

# political affairs

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HENRY WINSTON, *National Organizational Secretary of the Communist Party, former political refugee, who recently surrendered and was sentenced to three additional years for "contempt" besides his original five year Smith-Act sentence.*



GIL GREEN, *member of the National Committee of the Communist Party, who also received an additional three-year sentence for "contempt" despite his voluntary return. During his absence, Comrade Green wrote a book, The Enemy Forgotten, to be published in May.*

**POLITICAL AFFAIRS EXPRESSES ITS SOLIDARITY WITH THESE COURAGEOUS FIGHTERS FOR PEACE, DEMOCRACY, NEGRO EQUALITY, AND SOCIALISM.**

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**A Theoretical and Political Magazine of Scientific Socialism**

Editor: V. J. Jerome

## The Government Seizes the Bill of Rights

### An Editorial

PATRICK HENRY was right when he wrote Richard Henry Lee in November, 1788, that "the American union depends on the success of a Bill of Rights." He meant that without guarantees of the adoption of a Bill of Rights, the Constitution would never be ratified and there would be, quite literally, no American union. He was absolutely right, and it was only these guarantees—forced by the united will of the masses—which did bring the ratification of our Constitution and did cement the Republic we cherish.

\* \* \*

On March 27, 1956, agents of the Treasury Department accompanied by police seized the offices of a political party—whose status was even then being litigated in the Supreme Court of the United States—and put padlocks on their doors, from New York to California. And armed

agents seized the premises of a newspaper and padlocked its doors, after requiring the editors, in the midst of their work, to vacate the place at once.

In so doing the Government seized the Bill of Rights, for the heart of the Bill of Rights lies in the declaration that the Government may not act against "freedom of speech or the press or the right of the people peaceably to assemble."

But the Government "can explain everything." Just a routine tax matter. The Bill of Rights was seized for taxes! The Government claims the right to take over the assets of the Communist Party for taxes. And no one can deny they are valuable assets. What, for instance, is the value of the framed Declaration of Independence on the Party's wall that an agent was curiously examining? What the value of Marx and Engels,

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of Jefferson and Roosevelt, whose pictures adorn the board room?

The seizure of a political party and a daily newspaper will prove, we hope, to be the last straw in the cheap "wise-guy" tactics that disgrace the practice of American justice. For years now, when unable to prosecute particular political opponents constitutionally, the Administration sends them to jail through technicalities and tricks. For ordinary political opponents, tax evasion fills the bill, while for supporters of peace and the Bill of Rights, "contempt" and "perjury" have become outstanding political crimes. This has now been further facilitated by the Supreme Court decision upholding the Immunity Act.

The present attack on the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* bear all the trade-marks of the "smart" political maneuvers of the Brownell-Humphrey-Nixon clique—the type of scheme for which Nixon earned the nickname of "Tricky Dick." Is it not time that these gamblers with the people's welfare should be taught that the American masses have seen through their shabby charlatanism of meeting each election campaign with a new sensation in Red-baiting? In 1948, it was the Truman Administration that began its campaign with the indictment of the Communist Party's National Board. In 1954, Democrats and Republicans vied with each other in passing the incredible "Communist

Control Act." And in 1956 the Administration starts with this modern version of the notorious Palmer Raids.

There is an additional aspect to the Administration's action. Taking a leaf out of the Dixiecrats' defiance of the Supreme Court, the Administration seeks to make a *fait accompli* out of the pending Court decision on the McCarran Act. By "putting the Communists out of business," they could both anticipate and influence the Court's decision. Undoubtedly, Brownell's deep meditation on our constitutional system of checks and balances led him to turn the job over to the Treasury Department.

With the blind effrontery characteristic of all hard-shelled reactionaries, this Administration—known to all Americans as the Cadillac Cabinet and the give-away, take-away Administration—which has permitted enormous tax-steals by the big monopolies, which has shot the tax structure full of new loopholes for the rich, seizes the *Daily Worker* and the Communist Party for alleged non-payment of income taxes! Where are the seizures and prosecutions of the oil trust for their publicly known and colossal tax evasions? of the big corporations for their graft and excess profits in the arms contracts? of the natural gas concerns for their naked attempts at bribery of Senators and other public officials?

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It would be a mistake to assume that these raids, coupled with the

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reactionary decision of the Supreme Court on the Immunity Act, disproves the analysis that has been made that new winds are blowing in our country. Those new winds are real and reflect a widespread revulsion against McCarthyism on the part of the American people and a growing dedication to the principles of the Bill of Rights. It is true that the reactionary forces are mounting new attacks, but the rising people's resistance will overcome them.

We believe that the Brownell-Humphrey-Nixon gang has miscalculated. A frontal assault upon the Bill of Rights cannot sit well with Americans.

The *New York Post* spoke out editorially at once and certainly it will not be the last paper to say: "The press should be especially aroused by the spectacle of the padlocking of a newspaper. Surely the precedent should concern every journalist who has decried the peril of government censorship."

The American Civil Liberties Union, through its Director, Mr. Patrick Malin, saw the action as one seeking "harassment" of a political party and, particularly, as representing "an infringement on freedom of the press." Certainly, the ACLU will not be the last organization to speak out on this question.

\* \* \*

The raids did not succeed in stopping the functioning of the Party

or of the *Daily Worker*. The newspaper came out the next day even though written and edited in the midst of the eviction and under the eyes of the government agents. This was only to be expected by those who know the indomitable spirit of these newspapermen. We know that they acted not only in the courageous spirit natural to the class for which their paper is named, but that they also acted, consciously, as newspapermen in the finest traditions of their craft, defending a liberty bought with the suffering of hundreds of martyrs here and throughout the world.

They acted, too, as Americans defending their heritage and their freedoms and knowing that in doing so they were at the same time defending the heritage and the freedoms of every one of their compatriots. They knew that in so acting the American people agreed with them, whatever differences they might have or might think they have with the political views of those editors.

We believe that the vast majority of the American people, and especially trade unionists and the Negro masses, will recognize the acute dangers of this type of arbitrary governmental action. In defending the right of the *Daily Worker* and the Communist Party to function, all Americans—whatever their own opinions may be—will be defending the Bill of Rights. In defending the Bill of Rights, one defends America.

# The Road to Socialism, I

By William Z. Foster

*At the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, held in February, 1956, Secretary N. S. Khrushchev outlined the possibility, in certain capitalist countries, of establishing Socialism by parliamentary action. Previously, the Communist parties in many countries, over a number of years, had been developing this general tendency with their people's front policies; but Khrushchev added clarity to all this. Foster's article below expresses this trend in the United States. His article was written several days before Khrushchev spoke.*

*Bourgeois spokesmen, including government prosecutors in Smith Act cases, are now torturing the speech of Khrushchev into an alleged meaning, that it excludes the possibility of a parliamentary advance to Socialism in the United States, when he stated that in the countries where capitalism remains strong and has a huge military and police apparatus, "There the transition to Socialism will be attended by a sharp class, revolutionary struggle."*

*It is true, of course, that the United States is a very powerful capitalist country, and as Comrade Foster indicates in his article, the monopoly capitalists can be expected to make a most vicious resistance to the democratic and constitutional advance of Socialism in this country. But what forcible resistance they will be able to offer in the future when Socialism becomes a question of immediate political action may be a very different matter, with world capitalism, including American capitalism, constantly sinking deeper into general crisis. In this connection, in the pamphlet, In Defense of the Communist Party and Its Indicted Leaders, written in 1949, Foster pointed out: "It may well turn out that it will be far easier for the American working class, in the midst of an overwhelmingly Socialist world, to establish Socialism in this country than now appears to be the case, with American capitalism at its peak of strength."*

*Capitalist apologists are now also saying that Khrushchev, in enunciating the possibility of achieving Socialism by parliamentary action, has discarded Marxism-Leninism. This is ridiculous. As Foster makes clear in his article, all the greatest Communist leaders, proceeding upon the basic principle that Marxism is a guide to action, not a dogma, have upon various occasions during the past century restated their perspective of the road to Socialism in accordance with changing economic and political conditions. This is what Khrushchev has done.—The Editor*

THE GENERAL MANNER in which the workers of the world expect and plan to achieve Socialism has always been a question of major concern. From the inception of the Marxist movement over a century ago its leading theoreticians, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, have always paid basic attention to the concrete way, in the main if not in detail, by which Socialism may be achieved. And one of the greatest strengths of Mao Tse-tung, the leader of the Chinese Revolution, has been his constant development of this matter. The consideration of the road to Socialism inevitably has ever been a fundamental part of the basic Marxist program.

The utmost clarity regarding the way to abolish capitalism and to establish Socialism is imperative—in order to light up the path of the advancing working class, to prevent the workers from being misled by opportunist theories of the automatic growing over of capitalism into Socialism, to guard against destructive distortions and misrepresentations of the Marxist program, and to save the workers from being confronted with basic problems which they have not previously contemplated.

One of the most constant features of the century-long discussion of the road to Socialism is the fact that the outstanding Marxist theoreticians, starting with the *Communist Manifesto*, have always spoken with frankness on the subject. They have not hesitated to discuss fully with the workers all the questions of legality

and violence, relating to the central problem that stands ahead of the working class. The works of Marx, Lenin, and others are full of this frankness. The need for such open discussion is just as great now as ever. This is the only way that the class enemy's lies on this subject can be refuted, and, at the same time, the understanding of the workers be made sure and firm. The Communist movement must never leave itself exposed to charges of conspiratorial designs: that it holds in reserve secret political intentions, which it does not fully explain in its program. There are especially good reasons now why the Communists should speak out freely and frankly about how they foresee the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism.

Concern about the road to Socialism has naturally become of greater moment during the past 40 years, since the establishment of Socialism has become a practical question in various countries. The general result of the Marxist studies in this question, however, has not been the working out of an inflexible, blueprint forecast of the proletarian revolution, but a conception subject to substantial variations in the different circumstances of the many countries of the world. It is a striking example of the flexibility of Marxist theory and analysis.

Although Socialism is manifestly not on the immediate agenda in the United States, nevertheless it is especially important for the American Communist Party to have in mind

a clear conception of the road to Socialism in this country—not an elaborate scheme in rigid detail, but at least a perspective in general outline. The C.P.U.S.A. has had two striking examples recently of this elementary need. First, there was the attempt of Browder to implant in the Party a confusing and crippling theory and policy of trailing the working class after monopoly capital, as the way to realize the political monstrosity that this opportunist would have substituted for Socialism. Browder was defeated, but his kind of opportunism—"progressive capitalism"—still lingers actively upon the political scene in this country. Second, there is the current persecution of the leaders of the Communist Party by the government under cover of its gross distortion of the Party's ultimate program: to the effect that the Party teaches and advocates the violent overthrow of the United States Government. To meet these and similar attempts to cripple the Party, it is imperative that our Party, as other Communist parties, should have an understanding, in at least outline form, of the road to Socialism in the United States. That we have not presented and fought more aggressively in court for such a program has been one of the most serious weaknesses of our trial defense.

#### MARX, ENGELS AND LENIN CONSIDER THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM

Already in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, Marx and Engels con-

cerned themselves basically with the question of the road to Socialism. Under the then-existing conditions, they made it quite clear that the workers—oppressed, exploited, mostly devoid of the ballot, and living under tyrannical governments—in the face of all this repression and violence, would have no alternative, in fighting their way towards Socialism, than to conduct a revolutionary struggle: one outside the narrow forms of capitalist legality and against the capitalist class, the feudal nobility, and their political state. Among its statements to this general effect, the *Manifesto* says: "the violent overthrow of the bourgeois state lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat." Marx also said, "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 829). Marx and Engels then saw no prospects for either a peaceful or a legal revolution. They, however, always opposed this idea of *coups d'etat* by minorities and based themselves upon actions of the great majority of the people.

In making such generalizations, Marx and Engels did not, however, lay down an ironclad dogma. Two decades later Marx (with Engels' agreement) made an important modification of the earlier statements in the *Manifesto* regarding the road to Socialism. Writing to Kugelman in 1871, he said: "The aim of the proletarian revolution is no longer (as used to be thought) to transfer the

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bureaucratic and military machine from one set of hands to another, but to *smash* that machine. This is the indispensable prerequisite for any genuine folk-revolution on the Continent."

By the words "on the Continent," Marx intended, as it turned out later, to make a reservation in his generalization regarding the road to Socialism in Great Britain and the United States, where bourgeois democracy was then far more highly developed than in the European continental countries. No doubt, factors in Marx's reservation on this point were, the establishment of a pretty general manhood franchise in Great Britain during the 1860's and the enormous current growth of the American proletariat, of whom the men already possessed the general franchise.

A few years after the Kugelmann letter, in 1878, Marx, in replying to the German government's charges in the Socialist trials of the time that the German Socialists advocated force and violence for achieving Socialism, elaborated upon his earlier remarks regarding Great Britain and the United States, by pointing out at least a possibility of a legal, if not inevitably a peaceful, course for the revolution in these two countries. He said:

The goal in this case is the emancipation of the working class and the transformation of society involved in this emancipation. The fact, however, is that historical development can remain 'peaceful' only as long as those

who hold power in society at a given time do not place violent obstacles in the way. If, for example, the working class in England or the United States should win a majority in the Parliament or Congress, it could legally abolish those laws and institutions which obstruct its development and it could do this only to the extent that social development exhibits such obstructions. And yet the 'peaceful' movement could turn into a violent one as a result of the insurrection of those interested in the old order. If they are crushed by *force* (as they were in the American Civil War and the French Revolution) it is as rebels against the legal powers.\*

Marx wrote this passage during the period of the latter phase of the competitive stage of capitalism. At that time monopoly capital was already beginning to appear. Subsequently, Lenin, as other great Communist thinkers, was likewise intensely interested in the road to Socialism, and also like them, always considered Marxism to be not a dogma but a guide to action. Hence, almost 40 years later and in a changed situation, he proceeded to amend Marx's formulation of 1878. Writing in 1917, at the height of imperialist capitalist development, he declared that Marx's distinction regarding a possible "legal" revolution in Great Britain and the United States, which was true when Marx made it, no longer applied. Lenin said, "Nowadays, in the epoch of the first imperialist war, Marx's reservation lapses. Britain and the United States, which have been

\* Marx-Engels, *Briefe*, Vol. II, pp. 516-17.

up till now (thanks to their exemption from militarism and bureaucracy) the last and greatest embodiments of Anglo-Saxon 'freedom,' have at length come, like other nations, to wallow in the foul and bloody mire of bureaucratic and militarist institutions, which establish a universal tyranny. Today, in Britain and the United States, no less than elsewhere, the *smashing*, the destruction of the 'ready-made State machinery' (which in these lands had during the years 1914-1917 achieved the same imperialist perfection as on the Continent of Europe) 'is the indispensable prerequisite of any folk revolution'" (Cited by Stalin in *Leninism*, Vol I, p. 111). In this conception Lenin saw no chance for either a legal or peaceful revolution in these two countries. In the same volume, written in 1926, Stalin fully supports the position of Lenin, but with some important considerations, or reservations, to which we shall return further along.

It is of the utmost importance, in noting the variations made in the Marxist conception of the road to Socialism, to realize that all this is nevertheless, one unified historical political-ideological development. It is not that Marx "corrected" himself in 1871 and 1878; or that Lenin in 1917 "corrected the earlier mistakes" of Marx, or that the Communist parties of today, with their strivings for the most peaceful and legal advance possible towards Socialism, as we shall develop further along, are now "correcting" Lenin. The whole

development, since the *Communist Manifesto* of over a century ago down to the present time, has been a matter of applying the basically correct principles for the establishment of Socialism, worked out by Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto*, to the evolving capitalist system and Socialist movement throughout over a hundred years of social development.

