, based on the number of delegates allowed each local for the national convention. Locals such as 48 and 89 (Italian Dressmakers), whose membership meetings are attended by only a handful of members, recorded 23,000 and 13,000 votes respectively, cast for the administration slate.

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nounced to the New York press that in 29 New York locals the Left-wing had received 14,700 votes, against 104,000 for the administration.

Rank and file leaders pointed out, however, that the total of 104,000 votes is misleading. It is closer to the total of the eligible voters than actual votes cast since the rank and file contested the election in only 14 locals (the other 15 had practically no elections). In these 14 locals, where the administration received 77,000 votes, the rank and file actually received 17,181 votes, virtually the same as in 1944 despite the influence of the intervening period of prosperity.

Dubinsky is disturbed. He juggles figures and percentages and tries to minimize the rank and file vote because it belies his boast that he has purged the union of Communists. He knows that these votes represent the most advanced and union-conscious workers in the industry who stuck to their guns in the face of endless difficulties. He also knows that thousands of those who voted for the administration do not support his anti-working-class policies but were pressured into voting for the administration by the business agents who control their jobs and who did their utmost to befog the issues in the campaign.

No matter how Dubinsky manipulates the figures, the plain truth, revealed by his own statement, is that thousands of workers, who consistently support the rank and file pro-

gressive forces, are not represented and have no voice in the union's leadership.

The election revealed a sharp cleavage between a large section of the membership and the Dubinsky leadership and an urgent desire for a united leadership that would include workers of all political opinions. It also showed that the temporary prosperity of the war years and the ruthless persecution and suspension of progressives have not undermined the solid Left-wing strength in the union. It demonstrated that no real unity can exist so long as thousands of workers are systematically barred from participating in the life and leadership of their union.

The election results also explode the flimsy charges of the Riesels, the Woltmans, and Stewart Alsop (*Saturday Evening Post*) that progressives in C.I.O. and A. F. of L. unions retain their leadership through mechanical control of the union machinery.

Here is a union under tight control of the most unscrupulous Red-baiters, with a powerful machine and 1,200 officers in New York alone, and yet the rank and file, given half a chance, voted in the thousands, even at the risk of their jobs, for the Left-wing and the Communists.

URGENT ISSUES

Though the elections are over, the issues raised in the campaign are more urgent than ever. No. 1 is the defeat of the anti-labor drive. The

Hartley slave-labor Bill, the witch-hunt against Federal employees, and the proposed legislation to outlaw the Communist Party are all of one pattern. The aim of all these attacks is to disrupt the labor movement from within and undermine the democratic people's movement at home in order to eliminate the main forces which challenge the policies of American imperialism abroad.

The labor movement has been slow to grasp the full significance of this anti-labor drive. Some people thought that, with an eye on 1948, the Republican reactionaries would move cautiously. The court decision in the miners' case and the introduction of the Hartley Bill have helped to dispel these illusions. Even the most conservative labor leaders recognize now that there is a well-planned drive by the N.A.M. to restore the open shop, company unionism, and government by injunction, a drive to wipe out all that labor achieved during Roosevelt's administration.

Labor—primarily the C.I.O. and progressive A. F. of L. unions—is fighting back. But not the I.L.G.W.U. leadership! Dubinsky broke the solid labor front in his testimony before the Senate committee hearings on the anti-labor bills, and won acclaim from reactionary members of the committee and from the press. He proved himself a "labor leader amenable to reason," agreeing to modifications of the Wagner Act and to restoration of

"free speech" to the employers. To the average worker, this means giving the boss a free hand to intimidate him.

Dubinsky is, deservedly, one of the favorite labor leaders of the reactionary forces in the country, widely advertised as a labor "statesman" who believes that strikes are antiquated and that when workers ask for more wages they should be "sold" instead on more production.

Dubinsky and his colleagues can fight when they want to, but they never want to fight anyone except the progressives in their union and in the labor movement. The local installation meetings held at the height of the anti-labor hysteria were turned into Dubinsky editions of the star-chamber proceedings of the Un-American Committee. He spent hours villifying the thousands who had had the courage to vote against his hand-picked candidates and instructed the newly-elected officers to wage an unrelenting war of extermination against the "Communists!"

AN INFAMOUS ROLE

Dubinsky's war against his own membership and against the progressive labor movement is consistent with and flows out of his general political line on all major questions of domestic and foreign policy.

In the present world situation, he and his colleagues are just as alarmed as the capitalist class itself at the leftward trend of the masses throughout the world, and throw their support

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to reaction wherever it is in danger. Their role today, much like that of the Social-Democrats in Germany after World War I, is to promote bourgeois ideology in the labor movement and to win working-class support for American imperialism.

They have become crusaders for the preservation of "free enterprise" against "Communist totalitarianism." They glorify the capitalist system. A typical example of this is contained in an article in the *Jewish Forward* of December 10, 1946, by the theoretician of this group, Rafael Abramovitch. He tries to prove that the Marxist position on the state as an organ of class rule is antiquated and does not apply to the U.S., where the government is "an intermediary" between classes. During the miners' strike, when the N.A.M. inaugurated its anti-union campaign under the slogan that unions are monopolies, Abramovitch wrote:

Parallel to the system of capitalist monopolists, there arose in America a system of labor monopolists in the form of unions . . . intention to destroy each other. . . . Both sides strive to get along with each other—only in a democracy can there be such a "partnership" between capital and labor.

Therefore, both classes are interested in democratic forms and in the mechanics of political democracy.

The Government, thereby, is not the servant of the capitalist class but the arbitrator between two powerful social-economic organizations.

The importance of this labor and

liberal base for the monopolist scheme is highlighted by the Americans for Democratic Action, in which Social-Democratic influence is considerable.

