

Is the United States in the Early Stages of Fascism?

By William Z. Foster

DURING RECENT YEARS, particularly in the period of the "cold war", the United States has been increasingly the scene of ultra-reactionary legislation and governmental policies. Many of these measures are undoubtedly of a fascist character and they have definitely raised the question of the danger of fascism in this country. Not only has the Communist Party repeatedly signalized the growth of this fascist peril, but so also, in varying degrees, have many other groups and individuals. This is true on the part of the A. F. of L., C. I. O., and the independent unions, and even such conservatives as Ex-President Truman and Senators Lehman and Flanders have characterized McCarthyism as fascism. So have the Catholic Bishop Sheil and many Protestant clergymen. In foreign lands also, the growth of the fascist danger in the United States has long since become a matter of widespread comment in the Communist, trade-union, and Liberal press.

The passage in August of the infamous Communist Control Act, which formally outlaws the Communist Party and places the trade unions

under the surveillance of the pro-fascist Subversive Activities Control Board, has enormously increased the fear, here and abroad, of the growth of fascism in the United States. In fact, many are saying that the enactment of this law proves that this country has now passed into the early stages of fascism. This conclusion, which has already considerably influenced the policies of some independent progressive trade unions, has also been expressed among Communists, by inferences that the situation created by the new law invalidates the recently adopted *Program* of the Communist Party.

No less shocking than the anti-Communist Law itself was the atmosphere of intimidation in which Congress adopted this infamous legislation. Under the lash of the Red-baiters—Senators Humphrey, Morse, and others—the members of both Houses voted for the law like frightened sheep. Actually, when it passed the Senate and House the members of these bodies were not yet in possession of the full text of the bill they were acting upon. Never in the whole history of Congress was there such a disgraceful scene.

This general situation makes it imperative on the part of our Party to state clearly just what is the precise meaning and danger of the fascist trends after the passage of the Communist Control Act. The Party must particularly answer the specific question as to whether or not these trends have now brought about such a qualitative weakening of bourgeois democracy in this country that we can be said actually to be in the beginnings of fascism. We have learned from the disastrous experiences of the labor movement in other lands that nothing is more hazardous than to mis-evaluate the fascist danger. If this danger is overestimated it can lead to the abandonment, as hopeless, of practical means of struggle and to leftist moods of "let us go down with our flag flying", and if the danger is under-estimated, this can cause a Rightist failure to arouse the workers and their allies to fight a political menace which, if neglected, can become catastrophic for them.

Germany in 1930, living under the reactionary Bruening Government, was rapidly moving toward fascism. On December 2, of that year, in estimating the situation, *Rote Fahne*, official organ of the German Communist Party, declared that, "We are now living in a fascist republic. The Bruening Cabinet has become a fascist dictatorship." The Communist International, however, promptly and correctly (on December 30) disputed this analysis, on the ground that it was premature and that consequently the workers would be dis-

armed for further struggle by believing that fascism was not as terrible as it had been painted by the Communists. In the United States, however, at this moment, the main danger is that the masses of the workers will not understand the grave peril involved in the present strong fascist trends, and thereby will be hindered from taking sufficiently united and vigorous steps to combat them.

FASCIST ELEMENTS IN THE REACTIONARY OFFENSIVE

The mass of reactionary legislation passed recently in the United States by Congress and by the various state legislatures, under both the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations, is not merely reactionary in the traditional sense. There is also a new and sinister element in it, of a definitely fascist character. Among the major examples of this are: the Smith Act, under which a hundred and forty Communists, here, in Hawaii, and in Puerto Rico, have been arrested, framed-up, and jailed upon the lying pretext that they have taught the violent overthrow of the United States Government; the Taft-Hartley Act, which puts the trade unions under unprecedented controls, limits the right of the workers to strike, restores the use of the court injunction in labor disputes, and forces all labor officials to take oaths that they are not Communists; the McCarran Acts, which, together with grave attacks upon the rights of foreign-born workers, require the Communist Party and other progres-

sive organizations to register with the government as foreign agents, and which have set up a whole number of concentration camps for use in an "emergency"; and now there is the Communist Control Act which, besides formally outlawing the Communist Party, gives the ultra-reactionary Subversive Activities Control Board the arbitrary power to outlaw or to license such trade unions as it sees fit to condemn or to endorse.