Lenin, like Marx, had no blueprint of the Revolution. He was acutely aware that it was bound to take on different features in different countries in accordance with varying national conditions. He said in 1917 that all nations would come to Socialism; that this was inevitable. But, he added, they would not come by identical ways. Lenin's experience in the Russian Revolution was soon to show that he, like Marx, was quick to grasp at the possibility for a peaceful path to Socialism.

These fundamental realities must be kept clearly in mind in pursuing further our discussion of the road to Socialism in the present period.

#### THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM IN A CHANGING WORLD

During the almost half a century that elapsed between Marx's formulation of the road to Socialism in 1878 and Lenin's modification of this conception in 1917, many profound changes took place in the economic and political world. These decisively influenced Lenin's thinking. On the one hand, the capitalist system evolved basically from the period of free competition into that of mon-

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opoly and imperialism, and this change carried with it, as Lenin pointed out, the growth of huge armies, enormous monopolies, stifling military bureaucracies, and reactionary governments in all the major capitalist countries. On the other hand, there was also a big growth of working class forces—political parties, trade unions, cooperatives, etc.—as a counterweight to the increased capitalist strength. Between these two vast class forces a great revolutionary clash was developing at the time, immediately marked by the outbreak of the Russian Revolution and by revolutionary struggles in various other European countries. It was in this general setting that Lenin made his restatement of the road to Socialism; to the effect that the revolution in all the capitalist countries would be a violent one, as the imperialist employers would everywhere counter-pose violent opposition to the democratic advance of the force of Socialism.

Since Lenin wrote this formulation, in his turn, over a generation ago, further tremendous economic and political developments have also occurred. These profound social changes must, therefore, be evaluated, with special reference to their effects upon the ever vital question of the road of the working class to Socialism. In making this evaluation, there must never be lost sight of the elementary fact that Marxism is not a closed intellectual ritualism, but a dynamic and flexible system of proletarian philosophy. As the *History*

*of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* says, (p. 355): "The Marxist-Leninist theory must not be regarded as a collection of dogmas, as a catechism, as a symbol of faith, and Marxists themselves as pedants and dogmatists. . . . As a science it does not, and cannot, stand still, but develops and perfects itself." This principle of flexibility applies to the question of the road to Socialism, as we have already seen in the varying concepts of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

In this Marxist spirit, there are two major changes in today's world situation, over that of 40 years ago, which must be considered in our analysis of the present-day Marxist-Leninist concept of the road to Socialism. The first of these basic changes is that, during the past generation, there has been a tremendous weakening of the world capitalist system and of its general international position and perspectives. Its internal and external contradictions have become intensified to such a degree that the whole system, gravely weakened over the years, is relatively rapidly sinking deeper and deeper into its incurable general crisis, which begins 40 years ago. Monopoly capitalism has definitely lost one-third of the world to Socialism and its grip has been greatly weakened over additional huge territories, in that its colonial system, which historically has been a vital prop to world capitalism, is now in an advanced and increasing stage of anti-imperialist revolution. Besides all this, the economic and political structures of

several major industrial countries are in a decidedly shaky condition. Capitalism, in general, is in decay.

The second vast change that has taken place during the past generation, and this we must also consider in dealing with the question of the road to Socialism, is a tremendous strengthening of the world forces of democracy and Socialism. Thus, the Sôviet Union, born in 1917, has since become enormously stronger; its industrial output is now many times greater than in 1924, when Lenin died; its armed might is vastly increased, and its prestige as a world power has multiplied tremendously. Besides, the USSR, far advanced along the road to Communism, is now being accompanied by 16 other countries that are travelling in the same general direction. This makes a massive advancing Socialist contingent of some 900,000,000 people, or about 40 percent of the total population of the globe. Moreover, throughout the capitalist world there has simultaneously developed a gigantic growth of mass Communist parties, trade unions, cooperatives, peasant societies, peace organizations, and broad movements of women, youth, and other basic people's groups, far surpassing the organized strength of these types of people's organizations of a generation ago. In addition, these new revolutionary forces are, over the years, ever increasing the tempo of their advance and development.

The important thing to be noted about the above two-phased world

developments is that they represent a tremendous shift in the relationship of strength between the forces of world democracy and Socialism and those of world monopoly capitalism, and this is decisively in favor of the former. On the one hand, there has been a great weakening of capitalism, both actually and relatively, and a vast increase in world Socialist strength in every respect. To be signalized is the fact that the dynamic of change is constantly working on the side of rising Socialism; its forces are growing ever stronger than those of declining capitalism—even though this general development goes ahead, not evenly, but along a zigzag course. The significance of all this to the present study is that in the determination of the nature of the road to Socialism, the question of the relationship of strength between the Socialist and capitalist forces is of the most decisive importance.

So far, in fact, has the shift in power relations between the two world forces gone, that all factors considered, the camp of democracy and Socialism is fast outstripping the camp of monopoly capitalism in economic, political, military, and ideological strength. This trend constantly increases, with the rapid growth of the forces of democracy and Socialism on a world basis and the deepening decline of the international capitalist system. Internationally, the forces of Socialism are making much more rapid progress than is generally realized, in the fulfillment of Lenin's famous slogan of "overtaking and

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The foregoing analysis does not mean to say, of course, that the capitalist system is about to collapse automatically. On the contrary, world capitalism still possesses great reservoirs of strength, and to underestimate this strength, or the vigor with which the capitalists will undertake to use it against advancing world Socialism, would be a grave error. On the other hand, it would be no less a mistake to underestimate the vast and evergrowing power of world Socialism.

#### THE "NEW TACTICAL ORIENTATION"

The continued weakening of world capitalism and the constant strengthening of world democracy and Socialism in the decades after World War I inevitably produced fresh changes in the general concept of the workers' road to Socialism, as formulated in previous periods by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. These changes began definitely to take shape at the seventh congress of the Communist International in 1935, in the development of the policies of the anti-fascist people's front. They have continued to develop over the ensuing years.

By 1935, at the time of the decisive Comintern seventh world congress, the German, Japanese, and Italian monopoly capitalists, with the more or less open assistance of American, British, and French imperialism, were definitely embarked upon their ruth-

less drive to conquer and fascize the world through counter-revolution and world war. This reactionary offensive threatened humanity with the worst butchery and enslavement in its long history. It was a new situation for the world's workers and it called for new and bold remedies. In this spirit, at the seventh congress, the Communist parties of the world undertook to give leadership to the world's peoples against the fascist war threat, and they evolved the historic people's front policy.

There were two general phases to this policy. First, there was the Soviet proposal to draw up the peace-loving peoples of the world in an international peace-front, to counteract the war-offensive program of the Anti-Comintern Axis of fascist powers. Second, there was the creation of broad people's fronts in the respective countries, made up of all categories of democratic forces—Communists, Socialists, and Radicals; workers, peasants, intellectuals, and small business people—all united around elementary programs, aimed at defeating fascism on the national scale and at fighting internationally the looming war danger. In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the people's front policy took the form of the national front, which included the national bourgeoisie, and with national liberation, along with peace and anti-fascism, in the center of its program.

Among the developing implications of the people's front policy in individual countries were: a) a fight

to win in the national elections, on the basis of an elementary anti-fascist, anti-war program, parliamentary control of the respective capitalist governments, at least in those countries with a developed bourgeois democracy; b) the going over of the masses from the defensive to the counter-offensive—towards more advanced political policies; and c) the curbing and defeating of the attempts of the reactionaries to destroy the people's rights and bourgeois democratic governments by outright violence.

The above, in short, was the "new orientation" of the seventh C. I. Congress, and it represented, in its strategy and tactics, a wide development, along Leninist lines, of previous Communist conceptions and practices. The people's front movement was launched primarily as a tremendous defensive struggle against the national and world fascist-war threat. But it soon passed over onto the offensive against fascist reaction generally. In the countries of bourgeois democracy it represented a tendency to consider the revolution, not as a sudden insurrectional blow, but as a more protracted process of struggle. In the countries without democracy the problem, as before, remained primarily one of direct attack upon entrenched autocracy; but the people's national front united greater masses than ever for this task. As the sequel showed, the people's front policy, with its variations and follow-up movements, marked the beginning of a new road to Socialism.

### THE STRUGGLE FOR A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY

Immediately upon the initiation of the people's front movement, the Communist parties, in those capitalist countries where there was at least manhood suffrage and some measure of democracy, developed the orientation of a struggle to elect people's front governments under the existing bourgeois constitutions, in the expectation that this could be done. Two elementary conditions made such an electoral policy come within the range of possibility. These were, first, the broad character of the people's front alliance; including workers, peasants, intellectuals, small business elements, etc., who comprised an overwhelming majority of the population, and, second, the burning urgency of the people's front program, the fight against fascism and war, which set these vast masses into active political motion. All this on the background of a weakened world capitalist system and a rapidly growing world Socialism.

The perspective of actually electing a people's government within the framework of capitalist state constitutions was not, however, entirely new to the Communist movement, as Lenin made clear at the second congress of the Comintern in 1922.\* However, the key stress laid upon this course was new. The movement definitely challenged the capitalists' parliamentary control of the state by mobilizing against them the voting

\* See, W. Z. Foster, *History of the Third International* (N. Y., 1955) p. 333.

strength of the vast people's front masses. The feasibility of this policy was quickly demonstrated by the winning of strong parliamentary majorities in the national elections in Spain and France early in 1936, despite desperate efforts of the reactionaries to break down the existing bourgeois-democratic electoral systems. The people's front masses were determined to win the state power from the capitalists' control and to use it in their own behalf.

This program of parliamentary political action immediately brought about another new policy on the part of the Communist parties; namely, that of participation in Left governments that were still functioning within the framework of the capitalist system. For example, the people's front governments, specifically in Spain and France, had not broken with capitalism. In France the Communist Party was only unofficially a part of such a people's front government, but in Spain it became a full-fledged member. It is important to note that the participation policy was at this time definitely established for Communist parties, and this orientation has become more firm with later developments.

Prior to the formulation of the people's front policy in 1935 at the seventh world congress, it had been the traditional Left-wing policy, over many decades, to refuse participation in the leadership (cabinets) of governments committed to the maintenance of the capitalist system. Many bitter fights took place during

the pre-World War I period in the Second International over this question. The abstentionist attitude of the Left was correct then because, in reality, the entry of Socialist leaders into bourgeois governments meant that opportunists such as Millerand, Viviani, Burns, and others of the dominant Right-wing ilk, inevitably committed betrayals of the workers' cause into the hands of the employers.

Under the conditions of broad people's front movements, however, in the face of militant reaction and in the environment of a decaying capitalist system, it was quite a different matter for the participation by representatives of the strong Communist parties in Left governments that had not broken with capitalism. Thus, the participation policy was widely developed in the various coalition governments that grew up in many parts of Europe after the overthrow of the Hitler regime in World War II. The Anglo-American governments, however, were rigidly opposed to this Left-coalition policy, and by the use of money and political pressure, they managed to exclude the Communists from such governments in France, Italy, and Belgium—which were made up of those parties that had fought Hitler. In Eastern Europe, however, where Soviet influence was predominant and the Communist parties were very strong, the Left-coalition governments of the peoples succeeded in marching on to people's democracy and to the eventual building of Socialism.

The fight of the Communist parties and people's front movements for a parliamentary majority has nothing in common with the political opportunism of Right Social Democrats. It is based upon the Leninist understanding that the bourgeoisie will defend capitalism with every weapon and tactic at its disposal, and that monopoly capital has to be curbed and defeated by the proletariat and its allies. Between Marxist-Leninists and Right Social Democrats the question never has been that the latter wanted a peaceful road to Socialism, while the former said that it must necessarily be a violent road. The fundamental issue was that the Right Social Democrats, with their basically bourgeois program, had abandoned altogether the fight for Socialism, whereas the Communists have been ever and always its indefatigable champions, whatever might be the requirements of the struggle.

#### THE COUNTER-OFFENSIVE OF THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

In addition to this fight for parliamentary majorities, the second basic element of the people's front policy that we should note, in connection with our general analysis of the road to Socialism under current conditions, is the counter-offensive, or Leftward orientation, which usually, if not always, governments of the people's front and people's democracy (and the national front in colonial countries) express. The people's front has a revolutionary potential which can be developed. To cultivate

this Leftward orientation, by transforming the bourgeois state, is indispensable for people's governments if, born in crisis situations, they are to cope with the urgent problems thrust upon them by the development of the general crisis of capitalism, internationally and in their respective countries. This Leftward policy is a recognition of the continuing correctness of Marx's principle which he enunciated after the Paris Commune, to the effect that the workers cannot simply seize upon the readymade machinery of the bourgeois state and use it to their own revolutionary ends.

People's front governments are usually elected on elementary programs of demands during periods of intense political ferment, as in the struggle to prevent war, in the unsettled periods after wars, in the general struggle to prevent fascism, during a severe economic crisis, or in other manifestations of the decay of capitalism. However, people's front government, under the pressure of the crisis, ordinarily finds itself confronted with many serious problems, possibly not specifically covered by its program. Among other tasks, it has to combat the militant, even violent, attacks of the bourgeoisie; it must overcome the corroding opposition of Right-wing elements in its own ranks; and it must conform to the forward surge of the workers, who, after the big victory of electing a people's front, will want to press on for new conquests. Such a people's

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front government consequently must go over to the counter-offensive, it must move to the Left by adopting a more advanced program, or it will die, broken down, either by direct capitalist attacks from the outside or by opportunist disruption from within. Its Leftward course, tending to dismantle and remodel the state controls of the bureaucratic, militaristic, and monopolist elements—which are the barriers to the workers winning parliamentary control and to achieving their program when they do win such majorities—is the legal application of the Marxian principle of the break-up of the capitalist state.

The history of the pre-war French and Spanish people's front governments goes to prove the imperative need of carrying out such a counter-offensive. In France there was a tremendous surge forward of the workers during the strong people's front movement. In addition to electing the new people's front government in April 1936, the workers conducted unparalleled general strikes, mainly of the militant sit-down type; they built up their unions from about 1,000,000 to 5,000,000 members; they unified their badly-split trade union movement, and they enormously strengthened the Communist and Socialist parties. If the French people's front government finally disintegrated, it was because, due to the resistance of the Right-wing Socialist and petty bourgeois Republicans, that government was not able to move to the Left solidly and quickly

enough to cope with the many new problems which confronted it. In Spain, the situation was basically the same as in France. The people's front government, elected in February 1936, failed to rise aggressively to the proper handling of the many tasks which it immediately had to face. In substance, these amounted to preventing the counter-revolution from getting under way. Consequently, the government died after the bitter civil war of three years. The basic weakness in both the French and Spanish people's front governments was that the respective Communist parties were still too weak to give the necessary firm leadership to the movements as a whole.

Characteristic of such situations, the fifth congress of the Comintern, in 1924, sharply criticized the conduct of the Communists in the Communist-Left Social Democratic workers' government of 1923 in Saxony and Thuringia, precisely for not realizing the need for a militant and progressive Leftward policy by their government. It declared that they had acted like ordinary bourgeois ministers, by failing to carry through such urgently needed measures as the arming of the workers, the reorganization of the army, the organized distribution of housing facilities to the unemployed, and the like, measures which would have given them real political control.

The American working class, within the framework of the Roosevelt democratic front movement (which bore within itself various

characteristics of the people's front of the times) also displayed strong qualities of the counter-offensive, or Leftward orientation. Far from resting content with the election and reelection of Roosevelt, the workers pressed on to the winning of other victories, the most vital of which was the organization of the basic industries and the quadrupling of the membership of the trade unions. It was a period of a veritable renaissance of the labor movement.