When the country began to realize and protest the implications of the Truman Doctrine and its threat to the U.N., the A.D.A. hastened to support Truman in a demagogic statement aimed to make this reactionary program more palatable to the progressive forces.

Support of such a reactionary foreign policy leads logically to the subordination of all domestic issues to this "higher purpose." Hence, in the eyes of Dubinsky and his colleagues, the C.I.O. wage movement becomes a plot to disorganize the national economy in the interests of the Soviet Union. The witch-hunt against government employees is only a means of safeguarding our government against Russian spies. Strikes for improved conditions are translated into inflationary actions aimed to disrupt unity between labor and management. Economy at the expense of social agencies is a necessity to assure funds for military preparations. Labor curbs are merely the means of adjusting differences between labor and management; speed-up (expanded production) is just a pre-condition for increased purchasing power; while elimination of O.P.A. is a means of stimulating production and lowering prices.

However, it is not only ideologically that Dubinsky and his cohorts

serve reaction. They implement their ideology with dollars collected from the workers, ostensibly for relief and other humanitarian causes. They have worked out an interventionist policy of their own, paralleling that of the Truman administration. They, too, send emissaries to Europe, Asia, and Latin America to disrupt the labor movement, and to prop up discredited anti-unity Social-Democratic forces and even pro-fascist elements fighting democratic governments.

Only a few weeks ago, Dubinsky loaned \$100,000 to the Dutch Transport Workers. Why only the Dutch Transport Workers? Because, he said, they actively opposed the World Federation of Trade Unions. Thus Dubinsky proved himself an apt pupil of Herbert Hoover. Relief—yes—but only to those who support his anti-unity policies.

Funds collected for relief also are used to support disruptive groups in progressive C.I.O. and A. F. of L. unions. Philip Murray, at the last United Auto Workers convention, took public notice of Dubinsky's sinister interference in the internal affairs of that union.

These disruptive activities constitute an important part of Dubinsky's daily work. They are carried through systematically under supervision of a special department headed by the political analyst of the I.L.G.W.U., the notorious Jay Lovestone.

This center has direct contact with the most reactionary forces in the

State Department and, through the State Department, with reactionary elements throughout the world. Its purpose is to promote disharmony and provoke an anti-Soviet war.

The Dubinsky forces formally supported the recent war, but hoped it would exhaust the Soviet Union and bar that country from playing a world role. They enthusiastically supported Churchill in opposing the opening of a Second Front, advocated a prolonged war, and cooled considerably toward Roosevelt after the Teheran and Yalta agreements.

Dubinsky stood by the fascist Polish Government-in-Exile until the last minute and his clique of the *New Leader* even goes so far as to whitewash the anti-Semitic Cardinal Hlond who condoned the Kielce pogrom. They stood by Mikhailovich until his execution as a traitor to his people, and now try to enshrine his memory. They instigated and financed the split in the Socialist Party of Italy.

Dubinsky endorsed Churchill's infamous Fulton, Mo., speech and crossed a picket line to honor him at a banquet. Dubinsky and his crowd enthusiastically support atom-bomb diplomacy. They endorsed British and U.S. intervention in Greece and back the fascist king. They are apologists for British imperialism in Palestine, and Dubinsky is the proud recipient of the King's medal for services rendered. Dubinsky's vice-president, Israel Feinberg, went to Germany on an

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A. F. of L. mission and came back advocating a soft peace and the rebuilding of German industry. Mark Starr, Educational Director of the I.L.G.W.U., went to Japan as MacArthur's labor advisor. Wherever reaction needs a labor trouble-shooter, Dubinsky supplies one.

PROBLEMS THAT MUST BE TACKLED

All these reactionary policies are in conflict with the basic sentiments of the needle trade workers who constitute one of the most anti-fascist sections of American labor.

What is the perspective for these workers, both as regards their union problems and the broader political issues which affect them just as directly and deeply?

The convention, scheduled for Cleveland in June, from all appearances will be a platform for reactionary politicians and all sorts of renegades and outcasts of the European Socialist movement. The rank and file can hardly hope for anything constructive from it. The struggle to change the disastrous course of the union will not end with the convention. It must become a day-to-day struggle in the shops and the union. The 17,000 Left-wingers, as always in the past, will be a powerful influence.

Dubinsky's present reactionary policies, applied to the industry, will lead to a rapid deterioration of working standards and imperil the very life of the union. A danger signal

is the recent agreement in the dress industry, for which Dubinsky claims "personal credit," which opens the way for a 7 per cent wage cut if the cost of living goes down.

The Dubinsky leadership cannot be depended on to safeguard the union's gains. The progressive forces must alert the workers against the employers' attacks, which are already spreading throughout the industry in the form of unofficial wage cuts, and organize them to force union action on the many unsolved problems of the industry.

Among these problems is, for instance, the organization of the unorganized in New York and out-of-town, especially the chain stores and big mail order houses. These open shops are a serious menace to the organized workers. According to the last General Executive Board, there are more than 100,000 unorganized workers in the industry.

Then there is the wage differential between New York City and out-of-town smaller centers. Continued neglect of these problems will hasten unemployment in the larger centers and intensify the competition between New York City and out-of-town and force down the standards of the organized workers.

There is the problem of overlapping between the unions in the ladies' and men's garment industries. This must be tackled through peaceful and orderly channels. Disputes such as developed in Rochester can only be harmful to both unions.

There is also the problem of eliminating discrimination against Negro workers, who today are limited to the least skilled trades. This was raised by the progressives, but not concretely enough, nor with sufficient boldness. There must be action enabling Negro workers to enter the highest skilled trades, as operators, cutters, etc. The progressives must not hesitate to raise the issue just because Zimmerman will accuse them of creating racial disharmony. There can be no real harmony where discrimination exists. Zimmerman should be forced to back his noble words about Negro equality with deeds.