All this anti-Communist, anti-trade-union legislation stinks of fascism. So also does the whole mess of other ultra-reactionary laws and policies, adopted upon a national, state, and city scale, including the numerous loyalty tests in the government civilian services, in the armed forces, in the school system, in the industries, in the cultural field, etc. Capitalist justice has especially been further distorted by the growth of the monstrous informer system in the courts. On top of all this, the country is being plagued and be-devilled nationally and locally by endless thought-control committees and investigators—led by Velde, Jenner, and the vast number of smaller-fry reactionaries in the various states and cities. This system reaches its worst expression in the monstrous activities of Senator McCarthy, the grand chief inquisitor. Never were the American people even remotely so ideologically brow-beaten and terrorized as they are by this all-pervasive, fascist-inspired campaign of intimidation.

The first aim of the most extreme

reactionaries is to cripple or destroy the Communist Party, a goal which is always the prime purpose of fascists. This is because they know that our Party, although small, speaks with a strong and clear voice; that it is, in fact, the vanguard of the proletariat. In their increasingly critical economic and political situation at home and abroad, the ruling circles are afraid of its potential mass leadership. Such an anti-Communist attack is always an indispensable part of every fascist offensive. The assault upon the Party, as we know so well, has resulted not only in the arrest of over a hundred of our best leaders and the formal outlawing of the Party, but also in denying to individual Communists many of the most elementary Constitutional rights, including those of free speech and assembly, of fair jury trials, of working in industry and in government posts, of serving in the armed forces, of acting as trade-union officials, of teaching in schools, of immunity from being forced to testify against themselves, of the right to travel etc., etc.

The drive of reaction, with its strong fascist content, is especially being directed against organized labor. For the trade unions, with their 16,000,000 members, are always a great potential menace to monopoly capital and its plans of war and intensified exploitation. The attacks upon the Communist Party and upon popular liberties generally in the draconian anti-Communist laws are, of course, at the same time at-

attacks upon the trade unions, but there are also direct assaults upon the latter. The general purposes of the Taft-Hartley Act and of the Butler bill provisions in the Communist Control Act (not to mention the innumerable dangerous anti-trade-union laws in the various states and cities) are to bring organized labor more and more under the control of the monopolist dominated government, to permit government bureaucratic intervention increasingly in the internal life of the unions, to hedge the workers about with crippling restrictions of their right to strike, and generally to intimidate the unions and to undermine their fighting initiative and power.

That this fascist-reeking legislation is a serious threat to the unions, even the most conservative and complacent labor bureaucrats have had to acknowledge. The direct attack upon the unions has not (at least, not yet) assumed the violent, head-on character that it does with regard to the Communist Party, with an obvious determination to break up the unions, in the Hitler manner. This is partly because of the capitalists' fear of arousing the working class to action and especially because of the necessity for Big Business, in its basic need of the support of the labor bureaucracy for its aggressive foreign policy, to restrain somewhat, at least temporarily, its violent anti-union tendencies. Monopoly capital needs the misleaders of labor to poison the workers in this country with imperialist propaganda; it needs them as

its ambassadors abroad to confuse and cripple the workers' resistance to the aggressive plans of American imperialism.

The Negro people, always a major target in every offensive of reaction, are also not being overlooked this time. The developing fascist trends are especially dangerous to them. As the Communist Party *Program* points out, "The growing menace of McCarthyism confronts the Negro people with a new and grave danger. The drive towards fascism and war threatens to block further progress towards economic, political, and social equality and imperils the very existence of the limited gains thus far attained." This danger is concretized in the present gross discrimination against Negroes in the widespread layoffs taking place in industry, in the recurring hooligan-organized clashes over the housing of Negro families, in the widespread police brutality against Negroes, and especially the reactionary resistance now being arrogantly exhibited in the South by the Ku Klux Klan, and its brother organization, the so-called National Association for the Advancement of White People, against the application of the Supreme Court's recent decision condemning racial segregation in the schools. Also the working farmers whose price-support system, which was won after long and hard struggle, is now being undermined; and the foreign-born are being brutally stripped of American citizenship rights and deported as never before.

Another special target of the reactionaries, particularly of the fascist-minded congressional and state investigating committees, are the liberal intellectuals, especially those who in any way have ventured to criticize the war policies of American imperialism. This anti-intellectual drive is taking place among the Hollywood people, among the scientists, in the schools, on the radio and television, in the press, in art and literature, in the pulpit, etc. The pro-fascists are trying to stultify and silence the whole body of intellectuals who dare in any shape or form to speak up in favor of peace and democracy, and in so doing they have developed a reign of terrorism without parallel in American history.