The necessary Leftward orientation of the people's front (or national front in the colonies) must inevitably be in the general direction of eventual Socialism, and it can actually lead to this goal. Whether the workers successfully transform their people's front government (which still operates within the framework of capitalism) into a people's democracy (which is a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat) depends upon the urgency of the political crisis; upon the general strength of the workers; upon the relationship of forces inside the people's front, and particularly upon the strength of the Communist Party. My article, "People's Front and People's Democracy" (*Political Affairs*, January 1951) which was carefully edited by our National Board and later re-published widely in the world Communist press (including *Pravda*), deals in considerable detail with many of the problems of the transition from the people's front to the people's democracy.

The history of the people's democracies which developed in Eastern

Europe following World War II—in Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Albania—shows that these governments, too, displayed in a high degree the characteristic Leftward orientation of the people's front. Their coalitions of various anti-Hitlerite parties started out, after the Soviet Red Army had rid their countries of fascism in World War II, with relatively moderate programs. But the force of circumstances enabled them all progressively to adopt more advanced programs of nationalization of industry, farm collectivization, the cleansing and remodeling of the army and police, the establishment of a planned economy, and other measures amounting, in substance, to the initial phases of laying the foundations of Socialism.

This process involved making many changes in the bourgeois constitutions, or even re-writing them—the re-organization of the governmental apparatus—which is the present-day "breaking up of the state" stressed by Marx and Lenin. It also involved the merging of the Communist and Socialist parties—which sloughed off the opportunist Right elements—and the adoption of various other important measures. At first, the Communist-left Socialist majorities in the parliaments were very small, in some cases being as little as but two or three deputies (see my book, *The New Europe*), but they quickly expanded with the consolidation and development of the new-type governments.

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The carrying through of the Revolution in the countries of the present-day people's democracies in Eastern Europe, after the overthrow of the Hitler government, was basically a legal and peaceful movement. The new, post-war governments, in which the workers gained increasing power and leadership, had to put down minor counter-revolutionary insurrections in Poland, Rumania, and elsewhere, but this was done under the legal authority of the governments and with a minimum of force.

At the Seventh Comintern congress, in 1935, Dimitrov pointed out that the people's front stage of development is not inevitable in all countries. The same may also be said of the stage of people's democracy. This is because a people oppressed by a fascist or other ultra-reactionary regime, under which no democratic parliamentary action is possible, may see fit to smash outright such political tyrannies, as was done to the Hitler governments all over Europe during the war, with the full cooperation of the broadest democratic masses in armed struggle. In such cases, a people may skip the people's front stage and proceed directly to people's democracy, as they did in Eastern Europe after World War II. There is no blueprint for the advance of the workers to Socialism.

#### CURBING THE EMPLOYERS' VIOLENCE

The third element of people's front policies and trends that we should consider in our analysis of the road to Socialism in the present period,

(in addition to the fight for parliamentary majorities and the development of the counter-offensive) is the systematic efforts made by the people's front parties and masses (often with success) to check in advance the counter-revolutionary violence of capitalist reaction. This means that the workers strive not only to begin their march to Socialism by the legal election of a people's government under bourgeois democracy, but also, as they proceed, to curb and reduce to a minimum capitalist violent resistance to their democratic advance.

Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and all other Communist leaders, have always warned the workers and other democratic forces that the exploiting classes, in the course of the class struggle, never hesitate to throw overboard their own legality and to use violence when they see fit and deem their class interests to be seriously threatened. Habitually, capitalist rulers use their courts, police, jails, armies, and other means of repression and violence against the workers and their allies. This is especially true when they confront a working class that is resolutely marching on toward Socialism. Labor history is crowded with examples of this fact. The bourgeoisie are the instigators of fascism, civil war, imperialist world war, and other types of extreme violence. Under modern conditions, social violence always originates in the ranks of capitalist reaction.

On the other hand, the working class and other toiling elements are always and instinctively the cham-

pions of peace and democracy. They pick up the sword against those who oppress, exploit, and butcher them, only when they have no other alternative, only when more peaceful methods are closed to them. They are the basic forces of democracy and peace. The Communists are the most authentic spokesmen of these inherently peace-loving and democratic masses.

The working class, when compelled to by circumstances, will fight with whatever methods are open to it, as it has proven on many occasions, including the Russian, Chinese, and other revolutions, and in World War II. The workers and their allies not only strive to defeat such violence as is directed against them, but (most important in this analysis) they also try to curb this ruling class violence in advance, to nip it in the bud, to strangle and check it, in order to prevent it from growing into a real menace to them. This elementary tendency to restrain, as well as to defeat, capitalist violence, has been too little noticed and theorized by Communist leaders. It is, however, becoming more and more of an important weapon in the arsenal of the working class, especially as the latter gains in organized strength and conquers for itself more democratic rights. This factor is increasingly exercising a profound influence upon the course of the class struggle and must be given careful consideration in estimating the present-day road to Socialism.

The modern labor movement, particularly where Communist influence

is strong, does not stand passively by while the employers organize and precipitate their world wars, fascism, reactionary civil wars, violence against strikers, and the like. On the contrary, they definitely try to stifle this violence at its outset, or before, as well as to fight it after it breaks out. This is a basic condition for the maintenance and utilization of bourgeois democracy. The workers not only have to fight to enact democratic legislation, but also to make it work. Labor history provides ample proof that in this general approach, the workers have scored some very important victories.

In all the capitalist countries the labor movement, both economic and political, has accomplished very much; for example, during the past decades, in checking police violence and the use of troops in strikes. This it had to do in order to win these struggles. No doubt the employers would now, just as willingly as ever, also have recourse to such methods of violence; but they find it far more difficult to do so, in the face of the greater strength, consciousness, and alertness of the working class. Everywhere the latter have taken elaborate precautions against precisely such employer violence during strikes.

This decisively important fact is also a reality in the United States, where the employers once freely used extreme violence in strikes. It is only twenty years ago since the capitalists made their factories into veritable forts, and every big strike was the scene of widespread bloodshed, with the employers boldly using troops,

police, and armed company thugs against the strikers. In fact, many of the strikes of a few decades ago were veritable small civil wars. But now, since the enormous growth in size and solidarity of labor's organizations, (the trade unions are presently about five times as large as they were a generation ago), the employers are manifestly having far more trouble in cowing the workers during strikes by the use of their armed forces. Strike violence by employers is by no means ended, of course, and it may at any time flare up afresh. But the important thing obviously is that the workers, through their economic and political strength, have done much to curb and diminish it, at least, where bourgeois democratic conditions prevail. This is one of their elementary necessities for a successful strike strategy.

In line with this basic restraining tendency of the workers all over the capitalist world regarding capitalist violence in strikes, the workers also seek, and frequently succeed, in curbing capitalist violence in other types of political struggles, and for the same general reasons. Especially have they combated the attempts of the monopolists to overthrow democratic governments violently and to establish fascist or other reactionary regimes. On the same principle, of nipping capitalist violence in the bud, people's front governments, in the name of the people and as the condition for their own existence, use the state power to suppress such violence. All over the capitalist world,

the workers are today the best defenders, both of Socialist and bourgeois democracy. This significant reality has played a vital part in the capitalist world, and it has a direct bearing upon the whole question of the road to Socialism.

Take, for example, the workers' effective resistance to the well-known Kapp-putsch in Germany in 1920. On March 12th, a reactionary body of armed forces under General von Luttwitz and Wolfgang Kapp, marched into Berlin, drove out the bourgeois Weimar government, and set about establishing a reactionary regime. But they ran right into a tremendous general strike, called by the trade unions. The result was that the workers strangled the violent activities of the reactionary forces. After five days of national paralysis, Kapp and his pals fled Germany and the Weimar government was put in command again. There was very little armed fighting in the whole affair. This magnificent display of working class power and discipline was largely led by the Communists and Left-Socialists, who wanted to follow up their strike victory by taking over political power, as could have been done, but they were balked by the Right-wing Social Democratic leaders.

Since the advent of the people's front policy, this curbing trend has become more and more developed. Thus, in France and Spain, during the mid-1930's, the workers and their allies succeeded, at least for the time being, in blocking the fascist seizure

of power, by their resistance to the attempts at destroying the Republic, by their election of people's front governments, and by powerfully building their mass organizations. The trouble in France was that the workers failed to keep up the pressure upon the Socialist and Radical leaders of the Popular Front government, who peddled away the movement. And in Spain the movement failed, because the liberals heading the People's Front government refused, at the outset, to take the necessary measures of purging the army of its reactionary generals, as the Communists proposed. Franco and his gang of generals were thus able to get their counter-revolution under way. It was not written in the stars that the ill-fated Spanish civil war had to take place on any such big scale as it did. It could have been stamped out despite the Hitler-Mussolini intervention, by more determined efforts to curb the reactionaries at the beginning.

Now let us take a specific example of the curbing policies of the workers upon a higher, a Socialist level, in the people's democracies. A striking case of such a suppression of employer violence, before it could mature into counter-revolution was the throttling in East Germany by the people's democratic government of the June 23, 1953, putsch, or "demonstration." This violent uprising, an attempted counter-revolution, had in itself the potentiality of a major civil war in Germany, or even a gen-

eral European or world war; but these dread dangers were averted by the firm curbing policies of the East German workers and their government. Similar situations have also been taken care of in other people's democracies, a notable example being the timely defeat of the attempted counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia in February 1948. In this instance, under American instigation, a powerful bloc of 17 bourgeois ministers in the people's government resigned, which was to be the signal for a general uprising. But it failed completely, owing to the strong repressive (curbing) measures taken by the workers and their state. The general result, instead, was a great strengthening of the Czechoslovak people's democracy.

There are many other examples at hand of the workers acting vigilantly to halt reaction in time and to prevent employer *coups d'etat*. This has been notably the case, among others, in recent years in Brazil and Indonesia. In Italy, according to Walter Lippmann, Italian bourgeois leaders told him recently that they would not surrender state control to the Left, no matter how big a majority a people's front combination might poll.\* But undoubtedly, when that time approaches, the powerful Italian Communist Party and its allies will be able to find the means to pull the teeth beforehand of these would-be putschists.

\* For a discussion of this, see H. Aptheker, *History and Reality* (N. Y., 1955) pp. 69-70.

The concluding section of this article will appear in our next issue.—Ed.

# Questions and Answers on the XXth Congress, CPSU

By Eugene Dennis

*At the request of Political Affairs, Eugene Dennis, General Secretary of the Communist Party, commented briefly on a series of questions arising from the current discussions on the XXth Congress. The questions and answers, which were received on March 20th, are printed here in full.—Ed.*

1. *What is the overall significance of the XXth Congress of the CPSU?*

The 20th Congress is a truly historic event. It has had a tremendous impact on the whole world. This is because it registered great achievements, as well as projected the way to new advances in the struggle for peace and in the further development of Socialism. The Congress dramatized the results of the bold and flexible peace initiative of the Soviet Union in the past period which has been so successful in securing a relaxation of international tensions. It offered to the world its slogan—"Let's trade," instead of "Let's arm"—as a concrete means of promoting peaceful co-existence—a policy which corresponds to the vital national interests of all countries, not the least our own.

The new Five-Year Plan continues the rapid growth of industrial production and will make possible not only a substantial improvement in the economic well-being of the So-

viet people, but makes it possible for them to bring to the masses of people in the undeveloped countries a new form of aid to their development—aid without strings, which will enable them to industrialize and help solve their own age-old problems of poverty and national sovereignty.

The historic significance of the growth of the role of the countries of Socialism and Peoples Democracy in strengthening the cause of peace and in demonstrating the superiority and new successes of the socialist system was summed up in the statement of Khrushchev that "the emergence of Socialism as a world system is the main feature of our era."

Besides registering these achievements, and adopting policies to continue and advance them, the Congress made some basic theoretical contributions to the development of the science of Marxism-Leninism on the basis of the new international experience and profound changes in the world situa-

tion. In addition, the Congress made a profound evaluation of the harmful consequences of the cult of the individual that arose under Stalin's leadership and took far-reaching measures to strengthen and expand inner-Party and Soviet democracy.

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2. *What was new about the statement on non-inevitability of war?*

First: considerable ambiguity was swept aside, leaving this new fact of life in its full grandeur. For the first time in history, *war is not inevitable*. Many Americans have had in the back of their minds the idea that there is some law of nature that when two great social forces confront each other, it has to end in war. But the XXth Congress has placed before the whole world the fact that humanity can now make its own decisions effective on this question. We are not the helpless prey of forces beyond our control. The people of the world are strong enough now to prevent war. Imagine what a difference this is from 1914 and 1939!

Throughout the entire post-war period we American Communists have repeatedly said war is not inevitable. But the Congress added something new. It declared that the time has now arrived when Lenin's thesis of "inevitable war under imperialism" no longer applies. This is due to the fact that while imperialism still retains the economic basis for war, it is no longer a

world-wide system, and the peace forces of the world—which include the powerful lands of Socialism, as well as India and other neutral countries—have now become a major force strong enough to prevent war. The maintenance of the obsolete thesis obscured the recognition of these facts and made it possible for the warmongers to use it to hinder the struggle for peace.

War is not inevitable. But this does not mean that a lasting peace will be attained automatically. However, in the new world situation now unfolding the people are strong enough to prevent war, if they but unite and make that strength effective in bridling the advocates of war, the advocates of aggressive military alliances and of an atomic race.

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3. *What light do the theoretical discussions of the Congress throw on the road to Socialism?*

The Congress pointed out that the forms of transition to Socialism in various countries will become more and more diversified. They will by no means be just a repetition of the experience of the Soviet Union or of the People's Democracies. The only decisive and indispensable factor that will be common to all is the political leadership of the working class headed by its vanguard. It is true that in most of the period between the two world wars, thinking on this question tended to become somewhat "frozen." However,

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the changes that have taken place in the world since the Second World War have re-opened this question in the full richness in which it was originally envisaged by Marx and Lenin. They always emphasized that everything depended on the period, the relationship of class forces, the concrete situation and traditions of each country.

Viewing things from this angle, Khrushchev points out that it is perfectly possible that given the present and growing strength of Socialism on a world scale, and the internal change taking place within various capitalist countries, many peoples may now be able to achieve their transition to Socialism through peaceful means based on winning the majority of their peoples for Socialism and winning a stable majority in the parliament of their country. Khrushchev points out that this new generalization is based considerably on the experience of the labor and Communist movements of other countries.

We American Communists have ourselves perhaps made some modest contributions on this score, since we have for some time been exploring the question of the American road to Socialism. In the past we made clear that we are not advocates of force and violence as a means of effecting the transition to Socialism, and particularly in the period since World War II we have made clear that we strive for the constitutional and democratic path of transition. We believe that the possibilities of

such a path will be enhanced by the course of events in our own country and the world.

To realize a peaceful transition requires among other things, a broad and militant people's democratic coalition led by a united and class-conscious working class which will uphold and enforce the Constitution of the United States and its Bill of Rights, and decisively curb the monopolies—the historical practitioners of force and violence, the perennial opponents of all democratic advance and social progress.

Obviously this will entail big popular struggles on the economic, political and electoral fronts—sharp class struggles which will be forced upon the people by the offensive of the monopolies against peace and the liberties and standard of living of the people. Naturally we must continue to study this question and develop our position more fully.

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#### 4. *What about the role of Stalin?*

Apparently what is going on now in the Soviet Union is that for the first time they are finding it possible to make a fully objective assessment of the role of Stalin, his many and great contributions as well as the gravity of his errors and weaknesses, and in particular his responsibility for the fostering of the cult of the individual and for certain costly mistakes and harmful violations of the Soviet Constitution, occasioned by the absence of real collective lead-

ership during the past two decades. Necessarily our own ability to judge this record and the progress of this present reassessment is greatly limited by the absence of first-hand knowledge or contact. However, we believe that the frankness of the CPSU leadership in facing this question and boldly placing it before the membership of the CPSU and the whole Soviet people does a great service to their Party and to the whole people. Only a Party that is really strong and enjoys the confidence of the people based upon actual achievements on their behalf would be able to open up such a question and pursue it publicly. In turn, one can feel sure that this discussion will become a new source of strength to the CPSU and to all other working-class parties.