The fight for union democracy, not in form but in fact, which was raised during the election campaign, must be continued in day-to-day struggle. So long as local autonomy is denied to hundreds of out-of-town locals which are under the thumb of Dubinsky's appointees, no real democracy can exist in any part of the union.

The flippancy with which the union leadership approaches these problems, its irresponsible talk against strikes, the confidence it fosters in the good intentions of the bosses and the soundness and permanency of the employers' relations with the union, can only create dangerous illusions and weaken the resistance to employer attacks on the workers' living standards.

The workers cannot place their destiny in the hands of Dubinsky's

"bright young men moving around the countryside with cameras making time and motion studies to speed the needle trade workers so production costs can be lowered and wages raised."

Nor can they depend on officers who take "refresher courses" and listen to lectures from such "great friends of labor as Henry Kaiser and Eric Johnston" (Riesel, *New York Post*). This bankrupt policy has resulted in 45-cent minimum scales and mass dissatisfaction and revolt, as in the Maryland-Virginia and other Districts.

A CHALLENGING QUESTION

A challenging question to all familiar with the history of the needle trades is: How is it that I.L.G.W.U. membership tolerates these betrayals? Two basic factors account for this situation:

1. The internal struggle in the union which lasted for years.
2. Some serious errors by the Left wing forces.

From 1922 to 1933 the I.L.G.W.U. was led almost to the brink of ruin as a result of the mass expulsion policy initiated by the Social-Democratic leaders. The situation was accentuated by the economic crisis of 1933.

During the mass upswing in organization, after the birth of N.R.A. in 1933, the needle trade workers, oppressed by miserable conditions, revolted against the open shop. They carried through a great strike which tied up the industry and resulted in

turning the skeleton organization almost overnight into a union of hundreds of thousands.

The Left-wing forces brought forward every progressive policy in the union, and kept alive the spirit of unionism during the most difficult days of the depression; through their agitation and organization, they prepared the ground for this mass revolt. However, they failed to realize the opportunity presented by the strike to restore unity in the ranks of the workers. They remained for a time isolated in the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union which represented only a small minority of the workers. The mass of new workers entered the I.L.G.W.U. This gave the Dubinsky machine the opportunity to entrench itself.

The progressive forces, to this day, are paying for this costly mistake despite their great contribution to the building of the union. To this day, the most important branches of the industry—such as the dress-makers numbering about 65,000 and the miscellaneous locals numbering about 50,000 workers, mostly Italian, Negro and Spanish—are dominated by the Dubinsky leadership.

The Jewish workers, among whom the Left Wing has its main strength, are older persons, thousands of them retiring yearly, leaving the Jewish workers a minority in the industry. The problems of reaching the newer workers therefore assumes ever greater importance.

These workers, new to the labor

movement, unfamiliar with the background and history of the I.L.G.W.U., have not been integrated into the life of the union. In the out-of-town centers, they do not even have the right to elect their local officers. (Through appointed officers, Dubinsky also controls a large section of Convention delegates.)

Despite the boasting of the I.L.G.W.U. education department, it has done little to educate the masses of these workers in the principles of unionism. The progressive forces have no access to these workers, a large number of whom work in the cheaper garment line. During the election period, the business agent, the only one identified with the union, who controls their jobs, brings these workers to the polling place with instructions to vote for the administration slate. These workers hold the balance of power in many locals.

Not until the rank and file progressive workers begin to develop systematic work among this section of the membership on day-to-day issues, and begin to take cognizance of their special problems as Italians, Negro, and Spanish workers, will these thousands become a conscious force influencing the policies and direction of the union.

This is the task which the progressive forces must learn to master. There is no earthly reason why Negro workers who vote for Pete Cacchione should vote for Antonini, or why Spanish and Puerto Rican

workers who support the A.L.P. and Marcantonio should remain passive or else support the Dubinsky-Zimmerman administration.

The election campaign has demonstrated the basic importance of building the Communist Party among the garment workers. In those local unions where the Party has a mass base the progressive forces were able to develop a more effective campaign, to bring the issues to the forefront, and to win greater strength and influence among the workers.

The Communists in the I.L.G.W.U. are among the most loyal and de-

voted builders of the union. They were always to be found in the front ranks of every struggle to advance the union's interests. They have no interests separate and apart from other workers, and are ready to cooperate with all workers to advance the interests of the workers in their own union and the labor and progressive movement.

The building of the Communist Party among the garment workers, especially the new workers, will give greater strength and vitality to the forces fighting to bring their union back to the path of progress.

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TOWARD A PEOPLE'S TAX PROGRAM

By DONALD FREEMAN

THE FIRST ARTICLE on this subject, which appeared in the April issue of *Political Affairs*, dealt with the drive of monopoly capital to shift the burden of federal income taxes to those in the middle and lower income groups. The regressive nature of federal income tax laws, both individual and corporate, was discussed in detail and recommendations for a progressive tax program were outlined. In the same manner, gift, estate, excise, and similar taxes were discussed and progressive recommendations were made.

This article will be devoted to a discussion of federal social security taxes, state and local taxes, and federal-state-city tax relationships.

SOCIAL SECURITY TAXES

The social security laws, not only of the federal government, but of all the state governments as well, are badly in need of immediate change. Not only are most of the people in the U.S. excluded from benefits under the existing laws, but those who are eligible for benefits find them entirely inadequate.

Just a few of the many categories of people not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits are: agricultural workers, domestic workers, government workers, railroad workers, workers in educational institutions, maritime workers, and self-employed persons. In addition, most states exclude persons employed in small businesses. In 24 states, anyone who works for an employer of less than eight persons is not eligible for unemployment insurance no matter what type of work he may be engaged in.