A further distinctly fascist element in all these reactionary developments is that they are being inflicted upon the American people to the accompaniment of a wild campaign of intense warmongering and anti-Communist hysteria. Hitler and Mussolini never made a more intense Soviet-hating, Red-baiting drive than that presently going on in the United States. These fascist dictators, in their day, declared that they were acting to save their countries from being engulfed by the Communists within their nations. The American reactionaries can hardly say this plausibly, but they accomplish the same end by pouring out lies to the effect that the Communist-led nations are about to overrun the world in a great military offensive.

In addition to all the above, two

more pro-fascist developments of deep significance are, a) the loading up of the Eisenhower Government executive with direct representatives of Wall Street big capital, who come from the very source of the fascist infection in the United States, and b) the increased role of the military big brass in shaping government policies. The Pentagon, whose thinking is dominated by such ultra-reactionary elements as MacArthur, Ridgway, Radford, Clark, etc., represents one of the most dangerous aspects of the fascist menace in this country.

IS THERE FASCISM NOW IN THE UNITED STATES?

These ultra-reactionary and fascist developments emanate from Wall Street, and they are part and parcel of the drive of American monopoly capital for fascism and war, with maximum profits garnered along the way. Their basic aim is to so demobilize the working class and the broad masses ideologically and organizationally as to render them powerless to resist successfully the world conquest war drive of American Big Business. The fundamental similarity of all this pro-fascist offensive to Hitlerism is obvious.

In pointing out this fascist danger, the *Program* of the Communist Party thus correctly analyzes the objectives of McCarthyism, the most virulent expression of American fascism:

McCarthyism aims to impose fascism

on this country, to take it over through a program of unbridled intimidation and demagoguery. . . . It is trying to browbeat into submission every independent point of view, every thinking person. It burns books and destroys art and culture. It aims to smash the labor movement, to further enslave the Negro people, to stir up racism and anti-Semitism, to gag and brutalize the young generation, to wipe out all vestiges of liberty. McCarthyism seeks to turn America into a land of yes-men and informers, a land where patriotism is replaced with jingoism, independent thought with conformity, courage with servility.

That these ultra-reactionary developments constitute the gravest peril to American democracy; that they are a growing process of fascization, is unmistakable. The progress of this process to date, over a several years' period, clearly poses the question as to whether or not this fascization has advanced to a point where it can and must be said that our present political situation constitutes fascism in its early stages.

In answering this question, let us first of all recall the basic definition of what fascism is, made by the 7th Congress of the Communist International in 1935. Dimitroff then declared "fascism in power is the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital". Clearly, we do not yet have in the United States a situation conforming to this basic Marxist-Leninist definition of fascism. The group most representative of "the most re-

actionary, the most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital" is typified in Congress by such as Senators Knowland, McCarthy, Humphrey, Mundt, Jenner, and Governors Byrnes and Talmadge and many others. They are very powerful, but they are not (yet) in decisive control of the government.

The American big bourgeoisie, including monopoly capital, is definitely oriented towards another world war as the means to establish their hoped-for world domination. This war orientation is the chief breeder of fascism in this country, and the monopolists have generally supported the major steps taken so far towards fascism; but not all of the capitalists are ready to draw from the war orientation the full implications of fascism, as expressed by McCarthyism. Their current internal economic and political quarrels, especially the election struggle and the mess over McCarthy, are proof of this lack of unity of monopoly capital for a final drive for an all-out fascist system. Let us remember in this connection that the demagogue President Truman, who spoke for a large section of monopoly capital, vetoed the Taft-Hartley and McCarran laws—though he never distinguished himself fighting against them.

The Eisenhower Administration is not a fascist government as such, but its general orientation is in a fascist direction. This is what the Party *Program* means when it says: "The present Republican Administration,

despite certain disagreements with McCarthy, is itself embracing McCarthyism." This trend is taking place not only in domestic but also in foreign policy. *Weg und Ziel* (Vienna, October, 1953) remarks: "In its war policies American imperialism depends ever more clearly upon the fascist powers in this world; on Adenauer and Syngman Rhee, on Franco and Chiang Kai-shek."