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5. *The press indicates that there was a special report of Khrushchev to a closed meeting of the XXth Congress on the question of Stalin, the cult of the individual, and collective leadership in the CPSU. If this was of such importance, why didn't it appear in the main report?*

Possibly because the press in the capitalist countries would have seized upon this noteworthy feature of the XXth Congress to obscure its most important decisions and policies on the new epic 5-year Plan, peaceful coexistence, the non-inevitability of war, the possibility of peace-

ful transition, etc. At least this way, for the first two weeks after the opening of the Congress the world did get the full impact of these policies. Today, however, a reading of the press would make it appear that the only thing that happened at the Congress was the re-evaluation of Stalin. Everything else that happened at the Congress is being blotted off the newspapers, kept off the radio and TV. Big Business and its press is trying to use the issue of the re-evaluation of Stalin's role to wipe out of the people's mind the significance of the Congress for the peace and well-being of the people everywhere.

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6. *Why doesn't the CPUSA criticize the Soviet Union even though it is now clear that many things were wrong there? And what criticism should be made of the attitude of American Marxists in relation to the role of Stalin?*

The facts disclosed about the errors of Stalin in regard to the absence of collective leadership are, of course, new to us and without any doubt come to us all with something of a shock and raise many questions. The Soviet Union has been the first and leading country of Socialism and has with few intermissions been continually under every form of attack by the capitalist forces all over the world. Not the least among these forces was the whole network of calumniators, vilifiers and slanderers whose unremitting hostility to the Soviet Union was hostility to So-

cialism and to working-class rule under any conditions. Our attitude has been similar to that when confronted against unions and workers in the course of a strike. We support the workers and their organizations and are not deterred by the fact that some secondary errors on their part have been used as a pretext for denouncing the strike by those who are against all unions and against the workers generally.

However, it is true that in fighting these slanders we often tended to gloss over the problems, difficulties and shortcomings which the CPSU leaders themselves admitted. In heralding the epochal achievements of the Soviet Union, we also often fell into the habit of attributing these accomplishments to Stalin instead of to the CPSU and its Central Committee, to the Soviet people and to the system of Socialism. We sometimes allowed our discussion of the magnitude and grandeur of the history-making progress of Socialism in the Soviet Union to take on an aspect of virtually attributing infallibility to the leadership. In addition we sometimes tended to take a position on certain questions without having a first-hand knowledge of the facts. Incidentally this first-hand knowledge of facts was and is denied us by the Administration's restrictions on passports which prevents us from having any contact with developments over there and thus being in a better position to estimate them.

Moreover, one of the main lessons

we must draw from this situation is that dogmatism and doctrinairism must be uprooted from our Party's approach to the theory and application of Marxism-Leninism. Our Party must continue to study with utmost attentiveness the experiences and the theoretical conclusions of the Marxists of all countries. But this must be a scientific study which always considers the time, the place, the actual relationship of class forces that led to those conclusions. But the key task is for us to study the situation of our own country and to apply creatively and develop the theory and practice of scientific socialism in the U.S., in accord with the conditions and needs of our own people. It follows from this that we must encourage in our Party the freest atmosphere for critical and self-critical examination of all questions.

7. *What lessons can be drawn for the American Communist Party from the discussion around the role of Stalin?*

Together with the ever-pressing need to examine all questions and developments factually, objectively and scientifically, the chief lesson is the lesson of collective leadership, criticism and self-criticism. No matter how great any leader may be, no matter how well equipped for his tasks, if work is not done collectively, if he together with the other leaders does not continually participate in criticism and self-criticism, if he does not maintain ties with the masses, he

will make serious mistakes.

We have much to learn from this. The question of collective leadership, criticism and self-criticism cannot be settled once, for all time. The earlier writings of Stalin himself contain excellent statements on this question and explanations of their particular necessity in a Communist movement. As we see, however, from their experience and as we ourselves have learned from our experience following our struggle against Browderism, the struggle for collective leadership must be a continuing process. We must constantly encourage in our Party the fullest political initiative, collective responsibility and the freest atmosphere for critical and self-critical examination of all questions.

We have much to learn on the question of how to ensure the kind of criticism and self-criticism and democratic centralism without which there can be no collective leadership. In the recent period, owing to the attacks of the Administration upon the Bill of Rights and upon our Party, we were unable to work normally, and many abnormal practices developed. Now, however, as I mentioned in the speech at Carnegie Hall on Jan. 20th, we are

taking a new look at all the major features of our policies.

Some things we have been examining, for example, are: First, whether, while we correctly signaled the aggressive role of U.S. imperialism in the post-war period and the new dangers of war and fascism—and as a matter of fact pointed out in 1951 and since that world war was neither imminent nor inevitable and that the drive to fascism could be halted—we may not have presented this question at times one-sidedly in actual practice. Second, the question of our overall relations in regard to the trade unions. Third, whether at a time when we see the new level and scope of the heroic struggle of the masses of Negro people in the South for integration and full equality, the slogan of self-determination is valid. Fourth, a critical re-examination of our Party Program, *The American Way*, that was adopted in 1954.

All of these questions involve a study of the realities of American life today, utilizing and enriching the science of Marxism on the basis of American experience and traditions to advance and promote the interests of the American people.

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# Gradualism and Negro Freedom

By Henry Winston

*This article was received in the mail on the day that Comrade Winston terminated his status as a political refugee and voluntarily surrendered himself to the Federal authorities, as a victim of the Smith Act—Ed.*

THE ACTION OF the 1954 Convention of the NAACP in launching its "Free by '63" campaign was of far-reaching significance. That slogan was the outgrowth of the struggle to find an effective policy that would hasten the Freedom Train along the high road of complete economic, political and social equality. This slogan now is the banner under which the Negro people march toward the goal of equality and freedom.

Its projection at this time, according to the late Walter White, reflects the fact that, as he wrote in *How Far the Promised Land?* "The Negro knows that the tide of world history is flowing in his direction."

Dr. Ralph Bunche notes "that the emphasis today properly belongs on the urgency of fulfillment and not on the Negro's long exercised and often abused quality of patience. As the 'promised land' comes nearer, the pace of progress must be quickened."

The emphasis given to the "urgency of fulfillment" is most vital, particularly since many liberal adherents of the principle of equality,

in the name of "reasonableness," advise a gradualist solution to the problem. Unfortunately they fail to note that the only alternative to constitutional democracy in the South is the prolongation of semi-feudal relations in the sphere of economic, political and social relations.

Specifically, this prolongation means: bolstering the plantation economy and with it the barbaric oppression of the Negro people; stifling democratic developments in the South affecting Negro and white alike; impeding efforts to raise the standards of living of the masses in the South to a position of equality with the rest of the country; and maintaining the seniority in Congress of the East-lands and their alliance with the McCarthyites which threatens the liberties of the entire nation.

That is why Communists insist that any policy based on "reasonableness" has meaning when emphasis is given to the "urgency of fulfillment." Put another way, "reasonableness" must in substance demand a vigorous and forthright defense of the Bill of Rights and the

speediest possible implementation of its letter and spirit.

#### NEGRO EQUALITY AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Not everyone recognizes the unique character of the struggle for democracy in the country under present-day conditions. To understand the nature of it is at once a sign of new thinking and activity in the struggle for democracy.

This fight consists, on the one hand, in united efforts to check and defeat the McCarthyites, Jenners, and Eastlands. These are the most reactionary forces waging warfare against all existing liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. On the other hand, it involves a special struggle to attain equality for 16,000,000 Negroes at a time when efforts are being made to downgrade the greater liberties of the white masses, and the more limited rights of the Negro people. This means that the special struggle for Negro equality has to be merged more clearly and definitely with the general struggle for democracy.

The reason for this is that victory in the fight against McCarthyite-Eastlandite reaction will be realized to the extent that conditions are created for the maximum involvement of all the democratic forces in the country in united struggle.

The Negro people are a most important segment of the democratic forces. To achieve a general victory

for democracy requires their firm and united support. This emphasizes anew the imperative necessity for the general democratic movement to develop a crusade against all restrictions on the full use of 16,000,000 powerful black hands. Such restrictions include the poll tax, undemocratic registration practices, gerry-mandering, lynch law and economic terror.

The Negro people's movement cannot win its battle for first class citizenship by underplaying the general fight in the country against reaction. Neither can the general movement for democracy be victorious by underplaying the fight for equality for the Negro people. It is clear that to win, in general or in particular, demands breaking the reactionary Dixiecrat-GOP alliance in Congress, to retire these forces from public life.

Clearly the Dixiecrats are in power only because the Negro people in the deep South are denied the most elementary rights. Their retirement would give new and urgent emphasis to the just demands of the Negro people. The Negro question thus emerges as a cardinal one. Greater and greater numbers of people are beginning to recognize that equality for the Negro people is a just demand. They are beginning to realize that in advancing the just cause of the Negro people, they are advancing the general welfare of the nation.

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THE SOUTH AND THE  
NEGRO QUESTION

Inevitably the main center of struggle develops in the South and especially in that area where Negroes constitute the majority of the population. The reason for this is not to be found simply in the existence of a Negro majority in the Black Belt of the South. Nor is it because the problems of Negroes in the North are not of great importance. It is certainly not because the fight there against discrimination, Jim Crowism, and segregation has been won.

Primarily the center of struggle develops in the South because of special economic and social conditions. These conditions are akin to feudalism. This is the result of the continued existence of the plantation and sharecropping system.

The fact that this condition is present defines the status of Negroes everywhere. This is the major factor determining the lag in democracy in the South, preventing the achievement of equal rights for Negroes in the rest of the country, and acting as a retarding influence on the extension of popular liberties in the nation as a whole. It follows that one of the biggest democratic tasks before the nation, and especially labor, the Negro people and other democratic forces, is to act in such a way as to bring about a speedy end to the semi-feudal conditions present in Southern economy and

the political forms that maintain this backwardness.

The accomplishment of this task requires an appreciation of the central role which the fight for equality plays. No great advance is possible generally or in the South, without wiping out the status of second-class citizenship for the Negro people.

What would winning Negro equality mean to the South and to the nation? It would mean that the differential in wages existing between Northern and Southern workers would be ended and that the unequal wage now prevalent among Negro and white workers in the South would also be ended. This would result in billions of dollars being added to the purchasing power of the people in the South. Moreover, the fight for democracy would create the conditions for putting an end to "right-to-work" laws, and to Ku Klux Klan terror. It would create the basis for the organization of united mass trade unions in the South. It would help to eliminate the discriminatory freight rates, high rates for electric power, and would allow the South to develop its own local industry. This would raise the technological level of the South and with it bring about an increase in the numbers and skills of the Southern industrial workers.

On the countryside it would mean an end to share-cropping and the farm tenancy system. It would represent the beginnings of progress in

eliminating the whole plantation economy. It would really open up the farmlands of the South to mechanization and diversification. At the same time it would lay the foundation for the most basic reform necessary in Southern agriculture—land for the landless.

Any struggle which involves these objectives necessarily implies a fight against the alliance of Wall Street and the Southern Bourbons. The fight for democracy would weaken this alliance. It would release democratic forces in the South. These could curb the rapaciousness of those who profit from the special oppression of the Negro people, and are responsible for the backwardness of the South.

The fight to bring about these changes would ultimately result in replacing white supremacists in the House and Senate by representatives of democratic forces of the South. It would make possible a new democratic relationship between the people of the South and the people of the North.

### THE CHANGING SOUTH

Every proposal regarding the fight for equal rights must be considered in relation to these general developments. But to fight effectively requires an understanding that conditions are changing in the South. These changes have been developing ever since the 1930's. They are continually growing. The most impressive example of this vital fact is that

it is no longer possible to speak of the Solid South.

An example of the profound changes taking place in the South was the election campaign of 1948, when the Dixiecrats bolted the Democrats Party. The Dixiecrats carried few Southern states—Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and South Carolina. The vote the national Democratic ticket received in these states is most significant, for it indicated that a large body of opinion, Negro and white, within these states opposed the policies of the Dixiecrats. Even more significant is the fact that the national Democratic ticket carried every other Southern state. When this is understood in the light of the demagogic program for civil rights used by Truman in his campaign at that time, the defeat of the Dixiecrats is even more startling.

Certainly an examination of the 1948 election results has important lessons for us today. Such an examination shows first, that the Democrats won a national election without the support of the Dixiecrats. The so-called "Solid South" was not so solid.

It shows further that if a federal program of civil rights was advanced and fought for by the government that such a program could win the support of a decisive section of the Southern voters.

This point has been newly emphasized by the varied reactions to the Supreme Court decision on desegregation of public schools. The posi-



tive response in many parts of the South has shown that Southern custom, tradition, etc., cannot be blamed for anti-democratic practices.

However, to say that changes are taking place is not to say that the road ahead is free of obstacles. Far from it! But it is the duty of all democratic forces to note that which is new, and healthy, and to assist it in its further development. As a result of these profound changes taking place new divisions and differences are making their appearance in the ranks of the various Southern class groupings. The forces of progress must assess these differences from the standpoint of their relationship to the democratic struggle, to be able to seek out the allies and to strengthen and unify them.

#### ANALYZING THE BOURBONS

There are differences in the ranks of the Bourbons of the South. The Dixiecrats, representing the extreme Right wing of the Southern Bourbonry are allied with the most reactionary elements of finance capital. They were responsible for the bolt from the Democratic Party. This break-away was aimed at heading off democratic developments. They took this path of a separate party only because of the crisis nature of developments within the South.

On the other hand, the conservative forces of Southern Bourbonry, while in agreement with the maintenance of the status quo, nevertheless did not pursue the same tactic.

Mindful of the growing democratic spirit in the South, they took to the path of demagoguery. They gave lip-service to many progressive and social measures generally, but defended the Jim Crow oppression of the Negro people even though they admitted the necessity for some concessions eventually.

These are the groups who offer the major obstacles to the path of democratic development in the South. Progress can be made by the people only by opposition to these groups. However, in the struggle to expand democracy in the South they may be able to influence or neutralize some elements within the conservative groupings.

#### THE SOUTHERN LIBERALS

The liberals play a different role. They are divided into two main groupings. There are those who see the inevitability of change but counsel that such change must take place gradually. However, they support legislation to abolish the poll tax, to make lynching a federal offense, for an effective minimum wage law, opposition to the wage differential, and in general press for a peace policy. This group of liberals can play and are playing a vital role in the South today. Not all of them fully appreciate the central role of the Negro question. Nevertheless they are moving in this direction. We are convinced that the logic of the struggle will lead them more and more to a fuller apprecia-

tion of this question.

There are others who call themselves liberals. They are for change but feel that such change will come about only after a new spiritual revival or a moral reformation takes place among the white people of the South. This group of liberals usually opposes court actions and legislation on the ground that customs and mores cannot be legislated away. They take the view that only a long term process of education and persuasion will change racial attitudes. Meanwhile they defend the Jim Crow system and oppose militant action as harmful. Thus, these people see nothing but tragedy in the Supreme Court announcements establishing equality for the Negro people as policy of the federal government.

Mr. Hodding Carter, Mississippi publisher, most clearly presents the viewpoint of this more conservative grouping among the liberals. Whether or not they are aware of it, they have served to brake the movement for democratic rights. With their particular emphasis on Southern traditions and custom they bolster the declining power of reactionary Bourbon rulers. But admitting the limitations of these class groupings their very existence forces the inescapable conclusion that changes are taking place.