Even a person who is eligible for unemployment insurance benefits receives amounts which are insufficient to maintain even a single individual. If that person must support a family, he must immediately obtain additional financial assistance. Of the 48 states, ten have maximum unemployment insurance benefits of \$15 a week. Two have maximums of \$16 a week. Only seven states permit maximum payments in excess of \$20 a week. Only one state, Utah, has made any provision for changes in the cost of living. Only four states have made any provision for dependents — Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Michigan pay \$2 a week extra for each dependent; Nevada pays \$3.00 a week extra.

In the cases of old age pensions and pensions to survivors, the situation is just as bad as in that of unemployment insurance. Here, too, there are so many exclusions that most people find they are not eligible for benefits; and, just as in the case of unemployment insurance benefits,

those who are covered receive payments which are entirely inadequate. The minimum payment is \$10 a month. The maximum payment which a worker and his wife can obtain if they both become 65 years old in 1947 is \$66 a month, but the husband would have had to earn \$3,000 during each of the ten years from 1937 through 1946. Since there are very few workers 65 years old who earned more than an average of \$150 a month for the ten years 1937-1946, the effective maximum would be less than \$50 a month for a worker and his wife. If the worker dies and leaves a dependent widow over 65, the effective maximum which she will receive under the present law is less than \$25 a month.

Not only are payments under the social security laws totally inadequate, but the method of taxation used to raise the required revenues is regressive. These taxes now amount to five per cent of gross payrolls, of which the employee pays one per cent and the employer pays four per cent. If a particular state finds from its own experience that the fund is accumulating too rapidly, it can increase benefits or make refunds to employers on a merit basis. Too often the surplus funds are returned to the wealthiest employers.

Taxes based on payrolls are regressive because they make no reference to ability to pay. The employee who pays one per cent may be earning a wholly inadequate wage, may be earning so little that he must re-

sort to charity for assistance, yet he must pay taxes on the little he earns. Similarly with employers, a monopolist may be making millions in profits while a small businessman operates his business at a loss, yet both must pay the same rate of taxes. Furthermore, the monopolist making large profits may receive a merit refund because of ability to maintain a steady rate of employment.

Social security benefits must be separated from any particular tax. Funds for the maintenance and extension of benefits should be obtained from income, estate, gift, and excise taxes, as outlined in the first article.

The security of the workers, farmers, small property owners, professionals, and independent businessmen requires a great many changes in our social security laws. The following are a few of the changes immediately necessary:

1. Broaden coverage to include everyone in the U.S.
2. Increase all benefits and make them uniform throughout the U.S.
3. Eliminate waiting periods.
4. Lengthen the period of coverage.
5. Finance social security benefits from increased income taxes as recommended in the first article, instead of a tax based on payrolls.

REAL ESTATE TAXES

The workers and farmers pay by far the greater part of all real estate taxes. Not only do they pay the large

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er part, but, at the same time, their part is disproportionate in relation to the value of the real estate they occupy or to the use to which it is, or can be, put by workers and farmers.

A landlord does not pay the taxes on real estate which he rents to a worker or to a farmer. The landlord merely passes on the amount of his tax bill to the tenant by increasing the rent he would otherwise charge the tenant for the use of the property. In addition, he figures the tax as one of his costs—as part of his constant capital—and then adds a profit onto it. The tenants, therefore, not only pay the tax to the state or locality but also pay the landlord a profit for handling the money. A reduction in real estate taxes on property rented to workers, farmers, and small businessmen would, therefore, inure to the benefit of the tenant, if properly handled.

Tax rates on real estate within a given locality are usually the same whether a particular piece of real estate is a dilapidated slum dwelling or a magnificent residence; whether it is a small store whose owner barely earns a living or a very prosperous department store like Macy's in New York City, which does as much as \$1,000,000 business in a single day; whether it is a small farm yielding a mere existence to a family all of whose members work from morning until night or an apple orchard like that owned by the reactionary millionaire, Senator Byrd. The usual plaintive reply to this accusation is

that these various properties are assessed at different values; but, as a matter of fact, the most valuable property is always under-assessed and least valuable property is always over-assessed.

Real estate taxes are regressive in nature in that persons least able to pay any taxes must pay a larger portion of their incomes for these taxes than those most able to pay. A worker or a farmer who earns \$40 a week and rents a flat or a farm on which the real estate tax is \$120 a year is paying six per cent of his gross income in real estate taxes. On the other hand, a capitalist whose income is \$1,000,000 a year and who owns a home on which the tax is \$2,000 a year is paying only two-tenths of one per cent of his income in real estate taxes.

The use to which real estate is put must be considered in determining, not only the rates of tax, but also the method of levying the tax.

In the case of real estate which is rented to a tenant, taxes should be based on the profits which the landlord makes from the property. The rate of taxation should be graduated and should depend on the development of the locality in which the real estate is situated.

In the case of real estate which is owner-occupied, taxes should be based on an assessed valuation. In assessing such property, however, consideration should be given to increases in value due to changing conditions in the community, as well as

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to differences in services such as cleaning, police and fire protection, street beautification, etc.

In order to aid workers, professionals, small businessmen, and farmers to acquire and own their farms and homes, owner-occupied homes or farms valued at less than \$10,000 should be taxed at 50 per cent of the amount otherwise determined to be a fair tax by the application of the principles outlined herein.

SALES TAXES

Sales taxes are the most regressive of all taxes and are deliberately designed to shift the burden to those least able to pay. Since the tax applies only when an expenditure is made, workers, farmers, and others in the lower income groups, who must spend all their income to maintain themselves and their families, must pay sales taxes on virtually their entire incomes. On the other hand, capitalists who have large incomes from which they accumulate billions in idle and investment capital, pay the sales tax only on that relatively small part of their income which they spend for taxable items.