Undoubtedly the reactionaries and the more conscious fascists have been able to undermine seriously popular democratic liberties in this country, which were supposedly guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, and they have also weakened the general position of the labor movement. But this attack has not reached the stage of actual fascism, early phases or otherwise. Bourgeois democracy has been badly damaged, but not basically abolished. The workers and other democratic strata still possess the elementary rights to organize, to strike, to vote, and to discuss the various issues confronting the country.

At this point we have to distinguish between fascist trends and an actual fascist regime. That there is a strong fascist trend in the United States is incontestable. But, for the reasons already stated, this trend has not reached the stage of becoming what may be properly designated as a fascist political regime. Whether or not the current powerful fascist tendencies will culminate in actual fascism only the future can answer. This will depend fundamentally

upon whether or not, in the interim, the working class and its anti-fascist allies can mobilize their forces and defeat the forces of fascism.

In characterizing the political situation in the United States in connection with the passage recently of the vicious Communist Control Act, the Communist Party statement of August 27, in line with the Party Program, called the new law "fascist in character", and "a long step toward a police state." This is correct, but it does not amount to stating that the United States is already in the early stages of fascism.

In an article in the *World Trade-Union Movement* (June 20, 1951) the editor, S. Rostovsky, discussing whether or not there was fascism in the United States, summed up his general conclusion as follows: "In actual fact, what is happening in the U.S.A. is that there is a fairly rapid drive towards fascism which, if not halted, can lead to open fascist dictatorship, with all its consequences. This conclusion was correct at that time and it still remains essentially so, despite the sharp stepping up of the tempo of fascist development which has since taken place, including the offensive of McCarthyism and the passage of the sinister Communist Control Act.

The *New Times* of September 4, 1954, states that "the 83rd Congress, just dissolved, passed a number of terroristic, ultra-reactionary measures meant to suppress the labor movement." And, "the Smith, Taft-Hartley and the McCarran Acts rep-

resent an integral legislation, a police-state code that supersedes the Bill of Rights and the Constitution." *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy*, of August 20, 1954, speaks of an "orgy of fascist reaction in the United States." It characterizes the situation as "an intensification of fascist reaction", and it states that, "It is directly connected with the preparations of the U.S. imperialists for a new world war." Although sharply warning of the increased fascist danger in the United States, these writers do not state that a definite fascist regime already exists here.

Writing in *Kommunist*, Moscow (May, 1954), theoretical organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, V. Zorin declares that McCarthyism is "an American variety of fascism," that the McCarthyites are "direct tools of the most reactionary, most chauvinist, and most imperialist elements of American finance capital," that they are "following in the footsteps of the Hitlerites", and that "reaction is pushing McCarthyism to the forefront, hoping by means of fascist terror to intimidate the masses." All of which amounts to, not the existence of actual fascism in the United States, but the presence of a serious and rapidly growing fascist danger.

These analyses confirm the validity of the Communist Party *Program*, both in its analysis and its indicated line of anti-fascist struggle. The *Program* points out that, "The danger of McCarthyism, of American fas-

cism, is real, grave, and growing"; that it aims at "the gradual whittling away of our basic democratic liberties", and that it proposes to take over our country "through a program of unbridled intimidation and demagoguery." The passage of the fascist Communist Control Act is in line with this whole reactionary trend, as signalized. In our concluding section, we shall show that the main political tactics outlined in the *Program*, far from being outdated, are now more urgent than before.

IS THE FASCIST DANGER GROWING?

The vital question as to whether or not the danger of fascism in the United States is on the increase must be answered in the affirmative. There must be no illusions that the current setback to McCarthy means that the fascist danger is diminishing. The increase in the fascist danger is manifest from the many pro-fascist developments in the post-war period as indicated above. The general perspective, unless altered by vigorous counter-action of the workers, is for a further increase in the fascist danger. Although the monopolists still have many resources and much maneuvering ground, they are finding it ever more difficult to maintain their rule, their maximum profits, and their aggressive foreign policies under traditional forms of bourgeois democracy. With the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and the weakening of the general position of American imperialism, and these are

the sure prospects from now on, decisive sections of United States monopoly capital will tend more and more to adopt the methods and perspectives of fascism. It would be grave folly to expect any different course than this from American monopoly capital.