#### THE NEGRO PEOPLE STAND UNITED

The Negro people are united as

never before around a program of democratic rights and are militantly advancing the struggle for their own liberation. In so doing they fight for the future of a democratic South. They refuse to continue living as second-class citizens to whom the ballot and the right to run for and hold public office is denied. They demand a change from semi-feudal conditions on the farm as well as economic discrimination in industry. The desire for change as well as the fight for it has reached an unprecedented level of development. The Negro people through their efforts have helped large numbers of Southern whites to understand that the struggle for equality of the Negro people advances the interests of all. The result is a growing understanding, and a developing popular alliance.

#### LABOR AND THE SOUTH

The retarding factor in this entire development is the lack of organization of some four millions of workers in Southern industry. Consequently this reservoir of collective and organized strength cannot be brought into play. To the extent that trade unions exist in mining, auto, steel, waterfront, oil, etc., they involve only a minimum of Negro and white workers. Despite their limited numbers these organizations are engaging more and more in various forms of political activity.

What explains this limited amount of trade union organization? It is due to inadequate assistance given

to Southern workers by the labor and democratic movement in the rest of the country. Given necessary support, it would be possible to create a trade-union movement in the South of several millions strong. This could be a rallying center for all the democratic forces in the South. It could in a brief period of time change the whole complexion of the South.

It is in this connection that the Negro liberation movement must be seen. The question is, in the light of this perspective what policy must be advanced and fought for in order to bring about democratic advance for the whole South?

The attempt of the Southern Bourbons to hold back democratic progress presents the labor and democratic movement with some serious ideological and practical problems. While the States Righters do not call for secession today, they do call for an open defiance of any attempts to enforce the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments.

#### THE "STATES RIGHTS" SLOGAN

Under the slogan of states rights, legislation is being passed in various Southern states which aims to subvert and nullify any progressive decisions affecting the Negro people. Essentially, states rights means the maintenance of the plantation economy, sharecropping and tenant farming. It means cheap labor in the South. It guarantees protection for the run-away shop. It hinders trade-

union organization. It means the denial of the vote to Negro and white masses. Above all it means the continued use of force and lynch terror to support Dixiecrat domination.

Further, the conception of states rights is designed to keep the South as a hinterland for reaction. From it are elected Representatives and Senators whose major concern is support for the program of the most reactionary sections of Wall Street. That is why Congress has taken no action to curb this Dixiecrat conspiracy of governors, members of state legislators, mayors and sheriffs against federally constituted authority. These Dixiecrat conspirators are the watchdogs of the billions reaped from Negro oppression and from the backwardness of the South by the biggest banks, the biggest insurance companies, the biggest industrialists and the biggest plantation owners. The idea of states rights represents medieval barbarity in opposition to the interests of all Southern people—Negro and white.

#### "HOME RULE"

The second conception that must be fought is the demagogy around home rule. On the face of it, the idea of home rule appears to be democratic in character. As used by Southern Dixiecrats, however, it has become a reactionary slogan. It is based upon the denial of the right to vote for Negro and white, and thus becomes a guarantee for the rule of

the Southern planters. It is not accidental that the greatest demagoguery about home rule occurs precisely where the Negro people form the majority of the population. Talk of home rule by these reactionary forces is aimed at checking efforts to gain the ballot for the Negro people.

Consequently, this conception means the control of local governments by a minority of the richest, most avaricious, most chauvinistic elements in the countryside. It is a demand for the unrestricted right to exploit the Negro people. It means undeclared warfare against progressive forces in the towns and cities pushing for social reforms. If home rule meant what it implies, the vote would be given to the Negro and white masses in the South. For the Negro people it would mean the right to participate fully in public life: the right to choose and to be chosen as mayors of towns, registrars, prosecuting attorneys, chiefs of police, health commissioners, tax assessors, and officers in the national guard.

To give the conception of home rule its proper meaning would require exactly that. But then, that would mean democracy in the Black Belt. It is against this democracy that the present day home rulers use the police and the courts, the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens Council threats and economic repressive measures. It follows that the labor and democratic movement

must boldly tackle and expose this fraud which denies equal rights to the Negro people.

Neither the states rights doctrine nor the home rule doctrine provides any basis for hope regarding the struggle for equality. The reverse is true. They help to bolster the political rule of the most reactionary forces in the South.

These are the two main proposals advanced at the moment by a declining ruling class which declares that segregation will never end in the South. It is this type of conception that large masses in one form or another are beginning to challenge. But not all challenge these views with the same degree of clarity. There are liberals, for example, who consider that the oppression of the Negro people, which is sharpest in the Black Belt area, is the result of the large Negro concentration in that area. This grouping, while moved by moral considerations to oppose lynch terror and violence, states that the solution of the Negro question will be found when there is a dispersal of this large Negro concentration. They therefore develop the conception that the migration away from the South now taking place points the way to a solution of the problem. They feel that over the years, when the population ratio has shifted in such a way that there are a preponderantly greater number of whites to Negroes, a more liberal attitude will develop.

Here too, the rights of Negroes

are abandoned, and the solution to the problem is seen in proposals which take the Negro away from his homeland. Such a proposal may sound ridiculous to advanced thinkers in the labor and progressive movement, but in Mississippi a bill is now in the hopper of the state legislature which would grant \$1,000 to every Negro desiring to move from that state. It is obviously a false and misleading proposal based upon a denial of rights to which the Negro is entitled. Those who subscribe to such views and yet call themselves liberals are guilty of diversionary practices which can only derail the freedom struggle in the South.

Another group of liberals offers still another solution. They are convinced that by education and persuasion the problems of the Negro people can be solved. Therefore, they de-emphasize the policies of militant struggle against Bourbonry and Wall Street oppression. The fact is that they conceal who the main enemy is and against whom the blows must be directed. Talk about educating the planters and the tycoons of Wall Street away from the practices from which they coin billions is idle nonsense.

#### REAL EDUCATION AND PERSUASION

We are, of course, for education and persuasion, but education and persuasion should be based upon a given policy. Such a policy requires not only knowing the enemy but knowing one's allies in the struggle against the enemy. It demands knowledge of the means to bring about victory in the democratic struggle. At the same time we point out that in this regard the most effective aspect of "education and persuasion" is the enforcement of the citizenship rights of the Negro people.

To the extent that this liberal grouping supports the progressive edicts of the Supreme Court and pushes generally for social reforms, its members are playing a vital role.

The liberals, along with other sections of the democratic movement, will be able to achieve a clearer policy in an alliance with labor and the Negro people's movement. Only such an alliance, with labor playing a leading role, will guarantee a democratic reconstruction of the South. In this respect Communists can make a distinct contribution.

# Civil Liberties Under Socialism

## (ANSWERS TO THE "MONTHLY REVIEW")

### *To The Monthly Review:*

In answer to the questions which you asked *Political Affairs* to join in discussion, we would make the following comments. We agree with you, as any thoughtful person must, that "short answers must necessarily take a good deal for granted that ought to be explored and explained."

And, as you say, just as your "ideas about these questions are not fixed and frozen," so our own views are subject to change with the changing needs of the people and the country. Marxism is the science of the working class that has already brought about great victories of Socialism. It is of course not a dogma and therefore cannot give a set series of answers to set questions like a catechism. It is certain that the course of development toward Socialism in our country, and after, will be different from the forms it takes in other countries.

We think that the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Eugene Dennis, expressed this idea well when he said recently:

When and how Socialism will be

brought about is up to the majority of the American people. We Communists believe that ultimately some kind of workers and farmers government, based on a united and class-conscious working class and a militant alliance of labor, the Negro people and the toiling farmers, will effect the transition from capitalism to Socialism. Likewise, we are sure that this will be a truly American government. It will be headed by an American president and act through an American Congress which would be—for the first time in our nation's history—genuinely of, for, and by the people. And as for us Communists, we desire and advocate that this people's democracy shall be established by constitutional and democratic processes! (*Political Affairs*, Feb. 1956, p. 10).

The author of the questions you submit assumes that there has existed a Marxist movement, notably in the Soviet Union, which advocates as a Marxian dogma "rule by a single party"; that "the governing party" there "seeks to impose administratively its aesthetic and ideological standards on cultural and scientific workers and on the general public"; and that the Communist parties of other lands advocate and practice

suppression of political freedom "and the right of dissent."

None of these assumptions is true.

That there have been extraordinary difficulties in the creation and development of socialist democracy in the USSR—as with all great pioneering events in history—no one will deny. The Soviet Union was the *first* country to establish Socialism. This was a truly epoch-making achievement. It established the working class as the rulers of the country and thus from its inception infinitely enhanced the actual rights and freedoms of the masses. It had to carry this out under conditions of complete capitalist encirclement, savage intervention, chronic espionage and subversion financed from without. It had to feel its way without any previous examples to draw on, sometimes erring in lack of vigilance, sometimes allowing distortions of a contrary nature to develop. But this socialist democracy vigorously proves its real nature by the way in which it uncovers its own mistakes and rouses the widest number of people to join in correcting them. This could not happen in a society based on the assumptions in your correspondent's questions.

The American people's decision for Socialism will take place after Socialism has been triumphant in many countries. Our own country, in such a new world situation, will face nothing like the problems of the wars of intervention and the Hitler invasion. There will be no

other power capable of organizing a Project X, or a "Crusade for (capitalist) Freedom" against a socialist America. These changed circumstances will vastly alter the forms of social development here as compared with other countries. With this conception of the situation as a background, our answers to the questions are as follows:

Question 1: "Under what circumstances (if any) should civil rights in a socialist America be denied to anti-socialist individuals or groups who are not practicing, actively planning, or inciting violence?"

There should not be any curtailment of the civil liberties of such groups. But the key achievement of Socialism in this field will be that it will bring about the fullest flowering of civil liberties and political freedom, first and foremost for the overwhelming mass of the people who are denied these liberties in the fullest sense today.

Question 2: "Many socialists, including the writer, believe that propaganda which incites racial or national hatred should be outlawed in a Socialist America, or even sooner. Can this end be accomplished in a manner consistent with the First Amendment? If not, should the Constitution be amended, and how?"

Racist propaganda should be outlawed now; there is no need to wait for a Socialist America for that. This would no more challenge the

First Amendment than do libel laws.

Question 3: "Is the leadership of all or virtually all public bodies by one party inevitable in any socialist state? If not, would it nonetheless be desirable in a Socialist America?"

In general, the assumptions in the question indicate a certain confusion on the relation between parties and democracy. The number of parties does not indicate the breadth of democracy. There can be many parties and no democracy, one party and full democracy, two parties and precious little democracy. American bourgeois propaganda places the two-party system as the height of democracy. This ignores facts. The multi-party systems in West Europe are no less democratic, and may be more democratic, than our two-party system.

In the Revolutionary period of our own history, and for some years thereafter, the general assumption was that democracy meant unanimity. Then, in our Republic, there were no political parties, and, as is well known, Washington, for example, was twice elected President without opposition.

A socialist society necessarily is led by the vanguard party of the working class, the party of Marxism-Leninism. This, however, is not the same as one-party rule, nor does it mean the non-existence of dissenting or opposition parties. In a so-

cialist America there may well be a coalition of popular and democratic parties sharing jointly in state power. And in a socialist America we believe that there will also be freedom for the functioning of a dissenting or opposition party so long as it does not engage in efforts to overthrow the government by force and violence.

Question 4: "Is the control of mass communications by a single party inevitable in any socialist state? If not, should some degree of access to and control of mass communications be guaranteed in a socialist America to groups and individuals?"

It is not inevitable that a single party shall control the mass media; this flows from what has been said above. There will be access, we believe, to such media by other parties or groups (and no doubt there will be such even in an America that has made the democratic decision for a new society). These will be subject, we think, to the decisions of public bodies expressing the will of the vast majority of the people.

Question 5: "In a socialist America, to what degree (if any) should the government or governing party seek to impose administratively its aesthetic and ideological standards on cultural and scientific workers and on the general public?"

There will be no "administrative



imposition" of cultural standards in a socialist America. Of course, cultures reflect their social bases; there will develop socialist standards out of the people's needs and not out of any "administrative imposition." "Administrative imposition" is the bugaboo of anti-socialist propaganda coming for generations from capitalist apologists who so easily ignore the visible and concealed imposition of pro-capitalist standards in the culture of today. Under Socialism the people will seek and require higher standards than are permitted today; they will encourage art and science, and artists and scientists with a fullness and variety and freedom impossible today. Then our national genius will truly flower.

In conclusion: all who advocate Socialism face a creative challenge in finding the ways to make Socialism more meaningful to our fellow-Americans. Obviously this requires popular education for Socialism and especially participation in the mass struggle, joining hand-in-hand with the labor movement, the Negro people, the farming millions, and all Americans who seek to defend civil liberties against McCarthyism and racism, to defend peace against the war-plotters, to defend the economic interests of the masses against monopoly capital. Without this, Socialism in America would remain only a matter of speculation and a utopian dream.

—*Political Affairs.*

# Foster: Fighter for Correct Theory\*

By Benjamin J. Davis

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER'S 75th birthday celebration marks his achievements as an outstanding Marxist theoretician and historian.

Comrade Foster has written fourteen books, more than a hundred pamphlets, and literally thousands of magazine and newspaper articles. He has already given the American working class a big start in laying the foundations of a theoretical structure comprising the application of Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions of American reality and history. These writings have brought honor to our Party, our class and our people. They have received from Marxists all over the world a genuine welcome and a positive appreciation. His works have been translated into every major language in the world.

Foster's last six books, including the *Outline History of the World Trade Union Movement*—his latest—were written and published between his 70th and 75th birthdays.

At an age when financial magnates retire to an openly useless life, revelling in pomp and circumstance, Foster was making his biggest theoretical contributions. This took

place during the height of the war hysteria, with two savage indictments hanging over his head, with repeated government-doctor examinations converted into a routine of persecution, with social security turned into an instrument of harassment, and while illness sapped his strength, making even ordinary activity a great trial.

But despite raging political storms, Foster's books have been written with the imperturbable calm of confidence. Their style sparkles with simplicity and clarity. His works are written for youth and for new Party members in particular. Any worker can understand them, and any professor can learn from them. For every new Party member, Foster's works will be fruitful in terms of grasping the Marxist method.

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In our labor history there are a number of great personalities. Thus, there stand out William H. Sylvis, who formed the first national labor organization based on the class struggle; there was Isaac Myers, the lead-

\* Based upon the text of a speech prepared for delivery at the banquet in honor of Comrade Foster, held in New York City, March 9.

er of the Colored National Labor Union, who pioneered in the cause of Negro-white labor unity; and Albert R. Parsons, great fighter for the 8-hour day whose last words, before being executed in the Haymarket frameup, were: "Let the voice of the people be heard!" There was Eugene V. Debs, fearless fighter for peace and Socialism during the World War I period; Big Bill Haywood, founder of the Western Federation of Miners and of the Industrial Workers of the World; and John L. Lewis, who made contributions in organizing the unorganized on an industrial basis in the C.I.O.

Historians of the labor movement, regardless of their ideology, have already placed Foster's name beside those of Sylvis, Debs, Haywood, and others. When I was at Terre Haute, Indiana, as I browsed about the prison library, I found few labor histories that did not mention Comrade Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and none that did not mention Foster, most describing him as the greatest strike strategist in the history of the American labor movement. I hardly need to say that none of these was a Marxist book.

For forty years Foster has struggled for correct theory. Permit me to sketch just one of his varied theoretical contributions—perhaps his greatest—his leading role in the Party's development of the constitutional road to Socialism.

An understanding of this question and its significance is of profound importance. Its mastery can come

none too soon. The magnificent and confident speech of Khrushchev at the XXth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party projected this question into the world market of ideas and discussion. The way the American monopolists, their press and paid propagandists, have leaped at it, demonstrates that, fortunately, it is no internal debate exclusively for Marxists.