Studies reveal that a person with an income between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 a year pays a sales tax on approximately one per cent of his income. A person with an income between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a year pays a sales tax on approximately 49 per cent of his income. But a person with an income of only \$1,000 a year pays a sales tax on over 60 per cent

of his income. Put another way, a sales tax of two per cent is equivalent to an income tax of two-one hundredths of one per cent on an income of \$1,000,000 a year. On an income of \$2,500 a year however, it is equivalent to an income tax of approximately one per cent and, as the income goes down, the rate goes up.

In spite of the regressive nature of such taxes, many states and a few localities resort to them to raise revenue. Less than a year ago, the City of New York raised its sales tax rate from one per cent to two per cent, while the State of New York gave a 50 per cent cut across-the-board in income taxes. Even now, while no member of Congress has made mention of it, inherent in the rich man's tax revisions backed by the reactionary Republican-Democratic coalition in Washington is the threat of a federal sales tax.

All sales taxes must be eliminated and forever prohibited either by action of the states and localities which levy them or by an amendment to the federal constitution.

STATE AND CITY INCOME TAXES AND ESTATE OR INHERITANCE TAXES

Most states and a few cities impose an income tax on individuals and corporations and an estate or inheritance tax on individuals. While these taxes are generally based on ability to pay, they yield a relatively small amount of revenue which can

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be better obtained as a grant from the federal government in the manner outlined below. All such taxes should, therefore, be eliminated either by action of the states or cities themselves or by an amendment to the federal constitution.

OTHER STATE AND LOCAL TAXES

States, cities, and other political subdivisions levy numerous taxes not dealt with in detail herein—gasoline taxes, license fees, machinery taxes, tobacco taxes, alcoholic beverage taxes, etc. These taxes, for reasons already explained, are all regressive in nature and should be eliminated either by action of the state, city, or locality or by amendment of the federal constitution.

States and localities levy some charges in connection with the exercise of police powers, such as special license fees, fines, etc. These levies are not intended to be used for the purpose of raising revenue; and, so long as the income from such special fees and fines does not exceed the cost of exercising necessary governmental supervision, they are not taxes within the scope of this discussion.

FEDERAL-STATE-CITY TAX RELATIONSHIPS

If all the recommendations made in this and the preceding article are followed, the only taxes levied by states and localities will be on real es-

tate. The fact that state and local taxes would then be inadequate does not mean that the abolition of the states is contemplated. The practice of grants by the federal government to states and localities and by states to localities has long been in use in the United States.

The federal government, because of its superior ability to raise funds, already bolsters the public assistance and educational programs of many states and localities by grants of funds to those states and localities. Similarly, practically all states, because they have broader taxing powers than their political subdivisions, make grants to those subdivisions for either specific or general purposes. All that the people's tax program advocated here contemplates is an extension of that practice.

The economic well-being of the U.S. must have as one of its bases unrestricted interstate commerce. Profit made by a capitalist in New York more often than not arises from operations carried on in one or more of the other 47 states. Such profits, however, are distributed unevenly, not only among the states, but also within a given state. So uneven is the distribution that some of the states, if they were forced to rely solely on their own ability to raise revenue, could not perform most of the essential services. It is already an established fact that the governmental unit, whether it be a state, city, or county, which is best fitted to perform a certain govern-

mental function may not be able to raise the revenue for that function.

The amount expended on the education, health, and general welfare of a person living in one part of the U.S. should be no different than the amount expended to provide another person living in another part of the U.S. with similar services. At present the public expenditure for education per student in one of our states is five times as high as the amount spent in another state. Similarly, the amount of public assistance allowed per recipient in one state is over four times as high as the amount allowed in another state.

The only effective way of providing adequate services to all persons in the U.S., regardless of the wealth of the locality in which he lives, is by a per-capita distribution of funds from the federal government to the various states. In that manner we can make sure that the same amount will be expended on the education of a

student in Mississippi or Georgia as in New York or California. We can also make sure that each person requiring public assistance will receive an adequate amount regardless of his place of residence. And, at the same time, the cost of state and local administration can be substantially reduced by eliminating dozens of annoying taxes which yield little revenue.

SUMMARY

The changes in tax laws recommended in this and the preceding article are sweeping and broad. As stated before, these changes are not intended either as a substitute for socialism in America or as a program of economic struggle through which socialism can be achieved. They are, however, an important part of the fight to stem the drive of American monopoly capital toward fascism.

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

by J. MINDEL

Marx and Engels were close students of American life and thought, and valued every contribution to science made by Americans. Marx paid high tribute to the genius of Benjamin Franklin. He especially valued the contribution Franklin had made toward the labor theory of value. Marx considered Franklin's contribution original,* and not simply copied from Petty, as some American historians of economic theory insinuate.

Franklin's contributions to science were manifold. But he was not only a scientist and philosopher, he was one of the progenitors of the revolutionary current in American history.

AN ADVANCED THINKER

Benjamin Franklin was one of the rare eighteenth century Americans who throughout his long life identified himself with the most progressive ideas of his age. On many social questions his ideas were ahead of his time.

Franklin did not leave a general theoretical system; his ideas touched many subjects and are scattered

through his writings and letters. Franklin was primarily a man of action, with tremendous powers of observation and a penetrating mind able to draw general conclusions from his observations and experiments. He followed closely the progress of the natural sciences and himself made a notable contribution to physics by his experiments in electricity. Philosophy and the social sciences generally absorbed Franklin's attention, since they were directly related to the lives of men. His greatest interest was centered on problems the proper solution of which would lead to the improvement of the lives of his fellow-men. His many-sided abilities were always at the disposal of the city where he lived, Philadelphia. The progress and prosperity of Pennsylvania was one of his concerns. A great part of his life was devoted to a struggle against English colonial imperialism and to the struggle for independence.