In estimating the growing fascist danger in the United States, our Party must keep clearly in mind Dimitroff's warning at the Seventh Comintern Congress that, "The development of fascism, and the fascist dictatorship itself, assume different forms in different countries, according to historical, social, and economic conditions and to the national peculiarities and the international position of the given country." Concretely, with regard to fascism in the United States, Dimitroff stated that, "In contra-distinction to German fascism, which acts under anti-constitutional slogans, American fascism tries to portray itself as the custodian of the Constitution and American democracy." This makes the approach of fascism in the United States all the more cunning and dangerous.

Dimitroff's Marxist analysis has been entirely justified by the development since of fascist trends in the United States. Here, as yet, there is much less of the denunciation of democracy as such and worship of the leader principle, glorification of war, open and blatant propagation of fanatical anti-Semitism and "Aryan" superiority, such as characterized the Hitler movement from its

earliest stages, although these trends are definitely present and on the rise. American extreme reaction, up to this point at least, is, in the main, trying to entrench itself in power under the most elaborate demagoguery of peace, democracy, and tongue-in-cheek concern for the welfare of the common man. This is a basic reason why many reactionaries, who agree with McCarthy in principle, nevertheless discountenance his methods—as these tend to expose before the masses the true fascist nature of monopoly capital's reactionary program and thus to arouse a broad opposition against it among the masses.

In estimating the elements against the development of McCarthyism and of fascism in general in the United States the great significance of the pressure of the democratic forces of the outside world must not be lost sight of. The United States in its desperate (and unavailing) efforts to build an all-capitalist world front against the USSR, People's China, and the European People's Democracies, finds it necessary to maintain some pretenses of being a democratic country. Especially it has to strive not to expose itself before these world democratic forces. Already, the world's workers and other democratic elements are more than suspicious of the "democratic" make-up of the United States. This same consideration was of decisive importance in bringing about the recent Supreme Court decision against Negro segregation in the schools and also in certain other political conce

sions of late to the Negro people.

Fear of the hostility of the democratic forces abroad thus acts very considerably as a brake upon the monopolist cultivation of outspoken fascism in the United States. It is this situation that has much to do with capitalist opposition to the crude and revealing tactics of McCarthy, including the rebuke of him by the Watkins Committee, and also with Eisenhower's reluctance to accept officially the ferocious prison sentences for Communist Party membership proposed by the erstwhile New Deal Democrat, Senator Humphrey. The pressure of this powerful international democratic sentiment is a force of major significance in the fight against fascism in the United States, and we must not overlook it.

One of the specific characteristics of the fascist trend in the United States is that, unlike the movements of Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, and other European fascists, it does not organize itself in a separate and distinct political party (although there are some tendencies in this direction, notably that being featured by Colonel McCormick's *Chicago Tribune*.) So far, big capital has been able to use successfully the two major parties as its instruments of ultra-reactionary policy. Traditionally the main party of monopoly capital is the Republican Party, but it also has a solid control of the Democratic Party and readily makes use of that party, as witness the reactionary Truman policies. It is a significant fact

that up to this time all the reactionary legislation, particularly that herein signalized as essentially fascist in character, as well as the carrying out of Wall Street's ultra-aggressive foreign policy, has been done primarily upon a bi-partisan basis. The strongest concentration of fascist elements is presently in the Republican Party, but the Democratic Party, despite its far greater measure of working-class support, is also heavy with fascist influences. Such men as Senators McCarran and Byrd, and Governors Byrnes and Talmadge, and other Southern Dixiecrats made this fact known long ago, and it was dramatized afresh recently by the sinister fact that it was Democratic leaders in Congress, headed by Senator Humphrey, who literally dynamited through Congress the notorious Communist Control Act, the most definitely fascist piece of legislation ever enacted by Congress.

The growth of McCarthyism during the past few years is one of the many signs of the sharpening trends towards fascism in the United States. It marks the passage of certain reactionary monopolist elements to the adoption of open fascist methods, such as were generally characteristic of European fascism. Our Party *Program* is fundamentally correct to single out McCarthyism for special attack, and also, while doing this, not to neglect those broad reactionary currents which are the feeding forces for McCarthyism and every other aspect of fascism in the United States.

FASCISM IS NOT INEVITABLE

That there is a grave and rising danger of fascism in the United States is clear; but this by no means signifies that fascism is inevitable in this country. Fascism has never come to an industrial nation until first the working class has been decisively defeated or betrayed. There is no record of fascism being introduced in a country without the workers making a fight against it as best they could. And if, upon various occasions, the workers and their allies have been defeated in this anti-fascist struggle, it has always been basically due to Social-Democratic treachery, both at home and abroad.