The other day, the *N. Y. World-Telegram* made this question its lead editorial, nervously defending the already shattered basis of the Smith Act prosecutions, and attempting to prove that Roy Howard is the leading Marxist of the country, surpassing even Mr. Dulles. This only proves that the capitalist apologists are in a dither looking for a position on this question which would be comfortable for their class. We have news for them: there is no such position. What's more, there were several other contributions by the Soviet Party Congress and none will add to their sweet repose.

The workers and the people generally are asking questions, and the question of peaceful transition is today stimulating lively discussion in the broadest circles. Certainly the Negro people, wracked as they are by capitalist force and violence in the South, are deeply interested in it. Everywhere it has opened up possibilities of a new and broader unity between progressive and liberal forces in our country.

Khrushchev declared that in view of the historical situation in the

world today it is now possible in various countries to achieve the "parliamentary transition to Socialism."

On the part of Khrushchev this was indeed a bold theoretical step. What he did, among other things, was to generalize the experience of historical development and of life itself and the contributions of the fraternal Communist parties of the world. Khrushchev brought all this material together, rounded it out and forthrightly crystallized it into theory which will illuminate the path of workers and oppressed peoples the world over.

The Communist Parties of several countries were moving in this direction prior to the Soviet Party Congress. Conditions thrust upon the American Party, gave it the honor of being among the first to theorize the parliamentary transition to Socialism. In the development of this theory in our Party, Comrade Foster played the leading role.

When, in 1949, a dreadful pall fell over the Bill of Rights and the American Communist Party was compelled to fight for its life before Judge Medina, the Party first published the theory of the constitutional road to Socialism.

It fell to the lot of the strike strategist and mass labor organizer to bring together the trends, tendencies and experiences of the last century and combine them into the first articulate theory of the peaceful road to Socialism in the United States.

The position was put forth in the pamphlet *In Defense of the Com-*

*munist Party and the Indicted Leaders*, by Foster, in July, 1949. Said Foster:

Previously I have stated that the Communist movement, in this country as well as abroad, has been going along on the practical working theory that in this period, because of the mass struggle against fascism and war, it has become possible in a whole number of democratic countries' legally to elect democratic governments, which could, by curbing and defeating all capitalist violence, orientate in the direction of building Socialism. (p. 35)

This process consists of three fundamental steps, Foster wrote:

1. We propose the election of a democratic government based on a broad united front coalition of workers, farmers, Negroes, professionals, small business men and other elements, willing to fight against monopoly, fascism and war.

2. Our Party holds that such an anti-fascist, anti-war democratic coalition, once in political office, would be compelled to move forward and to take effective measures to curb and break the power of the monopolies. Such anti-monopoly measures it would have the full legal right to adopt and to enforce, as would any other duly constituted government.

3. Such a democratic, anti-fascist, anti-war government, under the violent attacks of the capitalists and under the progressive pressure of the masses, would necessarily move toward Socialism. (pp. 89-90)

These are the basic elements of

the constitutional transition to Socialism as theorized by our Party in the work of Foster—a fully revolutionary theory.

It completely refutes the cock-and-bull charges of the government and its stoolpigeons in Smith Act trials that our Party—its leaders and members—advocates force and violence.

Some capitalist apologists have said that Khrushchev's contribution at the Soviet Party Congress is a "concoction," a mere trick. But, as usual, this is false. On the contrary, it reflects the continuity of Marxism-Leninism through various and evolving historical periods and is fully supported by the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

Nor are we merely following Khrushchev and the Soviet Communist Party. Such a charge is aimed at severing the native roots of our Party. Marxism is a science and like all sciences, it is universal, resulting in a similarity of thought among all who adhere to it. At the same time, it encompasses key differences, in the application of that science, that flow from the native traditions and realities of each individual country.

The Communist Party began its People's Front orientation in 1935 and has continued it ever since. It has been reiterated many times by various leaders of our Party.

In 1948, Comrade Dennis said:

We should bring forward a program that will give the working class and its popular allies a clear perspective for drastically curbing the power

of monopoly capital and achieving governmental power for the people's coalition and thus for effectively undermining the social and economic basis of fascism and extending democracy.

The constitutional road to Socialism was contained in the Party program, *The American Way*, in 1954, stating: "The Communist Party declares that Socialism will come into existence in the U.S. only when the majority of the American people decide to establish it. The Communist Party advocates a peaceful path to Socialism."

\* \* \*

Socialism is not now a practical issue in the vital 1956 elections. But, in the present world context, one cannot stop with this negative placing of the question. The idea of Socialism is beginning to engage honest minds the world over. To the imperialists and the monopolists of the Western world, it is understandably a spectre. But to the working people, to the oppressed and colonial people, to the exploited in any degree, it is beginning to be recognized as a refreshing, liberating breeze.

When, in 1933, I joined the Communist Party, I was deeply inspired by the perspective of Socialism, as I was by the self-sacrificing struggles of the Communist Party on immediate issues. At that time, however, Socialism was a more distant goal, since world capitalism was not so weak and Socialism not so strong. The path toward that goal was not receiving the emphasis that it re-

ceives today—a relatively short 23 years later.

In 1956, when the influence of Socialism is growing by leaps and bounds, it is not sufficient to talk of the goal. We must talk of the manner, and path to reach it, not by blueprint, but by a general and perfectly possible orientation to the workers.

The present is illumined by the future, as well as by the past. The realistic advocacy by our Party of a constitutional road to Socialism contains profound significance and implications for struggle and unity on the immediate issue of the day.

If a constitutional transition to Socialism is possible, then certainly the political traffic will permit the broadest, most united labor-led front to be brought into being for the vital interests of the people far short of Socialism—a front embracing millions who do not yet accept the socialist perspective. This task confronts us now in the struggles to smash the obstacles to full Negro liberation, in the necessity of restoring the Bill of Rights, in the housing, job, and wage demands of the workers and above all in need to register a triumph for peaceful co-existence and democracy in the 1956 elections. In order to achieve this parliamentary perspective, the democratic and constitutional processes of our country must be kept open.

• • •

Meanwhile, we must ever keep be-

fore the workers their next big historic step, the building of a Labor-Farmer Party, comprising the majority of American voters. Widest distribution and popularization of Comrade Foster's theoretical works will assist us immeasurably. The latest volume, *Outline History of the World Trade Union Movement*, the first Marxist book of this kind, lends itself peculiarly to this purpose, to meeting vital theoretical needs of the American working class as it moves toward its next big step forward.

Our Party took a serious step against one-man bureaucracy when in 1945 under the leadership of Foster, it rid itself of Browderism and Browder and reconstituted itself as the vanguard of the working class. Since that day, leaders of the Party, previously hidden under the bushel of Browder infallibility, have blossomed forth and many new young leaders have come forward.

Rejection of the concept of one-man leadership does not negate the role of leaders, nor does it mechanically level out the contributions of individual leaders. That too is a fundamental principle of every Leninist party. Fraternal competition between Party members to make the maximum contributions to our Party, class and people should be a barometer of the Party's healthy activity. This is a traditional way of work in every American church, lodge, union and society, from selling tickets to the church picnic to awarding scholarships for the best

young orator in the nation, as do the Negro Elks.

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Let me single out some of Comrade Foster's sterling attributes of leadership.

(1) Running as a guiding line throughout his entire life are his remarkably deep-rooted class instincts. That is why it is inevitable that as he grew and matured in our labor movement, he took to Marxism as a duck to water and, in the process, became America's outstanding Marxist theoretician.

His unshakable class instincts account for the depth and clarity of his thinking and the breadth of his accomplishments. It whetted his zest for knowledge of all the complex aspects of a worker's life. It is reflected in his burning hatred of capitalism.

While seeking to move all strata of workers, Foster, in the great organizing drives he led, based his program on the most exploited sections of his class—in packing, for example, the Negroes and the foreign-born workers; in steel, on those who performed the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs. These were the most militant workers in their industries.

(2) Foster is a man of action. Foster always expressed healthy contempt for phrase-mongering or fancy-Dan formulas and empty resolutions. One major mass action, to him, was worth a thousand beautiful paper plans. However, he was equally conscious that among the prime obstacles to mass working-

class action are wrong theories. This he learned in part from his own mistakes, openly and self-critically acknowledged.

Foster fights today for the American working class to add sound theory to its genius for production. With Foster theory is no longer the exclusive domain of one man or circle in our Party, but the property and obligation of the whole membership. His appreciation of theory is based upon his being a man of action.

(3) Foster is a champion of the liberation of nationally oppressed and colonial peoples—and in particular of the full unconditional citizenship of the Negro people in America. His book, *The Negro People in American History*, the first and only Marxist history of its kind, demonstrates this.

His contributions for Negro liberation have been legion and have been dramatically highlighted during his early labor activities. Under Foster's leadership of the great packinghouse organizing drive in 1917, the first mass organization of Negro workers into the trade-union movement took place. He has been a bitter foe of all types of discriminatory policies against Negro, Jewish, foreign-born workers, and all other minority groups. He sought to transmit to the labor movement his own boundless confidence in the Negro workers as among the staunchest trade unionists in the nation. He has lived to see this dream become a reality. He has viewed the Negro

workers not only as an inseparable part of the multi-national American working class, but in their special capacity as leaders of the Negro people.

Foster accepts the challenge of reality and Marxist science that the white workers must take the lead in battling the monopolist class for the freedom of the Negro people from chauvinist and national oppression. Simultaneously he has warned against the bourgeois nationalism that hinders Negro-white unity. On more than one occasion, his political initiative has been foremost in our Party's development of the theoretical and political weapons with which to assault the strongholds of white supremacy. When, in 1946, our Party re-established the Negro question as a national question, Foster assisted us, in adopting a whole new approach to this complex task. In 1946, we discarded the Browder system of precepts and dogma handed down from on high—and based our Party's position on American reality, on what was happening among the Negro people themselves, what they want, where they're going and especially on their passionate desire for unity and freedom. It is on this basis that we must apply Marxist science to a re-examination of all facets of this question in the light of the heroic struggles and new developments in the South today.

Early in 1946, Foster signalized the fact that the Negro question in the U.S. had become an international question.

No one can deny today that the recent limited gains made by the Negro people and their popular supporters in this country were due, in large part, to the Negro people's powerful international allies—in the first place the camp of peace and democracy led by the Soviet Union and the revolutionary upsurge of the Asian and African colonial peoples symbolized at Bandung. Arrogant Wall Street imperialism had to make grudging concessions on Negro rights because it could not withstand the additional pressure which comes from the world majority of colored people who have been heavily influenced by the equalitarian way of life under Soviet Socialism.

Likewise, our country is paying and will pay still more dearly for the official state-organized barbarism against the Negro people now taking place in the South. In this connection, one must pay special tribute to the heroic role of Negro women in the deep South.

When, in 1932, Foster was the presidential candidate of the Party, with James W. Ford, his vice-presidential running mate, it marked one of the first testimonials to the fact that our Party had become the Party of the Negro people, a title it can retain only through ever new and bolder achievements for Negro rights. Many fellow prisoners at Terre Haute had not forgotten the names of Ford and Foster, showing the reservoir of good will still existing among the Negro people for our party.



Let us not forget that the struggle for the passport of the great people's artist, Paul Robeson, and for the freedom of Winston, Lightfoot and Jackson, of Tom Dennis, Careathers, Nabried and other Negro Communists bears a special relation to the whole national liberation struggles of the Negro people in the deep South and to the oppressed colonial peoples of Africa.

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Above all, Bill Foster is a Communist, deeply devoted to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and possessed with an inexhaustible passion for Socialism. During the last few years, our Party stood up under a very severe test, against blows rained upon it during the height of the McCarthyite war hysteria. The Party, its leaders and members, did not swerve in its main line—the fight against war and for peace, the fight against fascism and for democracy and social progress. Despite weaknesses and errors, let none deny this monumental achievement. During this period, our Party leaders and members fought like tigers against a virtual McCarthyite lynch atmosphere and they grew in the bargain. This was our pride and joy while we were in prison. Because our Marxist Party can and will grow into a full mastery of its responsibilities, it is head and shoulders above all other political parties in our land.

Although his own individual initiative and resourcefulness shine through in his books and writings,

it is the Party, its role and its destiny which are central. To Foster: the Party's the thing!

The fight for the return of our leaders in prison and foreign exile, is a serious test of our understanding of the role and importance of our Party. We are inspired by him to build a mighty, mass Leninist Communist Party fired with passionate advocacy of Socialism.

The collective method of work is his stock in trade. He has consistently fought for collective leadership. His books were written and published only after wide consultation with Marxists from Chile to China. He advises steadily with Comrade Dennis and many others in his political work.

Finally, these qualities—and more—might well be summed up as Foster's farsighted leadership and world outlook. This is the faculty of being a part of the present while seeing and charting the path ahead. Every Communist seeks to cultivate it.

Back in 1944 when Browder preached reliance of the labor movement on the good sense, peaceful intention and leadership of the monopolies, Foster made a magnificent contribution, by proclaiming that after World War II these same monopolies would attempt to dominate the world and would be the main source of danger of atomic world war. The whole last decade of the U.S.-inspired cold war has confirmed Foster's foresight. This was the ideological foundation of our struggle for peace, for the con-

tributions of American people sentiment to Geneva of the struggle against the concept of the inevitability of war.

Although the monopolies have not given up their plans for world domination, we know that our Party, under the leadership of Foster and Dennis, our National Committee and with our membership, will play their role in helping to unite the powerful peace and progressive forces in our land.

For 26 years Foster was a worker in basic industry; 20 years a mass labor organizer; 20 years a political worker.

Sixty years of fruitful contributions could not have been made without the highest type of courage—physical, intellectual and moral. It is courage plus confidence in the workers and people which marks Foster's boldness, his understanding for seizing the moment that leads to victory, his disdain for the overcaution which is the graveyard of theoretical and political progress.

The immediate issues of the day demand Foster's type of bold, farsighted leadership from our Party.

Far better that I can describe the international importance and significance of Comrade Foster's contribu-

tions are the warm greetings he has received from 42 Communist Parties throughout the world on the occasion of his 75th birthday. These greetings are at the same time a tribute to the staunchness of our Party during the recent trying times. Undoubtedly the fear of world-wide protest has played a role in staying the jailer's hand against Foster. But our Party and all labor and progressive forces have a job to do to smash the latest proposal of Brownell to force him to trial—a proposal which will endanger his very life.

With it all, Comrade Foster is a cultured and warm human being, big in mind and big in heart. He maintains an unquenchable zest for life and knowledge, that sparkles in the midst of big and sharp class battles. I am sure I speak for the National Committee and for all his co-workers and fellow Party members—for those who are absent as well as those present—in saying that it is ennobling to work with him. We congratulate Comrade Foster, Chairman of the Communist Party, and wish him a long life. We are confident that he will make still more contributions to peace, democracy and the cause of Socialism.

# The Economic Outlook for 1956\*

By David Goldway

WHAT IS THE situation of the U.S. economy and what are its perspectives?

Such a question, important at any time, takes on special significance today in view of the approaching Presidential elections. It has equally great bearing on the developing economic and legislative struggles of labor and the people in the coming months. It likewise has far-reaching importance in the battle of ideas.

The dominant official note, sounded in the *Economic Report of the President* and voiced by numerous Cabinet members and Administration spokesmen, was one of brassy optimism. Thus, the *Economic Report* speaks of our country as on "the threshold of a 400 billion dollar economy. Whether we observe economic activity at the stage of production, or employment, or income disbursement, or consumer spending, we find evidence of progress and prosperity."

Coupled with this optimism, however, there is also a note of concern. "The scope of economic expansion has narrowed in recent months," the *Economic Report* states, "and

its pace has slackened. . . . In short, the rapid expansion of six or twelve months back has given way to a tamer movement. . . ." Indeed, *Business Week* (Jan. 28, 1955) finds that the theme of the President's *Economic Report* is "How To Nurse a Slackening Boom."