Franklin was the first American to organize the importation of "foreign" ideas from the European continent to the American colonies. In 1731 he organized the first lending library in America, which circulated books by the best European authors.

He helped build academies for the youth and gave books to colleges and scientists. In 1743 he initiated a movement to establish the American Philosophical Society, which was organized in 1744. He carried on an extensive correspondence with leading scientists and philosophers abroad, always sharing the new ideas

* See Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 62 ff. Ketz Edition; and *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 19, 142. International Publishers.

with progressive men in America.

During his long stay in Europe, Franklin came into direct personal contact with the English freethinkers, among them Richard Price and Joseph Priestley, who were fighting for democratic reforms in England and at the same time mobilizing English public opinion in support of the American Revolution. In France Franklin was in friendly relations with the French materialists who supplied the ideological weapons of the great French bourgeois revolution.

Franklin himself was a mild deist, but he retained the greatest respect and admiration for the English and French philosophers of whom many were atheists. In a letter to a friend Franklin writes:

Remember me affectionately to good Dr. Price, and to the honest heretic, Dr. Priestley. I do not call him *honest* by way of distinction; for I think all the heretics I have known have been virtuous men. They have the virtue of fortitude, or they would not venture to own their heresy; and they cannot afford to be deficient in any of the other virtues, as that would give advantage to their many enemies; and they have not, like orthodox sinners, such a number of friends to excuse or justify them.*

In every epoch men who fight against the old order of society and for a new and higher form must possess the courage of their convictions, and integrity and willingness

to sacrifice for their convictions as this alone can sustain them in their struggle.

FRANKLIN AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

In March, 1775, Franklin left England, where he had represented the interests of several colonies, convinced that English colonial imperialism would not relax its stranglehold on the American colonies and that the struggle must proceed to the bitter end. The nearly seventy-year-old Franklin joined the forces of the American Revolution. He arrived in Philadelphia in May and was at once elected a delegate to the Second Continental Congress. In Congress Franklin was elected to every important committee, the most important of which was the committee that wrote the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration of Independence remains an historic document to this day. It was the first declaration that proclaimed the rights of men, stating, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The Declaration also established another right, the right to struggle against abuses and despotism that threaten life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The Declaration states, "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted

* *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*, Jared Sparks, ed., 1882. Chicago, Vol. X, p. 365.

among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

For some signers of the Declaration of Independence the above pronouncements were a political expedient necessary to give expression to the sentiments and the strivings of the laboring masses for equality, to bind them firmer to the Revolution. For Benjamin Franklin they were principles to be immediately realized, as far as possible.

Franklin actively supported the democratic forces in Pennsylvania in the struggle for a democratic constitution, which enfranchized the propertyless part of the population. His authority and insistence led to the adoption of a unicameral legislature and a multiple executive in Pennsylvania.

He pursued, less effectively, the same policy at the Constitutional Convention. He considered the Constitution a forward step toward consolidating the nation and expected amendments to be adopted later that would lead toward its improvement. "I am of opinion with you," he writes to a friend, "that the two chambers were not necessary, and I disliked some other articles

that are in, and wished for some that are not in the proposed plan."*

In another place he writes, "The disputes about the faults of the new constitution are subsided. The first Congress will probably mend the principal ones, and future Congresses the rest."**

FRANKLIN ON SLAVERY

For Benjamin Franklin equality meant equality for all men, not only for white men. Franklin hated slavery and wanted to see it abolished. He became president of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. In 1789 the Society sent a memorial to Congress, signed by Franklin. He often exposed and condemned the slave system, its parasitic character, its wastefulness of human lives and the degenerating influence of the system upon the white population.

... the slaves being worked too hard, and ill fed, their constitutions are broken, and the deaths among them are more than the births; so that a continual supply is needed from Africa. . . . Slaves also pejorate the families that use them; the white children become proud, disgusted with labor, and, being educated in idleness, are rendered unfit to get a living by industry.***

Benjamin Franklin despised not only the slave owner; he held in contempt every exploiter of labor. In inimitable style he tells how the people compare a gentleman of

* *ibid.*, Vol. X, pp. 345-46.

** *ibid.*, Vol. X, p. 360.

*** *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 316.

leisure with a hog. They would be more obliged to a genealogist who could prove them to be descendants of plowmen, smiths, carpenters, turners, weavers, and consequently "useful members of society, than if he could only prove that they were gentlemen, doing nothing of value, but living idly on the labor of others. . . ."

Franklin's ideal was a society of small producers, economically independent and politically free, a sort of petty-bourgeois heaven. This society of his was based on no particular theory but on the conditions of eighteenth century America.

. . . it will require many ages to settle it [North America] fully; and, till it is fully settled, labor will never be cheap here, where no man continues long a laborer for others, but gets a plantation of his own, no man continues long a journeyman to a trade, but goes among those new settlers, and sets up for himself. . . .**

"Great establishments of manufacture," Franklin writes further, "require great numbers of poor to do the work for small wages; those poor are to be found in Europe, but will not be found in America, till the lands are all taken up and cultivated, and the excess of people, who cannot get land, want employment."***

The huge tracts of land were monopolized sooner than Franklin anticipated. Capitalist rule en-

trenched itself in America, and reproduced on American soil all the beauties of capitalist exploitation so hateful to Franklin. In a letter to a friend written in 1772 he warned his countrymen to shun landlordism and capitalism and keep America a land of small producers. Franklin had the illusion that the historical process of development could be arrested or the inevitable misery accompanying the growth of capitalism at least postponed for America. To impress his friends with the necessity of keeping capitalism out of America he described conditions in Ireland, Scotland, and England where landlordism and capitalism were entrenched.