If Mussolini was able to lead fascism to power in Italy, this was primarily because of the Social-Democratic betrayal, which enabled the capitalists to defeat the great revolutionary general strike of 1920 of the metal workers in that country. Hitler also came to control the government in Germany in March 1933 as a result of a long series of defeats suffered by the working class, caused by the treachery of the Social-Democratic leaders. The same was true of the rise of Austrian fascism, led by Dollfuss in 1934. And the Spanish fascists, headed by Franco, could come to power only after a bitter three years' civil war which was crassly betrayed by the Social-Democrats, especially on the international scale. The same story of Social-Democratic treason and working-

class defeat attended the pre-war introduction of fascism in various other countries.

It was not foreordained, of course, that the workers had to lose in all these struggles. With Marxist leadership, they and their allies could readily have abolished capitalism and established Socialism in Italy, Germany, and Austria, and with proper support from the socialist-controlled labor movements of the capitalist world, the Spanish war also could have been won. Thus, in France, the fascists, in 1936, made a desperate grab for power, but were decisively beaten, primarily because of the fact that the Communist Party was strong enough to give militant and decisive leadership to the people's front of the aroused anti-fascist masses. And let it not be forgotten that it was also basically the workers and their allies, all over the world, who militarily smashed fascism in World War II and saved humanity from the worst slavery it had ever known.

From the foregoing historical experience the conclusion must not be drawn, however, that the working class and its allies automatically and inevitably respond and defeat the fascist danger. It is not written in the books that the present trend in the United States, to sneak the people into fascism under hypocritical slogans of peace, prosperity, and democracy, may not succeed. On the contrary, the masses will eventually triumph over fascism in this country only on the basis of clear-sighted and

resolute mass struggle. By the same token, the strong democratic traditions in the United States are, of themselves, not an infallible barrier to fascism in this country. These traditions, of course, are a vital force, but they must be supported by powerful action by the working class and other democratic strata. The workers must be aroused to the dread terrorism, destitution and destruction involved in the question of fascism in this country.

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International, in 1935, in theorizing and cultivating the People's Front policy, pointed out the type of people's coalition needed to defeat fascism. These, in terms of the United States, are the working class, the indispensable leader of the movement, the working farmers, the Negro people, the intelligentsia, and large sections of the lesser business elements. These forces constitute an overwhelming majority of the American people and properly educated, organized, and led, they possess the potential power to defeat monopoly capital and its forces upon any and all the fields of the class struggle. The creation of this broad People's Front movement, however, is no simple, straight road; it is a question involving complex strategy and tactics, of successive stages in the struggle, as we shall see further along in commenting upon the Communist Party Program.

At the present time there are undeniably deep currents of discontent surging in the ranks of the Amer-

ican working class and other democratic strata. These masses are deeply disturbed at the worsening economic situation; they are aroused at the menacing growth of McCarthyite fascism, and like the peoples in all other countries, they are alarmed at the war danger threatening the world. These are the moods out of which grows successful struggle against the fascists, profiteers, and warmongers, and they are bound to increase in scope and intensity. The same basic forces that are bringing about the growth of fascism—the deepening economic crisis, the frantic drive of monopoly capital for maximum profits, and the continuing war danger—also cause the growth of the elementary People's Front movement to combat these threats to the people's freedom and general welfare.

Throughout the world, in answer to the drive of American imperialism towards fascism, war, world domination, and intensified exploitation of the peoples, there is a swiftly developing mass movement for peace and democracy. This has especially been stimulated by this country's obvious intent to use, if it can, the A- and H-bombs. The American people, although with a somewhat less intensity and at a slower tempo, are playing an important part in this worldwide struggle against the ultra-reactionary program of Wall Street. Already this movement has, in its fight for a policy of peaceful co-existence between the countries of capitalism and of Socialism, dealt sev-

eral smashing defeats to American foreign policy—in the Korean and Indo-China truce, in the collapse of E.D.C.—and it has just about rendered that world policy bankrupt. The prospect is for a continued rise of this democratic wave, with further and eventually decisive defeats for American imperialism. An enormous role in this world democratic awakening is, of course, played by the U.S.S.R., by People's China, and the Peoples' Democracies of Europe and Asia.