The economic evaluation by the trade-union movement was very much on the cautious side. At its February meeting in Miami, the AFL-CIO Executive Council stated: "It is expected that 1956 will be a year of economic adjustments, with some ups and downs. . . . For the year as a whole, the volume of total production of goods and services may be somewhat greater than in 1955, but probably not great enough to provide sufficient job opportunities for entrants into the labor force and those who may be displaced by improving technology."

Similar guarded estimates have come from the more sober business economists and analysts.

It is clearly in order for the whole labor-progressive movement to take

\* Author's Note: This article is based upon a series of collective discussions.

another look at the economic situation, to make its own estimate and to bring up to date its program of economic demands, especially in terms of the 1956 Congressional session and the Presidential elections this fall. What follows here is an effort to make an economic assessment—a necessary preliminary to a people's economic program.

## 1. HOW PROSPEROUS WAS THE 1955 BOOM?

### *Production*

At the end of 1955, economic activity in the United States was at a high point, following the 1953-54 decline. The following statistics show the trend of economic activity, by quarters:

Economic Indicators, Seasonally Adjusted  
Quarterly, 1953-55

| Quarter  | Industrial<br>Production<br>1947-49 = 100 | Gross National<br>Product<br>Billions of Dollars<br>Annual Rate |
|----------|---|---|
| 1953 — I | 134                                       | 362   |
| II       | 136                                       | 369   |
| III      | 135                                       | 367   |
| IV       | 129                                       | 360   |
| 1954 — I | 124                                       | 358   |
| II       | 124                                       | 358   |
| III      | 123                                       | 359   |
| IV       | 128                                       | 367   |
| 1955 — I | 133                                       | 375   |
| II       | 138                                       | 385   |
| III      | 140                                       | 392   |
| IV       | 144                                       | 397   |

Sources: Industrial production, Federal Reserve Board  
Gross national product, Commerce Department

The drop in production which began in the summer of 1953 continued for almost a year. Gross national product fell 3%, the more volatile industrial production index

10%. During most of 1954 production maintained a level pace. A new increase began during the final quarter of 1954, and continued throughout 1955, reaching a point

at the year-end about 6% above the 1953 peak.

The 1953-54 slump was a limited downturn of production, the third since the end of World War II. (Of course, such declines, while minor in the broad movement of the cycle, cause intense suffering to millions of workers thrown out of work, to farmers forced to vacate their homesteads, etc.)

The 1955 boom went far beyond the prophecies of most forecasters. At that, it is hardly deserving of the extravagant descriptions which

abound in the press and over the airwaves. The gain of 6% in the two and one-half years since the spring of 1953, meant an average increase of 2½% per year, or less than 1% per year per capita, considering the growth of the population.

#### THE PROFIT PICTURE

The most spectacular aspect of the 1955 boom was undoubtedly the mountainous profits reaped by the capitalist class. Corporation profits during the past three years are shown in the following table:

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#### CORPORATION PROFITS, 1953-1955

(billions)

| Year     | Profits<br>before taxes | Profits<br>after taxes | Depreciation | Profits<br>after tax<br>plus dep. |
|----------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1952     | \$38.2                  | \$17.0                 | \$11.7       | \$28.7                            |
| 1954     | 34.0                    | 17.0                   | 13.1         | 30.1                              |
| 1955 (p) | 43.2                    | 21.6                   | 14.5         | 36.1                              |

p — preliminary

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

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These figures show that in 1955 profits jumped to record levels. When depreciation allowances are added to profits (a necessary calculation in order to take into account the huge quantities of hidden profit masked as depreciation), the profit picture is staggering. While production between 1953 and 1955 in-

creased only 6%, profits after-taxes rose 27%.

#### LABOR AND THE BOOM

While Big Business proclaims its unprecedented Eisenhower "prosperity," this "prosperity" has by no means created a happy situation for

the workers, the farmers and the masses of people.

The dominant industrial pattern of the past two years was speed-up. Automation, time study plans, modified wage systems, "engineering changes"—all these were used to cut labor costs and sweat additional surplus value out of workers. The annual increase in manufacturing labor productivity, which averaged 3.9% between 1947 and 1953, exceeded 5% in 1954 and 1955. Manufacturing production in 1955 was 40% above that of 1947, but the number of man-hours put in by production workers increased only 2%. An increase of 4% in manufacturing production between 1953 and 1955 was accompanied by a decline of over 5% in man-hours of employment.

In mining, man-hours of employment fell 10% between 1953 and 1955. Even in construction, where the 1955 boom was outstanding, 1955 man-hours of employment fell 10%

below 1952, the peak year.

All these are average figures. Particularly dramatic were the increases in productivity achieved by the giant monopolies able to invest hundreds of millions and billions in automatic equipment.

*Each General Motors worker in 1955 produced 8.37 cars and trucks, as compared with 6.59 in 1954.* (This makes no allowance for the many other items produced by GM workers.) Speed-up and automation gave GM an extra 1.78 cars, plus other items—a total of \$4,600 extra output per worker in the year 1955.

The sharp increases in productivity have meant record profits to the monopoly employers. To labor, they have meant that the boom has not eliminated unemployment, but has left it appreciably higher than in 1953.

The following table shows the trend of unemployment, as reported in government statistics (which are known for their understatements):

#### *Unemployment in Thousands*

|            | March | June  | November |
|------------|-------|-------|----------|
| 1952 ..... | 1,807 | 1,818 | 1,418    |
| 1953 ..... | 1,674 | 1,562 | 1,699    |
| 1954 ..... | 3,724 | 3,347 | 2,893    |
| 1955 ..... | 3,383 | 2,679 | 2,398    |

Source: Department of Commerce

By January, 1956, unemployment reached 2,885,000 bringing it to 77% of the peak level of 1954.

In addition, there is a considerable amount of disguised partial unemployment. Jobs in industry and

agriculture are fewer than in 1953. The fact that this did not result in increased general unemployment in 1955 is explained by the expanded employment in trade, service, finance-insurance-real estate, and government.

A notable feature of the unemployment picture is the persistence of depressed areas, with large and continuing unemployment. These include not only the chronic "sick industry" communities, such as textile and coal, but also an increasing number of other industrial centers that have been made the victims of the run-away shop and the development of automation.

Characteristically, the major weight

of unemployment has fallen on the backs of Negro workers, youth, women and other specially oppressed sectors of the population.

A general examination of the wage pattern during 1955 shows an upward movement as compared with 1954. Between October 1954 and October 1955 straight-time hourly earnings in manufacturing industries increased an average of 8 cents, or 4.5%. Since there was more overtime in certain industries, weekly earnings increased somewhat more than this. The following figures show the net spendable weekly earnings of a worker with three dependents, adjusted for changes in the cost of living.

Net Spendable Weekly Earnings  
Worker with Three Dependents  
1947-49 Dollars

| Year |         |
|------|---------|
| 1944 | \$58.59 |
| 1947 | 50.51   |
| 1953 | 58.20   |
| 1954 | 58.17   |
| 1955 | 61.50   |

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, 1955 preliminary

After increasing an average of a little better than a dollar a week each year between 1947 and 1953, real spendable earnings increased more than three dollars per week in 1955, and for the first time surpassed the World War II level.

Nevertheless, wages continued to lag far behind the cost of living. Weekly wages in manufacturing at

the end of 1955 averaged \$79.52, or \$4,135 a year (provided there was steady work throughout the year). But the Heller Budget for a wage-earner's family of four called for \$5,465 a year, or \$105.11 a week. The deficit for a one-worker family trying to live on this minimum Heller Budget standard would thus be \$25.29 a week. This helps to explain

why so many workers' families *have to have more than one wage earner*. It also explains the pressure on workers to work overtime.

Moreover, the average wage figures listed above blanket a wide spread in the wage levels of the workers. Large numbers were in the chiefly unorganized and lower-paid categories (unskilled, Southern workers generally, etc.) and received well below the average. For example, the Southern average wage for factory workers is \$1.36 an hour—31 cents below the Northeast average, 44 cents below that of the Middle West, and 58 cents below the Far West.

Further, as noted earlier, the trend of employment was away from industry and into trade and service occupations, where workers are not as well organized and generally paid less for longer hours of work. Hence the trend toward trade and service occupations represents a lowering of standards of employment and earnings. At the same time it reveals a narrowing base of productive workers in the economy, which in turn makes for greater economic instability.

The foregoing facts serve to explain why the workers of our country, in the hey-day of this "boom," have nevertheless been compelled to wage bitter strikes. The central demands of these struggles also reflect the economic factors described above.

The Westinghouse strike (still going on as this is written) is not only historic for its duration and the unbroken determination of the workers, but also for the fact that its focus is the fight against the company's attempt to institute speed-up, eliminate jobs and cut wages through new time-study procedures.

During 1955, the auto-workers, in sharply-contested negotiations, wrested from the giant corporations supplementary unemployment benefits, as well as pension improvements. Immediately after the contract signing there followed a sweeping wave of plant strikes in which the workers gave expression to their feeling that their demands for curbing speed-up had to be included.

The question of definitely shortening the hours of labor is not only arousing a wide discussion in the labor movement; it has already become, in some instances, a direct demand in negotiations.

Taking all this into account, it is clear that while unemployment fell somewhat and average wages increased, 1955 was not a "boom year" for the workers. In addition to their grievances against speed-up, high living costs, taxes and intolerable working conditions, throughout the boom they have had a deep uneasiness about the stability of the economy. Fear of depression has permeated the mood of the workers and has influenced their struggles.



## THE FARM CRISIS

An outstanding contradictory feature of the 1955 boom was the continuing and deepening farm crisis. The boom did not touch the agricultural sector of the economy at all. On the contrary, the farm crisis has deepened during the period of the upturn.

Why has the agricultural crisis been so severe and persistent? Why has the general upward movement of the economy in the past few years not been able to pull agriculture with it, but on the contrary has only deepened the farm crisis?

While there has been a general industrial boom, domestic consumption of farm products increases at a snail's pace. Millions of low-income families are still unable to afford adequate diets. Meanwhile, the foreign markets for U.S. agriculture are slashed by the militarization of official foreign trade policy, by the general shrinkage of the capitalist world market and the growing competition in it, and by the Government's policy of preventing development of trade with the socialist world.

Agriculture, the most scattered of domestic industries, has been a special prey for the huge financial, industrial and processing monopolies. As these monopolies have extended their domination over the economy as a whole, they have applied the price "scissors" against the farmers at a catastrophic rate. While farm

product prices have fallen as a result of increased productivity and intensified competition, prices of the farmers' means of production have risen. At the same time the prices paid by the ultimate consumer for food and other agricultural products have been gradually rising.

Within agriculture, concentration has also developed at a more rapid rate than ever before. Large capitalist farms, often run as sidelines by wealthy industrialists, highly mechanized, have increased productivity and flooded the markets with products turned out at low cost. These few farms flourish even with reduced prices, at the expense of the overwhelming majority of working farmers. Through all sorts of devices, the rich farmers make a mockery of the various "crop restriction" schemes, and add to the truly enormous surplus yearly at handsome profits to themselves.

Furthermore, the effect of government farm programs throughout the post-war period, and especially during the Eisenhower Administration, has been to aggravate the farm crisis. While the government has bought up agricultural surpluses and thereby kept the bottom from falling out of the market for a number of farm commodities, it has at the same time contributed greatly to the growth of large-scale, highly capitalized farms. The pattern of government farm loans is deliberately designed to give aid to the big rather than the small farmers, thus

providing a major source of capital for the farm giants in the battle against their small competitors. The current Eisenhower-Benson program of curtailing production, lowering parity ratios, and seeking to drive more farm families off the land, only serves to sharpen the farm crisis.

All these elements have combined to depress farmers' prices received and net income. Between 1951 and January 1956 the index of prices received by farmers fell from 302 to 226, while the farm parity index fell from 107 to 80. Each year has been a year of decline, and in the boom year 1955 the decline was even more severe than in 1954.

A by-product of the crisis in agriculture is the forcing of hundreds of thousands of people out of farming each year, especially Negro tenants and sharecroppers on the Southern plantations. This phenomenon contributes to the unemployment problem, and could be a serious factor when a general economic downturn develops. In addition, it is cutting the market for farm equipment and other commodities bought by farmers, and thus weakening the industrial economy as well.

#### THE BOOM AND THE MIDDLE CLASS

Small business and the middle classes shared little if at all in the prosperity.

The U.S. Senate Select Committee on Small Business, in its sixth an-

nual report in January, 1956, after surveying data on manufacturing for the first half of 1955, noted: ". . . while the prosperity of 1955 brought a profit rate of 14.4 per cent to the biggest corporations, the smallest group reported earnings in the first six months of 4.4 per cent."

It concludes its examination of the relative position of big and small business with these words:

To your committee there is an ominous significance in an economic atmosphere which makes it possible for the nation's mammoth corporations to reap record profits while the general run of small enterprises are worse off than they were three years ago. . . . If small manufacturers are lagging so far behind the prosperity parade of an expanding market, what position will they find themselves in should there occur a marked contraction of economic activity in the future?

The same Senate Committee, quoting Dun and Bradstreet figures on the rate of business failures in 1954—"the highest rate in the past 12 years"—indicated that the failure rate would be at least as high in 1955. It noted that "the average liability of the firms failing in the first 7 months of 1955 was about \$40,000, (and) leaves little doubt that the majority, if not all of the bankrupt companies, were small business."

As for the professional groups, the plight of the nation's teachers reached the level of a national scandal. Some other professionals, such

as doctors and engineers, fared a little better. Such categories as government workers, pensioners, and others on fixed incomes received little relief. In general, it can be said of the middle strata that the much-vaunted "prosperity" passed them by.

## II. THE SHAKY FOUNDATIONS OF THE BOOM

"National security" spending holds at above \$40 billion per year. This is three times the pre-Korean level, and thirty times the pre-World War II level. This truly enormous expenditure, which exceeds the entire national income of several major European countries, is, of course, the most dire source of national insecurity. But its economic effect is considerable, especially since military spending provides the monopolists with assured markets and a very high rate of profit.

The budget submitted by the Eisenhower Administration to the present session of Congress shows that the government's perspective is not only the continuance of staggering sums for military purposes, but an increase. Nearly a billion dollars more for military outlays is called for, while expenditures for "civil benefits" come to less than 13 per cent of the total budget.

As long as the administration continues its "positions of strength" foreign policy, it demands the enormous taxation needed to maintain

the arms burden. Military spending remains the keystone of the Administration's Keynesian theory of "managed economy," through which it purports to make the system proof against depression. However, once the faltering economic structure has been propped up by arms spending, the military sector tends to become a permanent feature of the economy. But of all the economic devices at the disposal of the capitalist class, military spending most sharply aggravates the contradictions of the system. Far from being a prop to the economy in a long-range sense, it is bound to increase the factors leading to crisis—not to speak of the burdens it imposes on the people and the dangers of war adventurism that it opens up.

In addition to making military spending and arms production a "built-in" feature of our economy, the Administration has intervened in the economy to maintain the high rate of profit of Big Business in a number of other ways. Tax concessions, rapid depreciation write-offs, and various similar devices have been developed. It is estimated that the U.S. Treasury alone loses \$8 billion a year through tax loopholes for the rich. Give-aways of natural resources, monetary and credit manipulation—these have been raised to new levels by the Cadillac Cabinet.

The Administration does have some possibilities for affecting the

economy to a certain degree through non-military means, which it may call into play: substantial revision of its position on tax cuts; substantial alteration of its position on foreign aid and trade, especially, East-West trade; as well as revival of the massive road-building plan, additional credit measures, etc. But these are as yet possibilities—not actual policies.