I have lately made a tour through Ireland and Scotland. In those countries, a small part of the society are landlords, great noblemen, and gentlemen, extremely opulent, living in the highest affluence and magnificence. The bulk of the people are tenants, extremely poor, living in the most sordid wretchedness, in dirty hovels of mud and straw, and clothed only in rags.*

Franklin then proceeds to picture what would happen to his countrymen if they were to introduce capitalism:

. . . if they should ever envy the trade of these countries, I can put them in a way to obtain a share of it. Let them with three fourths of the people of Ireland, live the year round on potatoes and buttermilk, without shirts, they may their merchants export beef, butter, and linen. Let them, with the great

* *ibid.*, p. 470.

** *ibid.*, p. 313.

*** *ibid.*, pp. 474-5.

* *ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 552-53.

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* *ibid.*
** *ibid.*

erality of the common people of Scotland, go barefoot, then may they make large exports in shoes and stockings; and, if they will be content to wear rags, like the spinners and weavers of England, they may make cloths and stuffs for all parts of the world.*

Franklin liked America with its self-sufficient farmers, hunters, and independent craftsmen, self-reliant and freedom-loving. In his time class differentiation in the Northern colonies was at a minimum and to be found only at the seacoast. The backbone of the country was the farmer. Franklin cherished the thought that this condition would continue and was certain that capitalist civilization would be the ruin of America.

Had I never been in the American colonies, but were to form my judgment of civil society by what I have lately seen, I should never advise a nation of savages to admit of civilization; for I assure you, that, in the possession and enjoyment of the various comforts of life, compared to these people, every Indian is a gentleman, and the effect of this kind of civil society seems to be the depressing of multitudes below the savage state, that a few may be raised above it.**

Franklin deplored the conditions created by capitalism, but could not find the means to eradicate them. In Franklin's time the science of society was in its infancy. Social phenomena were judged by their external manifestations; the inner laws governing the life of a given society were not yet discovered. The discovery of these

laws was made by Karl Marx in the middle of the nineteenth century. Marx laid bare the fact that capitalist society is a transitory, historical form of society. It succeeded feudalism and itself prepares the ground and creates the force, the working class, which supplants capitalist society by socialist society, the first stage of communism.

The representatives of the eighteenth century bourgeoisie claimed to be the "representatives not of a special class but of the whole of suffering humanity" (Engels). They thought that with the overthrow of the power of the feudal aristocracy and with the coming to power of the bourgeoisie the rule of reason and justice would prevail. But the rise of the capitalist class to power did not abolish the class struggle. Capitalism only called to life new classes and new forms of struggle.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx wrote:

The history of all hitherto existing society* is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. . . .

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new

* *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 553.

** *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 553-4.

* That is, all *written* history, Engels adds.

classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: It has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat.

FRANKLIN ON WAGE LABOR

Franklin observed that in countries where capitalism was developing, the mass of the people were living in poverty and want.

... from the lowness and insufficiency of wages, the laboring class procure so scanty a subsistence, that, barely able to provide for their own necessities, they have not the means of marrying and rearing a family, and are reduced to beggary, whenever employment fails them, or age and sickness oblige them to give up work.*

He upbraided the capitalists for these conditions and denounced them as people of "hard hearts and perverted understanding" for advancing the argument that if people are not poor, it is hard to keep them in subjection. He criticised the capitalists who say that if the wages of the workers are raised, it is impossible for them to compete with other capitalists, especially on the foreign market. Franklin smashed this argument by proving that the introduction of machinery and division of labor in the factory increased pro-

duction tenfold. The price of labor, he contended, is thereby diminished and articles can be produced and sold cheaper. The power of the capitalist to compete on the world market is therefore increased and not diminished.

The low rate of wages, then is not the real cause of the advantages of commerce between one nation and another; but it is one of the greatest evils of political communities.*

Franklin was looking for a way to improve the conditions of labor. He did not and could not, in his time, see that the only power that can effectively fight against capitalist exploitation and the misery it creates is the power of organized and united labor itself.

He sought to remedy the conditions of the wage-worker by appealing to government. He denounced the government's policy of protecting the capitalists. If the advantages of commerce can be gained for the few capitalists by the ruin of half the nation then, he says, "it becomes the duty of a government to relinquish them."**

Protected by government, capitalists reduce wages to the lowest level. This policy, Franklin emphasized, is:

... attempting to enrich a few merchants by impoverishing the body of the nation; it is taking the part of the stronger in that contest, already so unequal, between the man who can pay

* *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 436.

* *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 439.

** *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 437.

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* *ibid.*

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wages, and him who is under the necessity of receiving them. . . .*

A society that neglects its duty to the majority of the people and favors wealth and power is an unjust society. Franklin insisted "that the object of every political society ought to be the happiness of the largest number."***

With all his worldly wisdom Franklin was a utopian. He hoped that the American Revolution had opened a new era which would enlighten the great and the powerful, that it would curtail the avarice of the rich and the brutality of the state.

FRANKLIN ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Benjamin Franklin had a profound understanding of private property. The rich and powerful of his day, just as the economic royalists of today, sought to control state power and to disfranchise the poor. Otherwise, they contended, private property is in danger. The venerable humanist beat back the attacks of the reactionaries and maintained that wealth did not entitle them to any special consideration or privilege. Franklin analyzed the source of private property, though imperfectly, with the insight of genius. The reactionaries and plutocrats of today would undoubtedly place Benjamin Franklin under suspicion as a Communist; for he also denied the holi-

ness of private property. Franklin asserted that property which consists only of necessaries does not require special protection and in primitive society property needed no protection at all. It is only with the accumulation of wealth by individuals at the expense of society that special laws were enacted for its protection.