#### AUTOS, HOUSING AND CREDIT

In addition to the continuing high level of arms spending, autos and housing construction played a key role in sparking the 1955 boom. The degree of the expansion of these two industries was made possible only by an unprecedented extension of credit.

In 1955 the auto industry produced just under 8 million cars, a spectacular record. People spent 30 per cent more money on new cars than in either 1954 or 1953. With the automobile industry and allied industries employing well over a million people and using almost one-fourth of the country's steel as well as huge quantities of other materials, this had much to do with the broad increase in industrial activity.

As the year drew to a close, however, the industry left in the hands of its dealers a legacy of 800,000 unsold new cars. Production in the early months of 1956 dropped markedly. Leaders in the industry, in-

cluding Curtice of General Motors and Romney of American Motors, as well as business and labor-economists, have been predicting a 10 to 15% decline in production in 1956. At the end of February, GM production was down 7%, Ford 20%, and Chrysler 30%. This not only means significant layoffs in auto (70,000 by March 1st), but also has a widespread effect, first and foremost, on the steel industry, as well as on related branches of production.

The decline in auto sales obviously in store for 1956 reflects the fact that a saturation point in the auto market has been reached, largely because 1955 oversales "borrowed" from the 1956 market. The only answer the leaders of the industry have been able to find is to seek better sales techniques and longer-credit terms. But sales techniques cannot put money into the pockets of customers. And credit terms clearly cannot go much beyond their present limits—at a certain point it becomes more economical to give up the old car than to continue the payments.

Housing construction volume jumped from \$11.9 billion in 1953 to \$13.5 billion in 1954 and to \$16.6 billion in 1955—another powerful stimulus to general industrial activity. Detailed examination, however, reveals some serious weaknesses.

First, new housing starts declined in 1955, from an annual rate of 1½ million in January to less than 1.2 million in December. This decline

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was not immediately felt because work on houses continues over a long period of time. Thus, "work put in place" reached its peak rate of \$17.2 billion a year in midsummer. At the end of the year it had fallen to a \$15.9 billion rate.

Second, the pattern of housing construction shows that private non-farm construction declined most, while the over-all figures were kept high by a considerable increase in commercial construction and modernizing of office buildings, retail stores and supermarkets, etc. (mostly in suburban areas). The decline in residential construction is most significant, since this type of construction has the most powerful effect on the general economy, bringing in its wake commercial construction, a market for household hard goods, etc.

The housing boom of the past few years was greatly assisted by the marked easing of government credit. Mortgage loan repayments were lengthened to 30 years, and down payments were eliminated in certain cases. But the basis for the housing boom lay in the rapid growth of population and family formations in the post-war years, coming on the heels of a long period (the 30's and the war years) when housing construction was relatively at a standstill.

These housing boom factors are now weakening and indicate that a limit is being reached, not only in terms of credit potentials, but also

as regards "effective demand." This is reflected in the declining rate of residential construction.

The most significant critical feature of the 1955 boom was the over-extension of credit. Today, gross debts, government and private, are approaching \$750 billion, and are rising more rapidly than the national income. Particularly dangerous is the rise in consumer debts for home mortgages and installment purchases.

During the years 1950-54 home mortgage debt and installment debt increased about \$10 billion per year. But in 1955 those debts increased by \$18-19 billion, or almost twice as rapidly.

Up to 1953, while consumer debts were rising, the dollar increase in "consumer disposable" income (income after taxes) was increasing by larger amounts. But in 1954 and again in 1955 the increase in consumer debts was \$4.5 billion more than the increase in consumer disposable income. In terms of percentage, consumer income increased a little over 6% from 1954 to 1955, while consumer credit increased about 14%. In other words, despite nominal increases in income, tens of millions of workers are affected by declines in available cash income, after making payments on debts. The Federal Reserve Board pointed out that consumers are using a record 11.8 cents out of every take-home dollar to pay installment debts, and are going into fresh debt to the

tune of 14.1 cents per dollar of take-home pay. This is in addition to the mounting payments on mortgage debts.

Obviously this borrowing from Peter to pay Paul cannot go on forever. The effect of accelerated credit expansion is temporarily to stimulate profitable investment and expand productive capacity by mortgaging future wages of the working people. But this can continue only when the income of the workers is rising at a rate faster than the increase of their debts. When this state of affairs ends (as appears to be the case at the present time) then credit will have to be drastically curtailed.

Above all, credit expansion threatens a crisis in payments, stemming from the liability of working people to pay installments when due. This could have profound interacting effects on the movement of the economy as a whole. One of the significant features of earlier post-war declines (1948-49 and 1953-54) was that they were not accompanied by payments or financial crises. This is to be explained, in part, by the fact that while debts were rising, this rise was not out of proportion to the growth of consumer disposable income. As indicated, the situation is different today. A decline in production and employment could touch off a severe payments crisis, with a chain reaction on the economy as a whole. This is one of the reasons why more and more business

leaders and economists are "viewing with alarm" the consumer debt, which has now passed the \$32 billion mark. Typical of their reaction is the following account of the views of credit men when polled by the *New York Times* (Jan. 3, 1956):

They point out that, with retail credit stretched as it is, the companies in the wholesale and manufacturing fields supplying these goods to retailers also are extended . . . substantial reductions in sales at the consumer level could touch off chain reactions all down the line. The reserves in many small businesses, it was stressed, cannot withstand extended periods of poor business.

The big bankers and their agencies in Government are thus confronted with a major dilemma. While they are alarmed at the over-expansion of credit, their knowledge of the actual instability of the economic situation today leads them to fear that any restraint of credit may lead to collapse of the boom. Thus, the Economic Report of the President calls for stand-by authority to control credit, but carefully refrains from recommending any action at the present time.

Along with the alarming growth of credit that characterized the 1955 boom was also an increase in speculation. The most obvious indication of mounting speculation was the upward movement of prices in Wall Street. This, as well as other forms of speculation (real estate, commodi-

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ties, etc.), reflected an excess supply of money capital confronted by relatively limited investment possibilities having a sound basis.

### PROFITS AND INVESTMENTS

As a consequence of speed-up, intensification of labor, unprecedented tax concessions and give-aways by the Eisenhower Administration, and the maintenance of monopoly prices, the capitalists attained record profits in 1955.

This rise in profits stimulated a sharp increase in the investment of capital. By the end of 1955 capital investment in new plant and equipment was at about \$31 billion, an all-time high.

The expansion of profits and capital investment is of course the foundation of capitalist booms. But it is at the same time an expression of the basic contradiction of the system, the contradiction between social production and private appropriation. The feverish increase in profits and their reinvestment in new plant intensifies the contradiction between the swiftly growing productive capacity and the very limited rise in the workers' consuming power. At a certain point the employers will no longer be able to realize their profits fully by sale at peak prices, owing to the limited market. At that point, the contradiction resolves itself by economic crisis, with all that that entails. Tax concessions, credit tricks, speed-up schemes—none of these can avoid the

ultimate reckoning. And should labor collaborate in these schemes, should labor not resist the efforts by big business to get still more concessions through Government—the more trifling will be the share of the majority of the population in the boom, and the more drastic the blow to them of the following crisis.

What is the outlook for capitalist investment now?

Private and government surveys forecast an increase of 22 per cent in business spending for plant and equipment during 1956. Of course, statements of business corporations concerning their investment plans do not represent firm plans, as in a socialist society. Comparisons by economists show that the actual investments of individual firms vary enormously from their announced "plans." These individual variations may or may not balance out, depending on broader economic developments. Thus, the sharp rise in capital spending effected during 1955 was not expected in the plans of the big corporations prior to that year. Similarly, under other conditions, "plans" for a sharp rise can be converted into the actuality of a decline.

Particularly publicized have been the expansion plans of General Motors and U.S. Steel. Aside from the fact that the manner of their announcement shows an unconcealed political purpose of making propaganda for the Eisenhower Administration, what is to be expected from these plans? General Motors may

well decide to take advantage of a declining market for autos to further rationalize and automatize its plants, and expand its capacity to meet competition. But such expansion is highly speculative and could be readily discontinued if and when the situation takes a turn for the worse. Steel capacity expansion likewise rests on considerations of speculation and competition, as well, perhaps, of stock-piling in anticipation of the coming union negotiations and the possibility of a strike.

How assured are the general "plans" for 1956? Already these plans have been converted, to a considerable degree, into construction contracts and machinery orders. New orders for machinery, which averaged \$3.1 billion monthly in 1953 and \$2.7 billion monthly in 1954, rose to \$4 billion monthly in the late months of 1955. Heavy engineering construction contracts showed a similar sharp rise.

Certainly this guarantees a high level of activity in the capital goods industries for a period. However, in the present situation, the period could be comparatively short. Although orders have expanded rapidly, heavy industry production capacity has already over-expanded so much that the new surge of orders cannot provide a basis for further expansion. The capital goods orders of the Korean War period, and even of the reconversion boom after World War II, created a huge backlog, which took about two years to work

off. In 1955 the backlog of unfilled orders rose but slowly. At the year-end it was still only about two-thirds of the level existing at the end of 1952. The capital goods backlog as a whole, and for the machinery industries in particular, remained at under four months of sales, about the same as a year earlier.

Of course, these averages conceal a considerable volume of long-period-of production items. But the general picture is that any significant decline in new orders will be followed within a few months by a decline in production in the capital goods industries. Cutbacks in automobiles and other durable consumer goods industries could easily have such a result.

#### U.S. AND WORLD ECONOMY

Another factor that contributed to the 1955 boom was the much more impressive boom in most of the capitalist countries of Western Europe, especially West Germany. The boom in these countries, for the first time able to develop more or less normally since the end of World War II and the Korean War, had a positive effect on the United States economy. Non-military exports increased 3% in 1954, and another 9-10% in 1955. Almost all of the increase was in exports to Western Europe.

Ironically, the United States capitalists indirectly benefited from the expanded trade between Western Europe and the socialist countries,



which increased the ability of West European countries to finance purchases here, and increased their need for additional imports.

Even the chronically sick coal industry received a shot in the arm, supplying millions of tons for the steel mills of the Ruhr and other European areas.

Now the situation appears to be changing. Although during the first post-war decade the capitalist countries of Europe were wracked by acute financial and political crises, conditions were far from ready for a typical capitalist crisis of overproduction. This condition helped to moderate the declines in the economy of the United States, providing expanding markets for goods and outlets for capital investment while European capitalist economy was recovering and developing. Today, however, it has recovered and the U.S. faces expanding competition from Western Europe.

### III. PERSPECTIVES AND PROGRAM

The recovery and boom of 1955 was a continuation of the general post-war economic boom in the U.S., based on the rebuilding of war-devastated Europe, on the dominant position of the U.S. in the world capitalist market, and on the replenishment of shortages inherited from World War II, as well as the arms economy built up for the Korean War and as part of war preparations for the future. A central

feature of the post-war economy was its extreme instability, as evidenced by the three downturns since the end of the war.

The general factors making for the post-war boom are now approaching exhaustion and the factors making for economic crisis are maturing. Neither an arms economy nor any other form of operation by government or Big Business can eliminate the contradictions of the capitalist system which make crises inevitable.

This does not mean that any particular downturn automatically marks the onset of the crisis phase of the cycle. (The 1953-54 downturn was succeeded by the 1955 boom.)

The analysis outlined in this article indicates that 1956 will probably witness a downturn in production. The main civilian elements that contributed to the 1955 boom—autos, housing, credit expansion, etc.—appear to have lost their viable force. The agricultural crisis continues to deepen. The Administration will try of course to limit any decline, through measures discussed earlier in this article.

### CONCLUSION

As 1956 develops, labor and the people need to intensify their struggles on the economic front. With a tightening economic situation, employers are determined to make the workers carry the full load of the capitalist system's economic difficulties. They are resisting even the most

modest wage demands and are mounting an open-shop counter-offensive. All this underlines the importance of sharply stepping up the wage fights, the organizing drives, and the legislative and political struggles of the newly merged AFL-CIO and all other people's organizations.

What economic policies are being offered to the American people by the Eisenhower Administration? The central principle enunciated in the President's *Economic Report* is that "lasting prosperity of the Nation depends far more on what individuals do for themselves than on what the Federal Government does or can do for them." The policies flowing from this principle, as experience shows, add up to the following:

1. Continuance and expansion of military spending.
2. Giving all possible aid to Big Business through tax concessions, giveaways, and other forms of special interest treatment.
3. Denying any aid or relief to farmers and other "less flourishing" sectors of the population.
4. Keeping welfare spending to a minimum.

The position of Congressional leaders of the Democratic Party was expressed most recently (March 1, 1956) in their "Supplemental Views on the Report of the Joint Committee on the Economic Report," chaired by Sen. Paul Douglas. This statement of views, while agreeing

with much of the position of the Eisenhower Administration, called for: 1) greater attention to the need of family-sized farms and more widespread distribution of farm surpluses at home and abroad; 2) aid to small business through anti-trust actions, tax revision, elimination of price discrimination, and more equitable allocation of defense contracts; 3) a "thorough review" of the administration's natural resources policies; 4) greater aid to distressed areas; 5) no tax reduction unless "required to assure full use of our productive capacity and full employment"; 6) "greater equity in our tax laws"; 7) vigorous use of credit to bolster the faltering auto and housing booms; 8) expansion of foreign trade; 9) no consumer credit controls now, but study leading to possible controls later.

This position, while containing some features of value to the people is obviously far from adequate. A somewhat more advanced approach has been put forward by the three leading Democratic presidential aspirants in their campaign speeches.

The AFL-CIO has put forward a more extensive economic program. At its most recent meeting (February 13, 1956) the Executive Council put forward the following proposals "to serve the advance of human welfare, as well as to sustain full employment": 1) substantial wage increases; 2) reduction of the tax burden on low-

and-middle income families; 3) federal aid to distressed areas; 4) a \$1.25 minimum wage; 5) federal aid to education and an expanded school building program; 6) an extensive road-building and hospital construction program; 7) a federal housing program to guarantee 2,000,000 new housing units; 8) relaxation of the Administration's "hard money" and "tight-credit" policies; 9) a program to raise farm family incomes and encourage consumption of farm products.

This program has the outstanding virtue that it emphasizes a number of the immediate economic needs of the works and the people. An effective campaign for these demands is a prime necessity of the entire labor and people's movement.

However, there are many important shortcomings in the AFL-CIO economic approach. Among them are: 1) the failure to call for substantial cuts in the arms budget, the funds so saved to be used for tax cuts and for expanding social welfare; 2) the absence of even the elements of any program to curb the monopolies; 3) the absence of any plans to eliminate obstacles to the expansion of foreign trade—especially East-West trade; 4) the absence in the *economic* program of any proposals to fulfill the special needs of labor's allies—especially the Negro people—as well as the youth, small business, etc.

It is in order for the advanced labor-progressive movement to again

put forward an economic program, more complete and up-to-date than its previous ones. This program should have the aim of defending and improving the living conditions of the American workers, the Negro people, and the mass of farmers and other middle class strata. It should advance measures to assure the well-being of the people in a peace-time economy and to protect them against the effects of threatening economic crisis. It should, of course, incorporate the main features of labor's present economic program and thus base itself on demands that have the widest support among the people, and particularly the organized labor movement. But it should couple these demands with more advanced proposals in the fields of struggle against the monopolies; for foreign aid with no strings attached; against trade barriers and arms spending and other features of our economy which actually hinder the winning of the workers' immediate demands. It should assume the task of influencing Congress and the Eisenhower Administration to make concessions to the people's needs and interests *now*, as well as to influencing the course of the election campaign.

The time for advancing such a program is propitious—with elections on the horizon, with new strength in a merged labor movement, and with a new spirit of struggle alive among the American people.

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