The savage's bow, his hatchet, and his coat of skins, were sufficiently secured, without law, by the fear of personal resentment and retaliation. When by virtue of the first laws, part of the society accumulated wealth and grew powerful, they enacted others more severe, and would protect their property at the expense of humanity. This was abusing their power, and commencing a tyranny.*

Franklin was fearful that a tyranny of wealth might be erected in the United States. He was "sorry" to see that there is "a disposition among some of our people to commence an aristocracy by giving the rich a predominancy in government. . . .*** Franklin denied the claim of the capitalists that the ownership of property entitled them to any special recognition or protection. Society, he contended, has the first claim on private property; it may take it without even offering to compensate the owner of that property.

Private property . . . is a creature of society, and is subject to the calls of that society, whenever its necessities

* *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 479. For a study of the origin of private property see Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, International Publishers.

** *ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 169.

* *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 437.

** *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 437.

shall require it, even to its last farthing; its contributions to the public exigences are not to be considered as conferring a benefit on the public, entitling the contributors to the distinctions of honor and power, but as the return of an obligation previously received, or the payment of a just debt.*

The great American philosopher did certainly preach and disseminate "subversive" ideas.

FRANKLIN LOOKS INTO THE FUTURE

The savant was always contemplating the way of the world in which he lived, trying to explain to himself whence came want and misery when the people could have lived in security and plenty. The steam age was just making its way, but there was already enough indication for Franklin that men could produce enough wealth to provide every individual with the comforts of life. "What occasions then so much want and misery?" he asked.** He found the causes in commercial wars "by which are often destroyed in one year the works of many years' peace"***; in "the employment of men and women in works, that produce neither the necessaries nor conveniences of life, who, with those who do nothing, consume necessaries raised by the laborious."****

He found such an order of society senseless, sought an answer, and contemplated what would happen if

every man and woman were to do useful work.

"It has been computed by some political arithmetician," Franklin writes, "that, if every man and woman would work for *four hours* each day on something useful, that labor would produce sufficient to procure all the necessaries and comforts of life, want and misery would be banished out of the world, and the rest of the twenty-four hours might be leisure and pleasure."*

The eighteenth century genius dared to dream and hope that want and misery will vanish from the earth.

What was at the beginning of the machine age only a daring look into the future, can and must in the age of atomic energy become a reality.

The reactionaries and warmongers and their hirelings are raving that the Communists keep their aims a secret. The "secret" aim of the Communists is to make the beautiful dream of Benjamin Franklin a reality. Franklin did not and could not discover the forms that would bring this about. At one time he even thought that the kings and the wealthy themselves might see the necessity of reforming the world. The Communists say that the exploiting and oppressing class will not do it. The stronger and mightier this class becomes, the closer it tightens the noose of want, misery, and degradation around the neck of the people.

* *ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 168.

** *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 451.

*** *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 452.

**** *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 451.

* *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 451. (My emphasis—J. M.)

Only labor itself can bring about a change. Only the majority of the American people, by abolishing the exploitation of men by men and of nation by nation, will transform our country into a happy abode for its people. Crises, unemployment, ignorance, race hatred, exploitation, and war will be abolished and the brotherhood of man based upon the common ownership of the means of production and exchange will become a reality. The Communists alone, by themselves, cannot bring this about; they only lead the way.

FRANKLIN ON IMPERIALIST WARS

Benjamin Franklin was always appalled by the unjust imperialist wars the European nations waged against one another and the misery they produced.

Delving into the misery of the English workers and poor people generally, the many breaches of the law, and the harsh and brutal punishments inflicted upon those breaking the unjust and barbaric laws, Franklin in 1785 wrote to a friend in England:

May not one [of the causes] be the deficiency of justice and morality in your national government, manifested in your oppressive conduct to your subjects, and unjust wars on your neighbors? View the long-persisted in, unjust monopolizing treatment of Ireland at length acknowledged? View the plundering government exercised by your merchants in the Indies; the con-

fiscating war made upon the American colonies; and, to say nothing of those upon France and Spain, view the late war upon Holland, which was seen by impartial Europe in no other light than that of a war of rapine and pillage; the hopes of an immense and easy prey being its only apparent, and probably its true and real motive and encouragement.*

Franklin condemned the colonial and commercial wars of England as unjust wars which enriched a few and brought misery and degradation to the people at home and enslavement to hundreds of millions over the globe. He gloried in the independence of America and wanted all enslaved peoples to shake off the yoke of the enslaving foreign powers.

FRANKLIN THE INTERNATIONALIST

Franklin was an internationalist who had a deep faith that unjust wars will vanish and nations will live in peace with each other. He firmly believed that the European nations would free themselves from feudal oppression and absolutism. At the age of 83 he greeted the French Revolution and hoped that a new era had opened for all nations and that wherever the philosopher traveled he would be able to say, "This is my country." Franklin wrote:

The convulsions in France are attended with some disagreeable circumstances; but if by the struggle she obtains and secures for the nation its

* *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 482.

future liberty, and a good constitution, a few years' enjoyment of those blessings will amply repay all the damages their acquisition may have occasioned. God grant, that not only the love of liberty, but a thorough knowledge of the rights of man, may pervade all the nations of the earth, so that a philosopher may set his foot anywhere on its surface, and say, "This is my country."*

These are some of the ideas of Benjamin Franklin. In the revolu-

tionary struggles of the eighteenth century against feudalism, the monarchy, and trade monopoly, they expressed the aspirations of the democratic masses. The capitalist world left them buried in the past. The predatory capitalists, the Southern Bourbons, and fascists view these ideas as "alien ideologies." In America, only the workers and democratic forces can draw new strength from the ideals of Benjamin Franklin in their struggle against the war-makers and the economic royalists.

* *ibid.*, Vol. X, pp. 410-411.

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