A further characteristic of the present world situation is that considerable sections of the world bourgeoisie, with their own fish to fry, are increasingly reluctant, and often hostile, to the world conquest program of Wall Street, which is being carried out under the Hitlerite slogans of the anti-Communist crusade. Such oppositionist capitalist elements are to be found in Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Germany, and elsewhere. They are to be found, too, in the United States, and their number is bound to increase with the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and the worsening of the imperialist position of the United States. Communists must know how to utilize all these divisions, contradictions, and splits in the ranks of the bourgeoisie; but while doing this, it would be folly to rely upon any section of United States monopoly capital to fight against fascism. That is the historic task of the democratic forces going to make up the People's Front, and, properly organ-

ized and led, these are thoroughly capable of doing the job effectively in all the capitalist countries. In no sense of the word is fascism inevitable.

THE MASS ANTI-FASCIST STRUGGLE

In the United States the mass struggles against the developing economic crisis, against fascism, and against war, although all parts of the general struggle against the whole program of American monopolist reaction, are not carried on by the working class and its allies with equal understanding, intensity, and militancy, nor as an integrated whole, but in accordance with the varying degrees of pressure that they feel in the respective spheres. It is, therefore, one of the basic phases of our Party's task not only to participate in all these mass struggles, but also to help make the workers understand their fundamental inter-connection.

The American workers, at present, are making their best fight on the bread-and-butter questions of the worsening economic situation. This is natural, for here the pinch is the sharpest and the most obvious. Many recent strikes illustrate the high state of militancy among the workers, and their willingness to fight. They are also deeply stirred by the growing army of unemployed—at least five million are now without jobs and many more on part time, and the prospect is for a much worse situ-

ation this coming winter. On these economic questions the workers' pressure has been so strong that even the self-complacent bureaucrats at the head of the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. have been forced to show some signs of life and to develop some semblance of anti-depression programs. This economic fight is the doorway to more advanced political struggles. It has to be broadened and politicalized, to include every form of the growing fascist menace.

On the question of McCarthyism, the workers have also shown much political understanding and militancy. In consequence, the A. F. of L., C. I. O. and many other labor organizations, as well as various groupings of the Negro people, the farmers, etc., have gone on record against such pro-fascist legislation as the Taft-Hartley, Smith, McCarran, and Communist Control Acts. The labor movement has also dealt some real blows in behalf of equal rights for the Negro people. But there is also much confusion in this sphere of struggle. The greatest mass weakness is that, in general, organized labor does not clearly grasp the elementary fact that the wild Red-baiting and fiercely repressive laws now being directed against the Communist Party are in reality levelled also against the whole labor and progressive movement. Thus there was the tragic spectacle of the United Steel Workers (CIO) at their recent national convention, on the one hand condemning McCarthyism and the whole spate of fascist legislation, and

on the other hand, going beyond the proposals of even the most extreme fascists by denying Communists the right of union membership and thereby of employment in the steel industry.

On the question of the fight for peace—the workers and other democratic masses in the United States also share the hatred of war common to peoples all over the world. Unfortunately, however, the top leadership of most of their organizations are committed to the aggressive foreign policies of American imperialism, and constantly busy themselves with peddling the war program of Wall Street in the shape of hypocritical peace slogans, among their masses. Thus, the "peace" program adopted by the recent A. F. of L. convention might well have been written by Senator McCarthy. In consequence, in the peace issues, the working masses have been largely leaderless, save for what direction they get from the Communist Party, from the progressive and independent unions, and from a few other sources. Nevertheless, the workers and other anti-war forces have been able to develop much resistance to aggressive American imperialism and even to win some important victories against it. Among these successes may be noted the long and powerful mass opposition to universal military training, the popular outburst against the proposed A-bombing of Chinese cities, the resolute hostility to participation in the Korean and Indo-China wars, and

the active support given to the world demand of the peoples for armistice in these wars, despite Wall Street's obvious determination to keep them going.

These great, largely spontaneous American mass peace movements are, of course, highly vital, and must be cultivated by every means at our disposal. But, like the fight against fascism in general, spontaneity is not enough. The great mass organizations of the workers, the Negro people, and other democratic strata, must be won for a united struggle. This is absolutely indispensable. The current fascist threat also enormously stresses the importance of the role of the Communist Party and the imperative need for it to stand its ground in the face of every attempt of the Government to cripple or destroy it.

In the fight against fascism and war, the basic danger and obstacle confronting the workers and the masses in general are the opportunist reformist leaders now standing at the head of the A. F. of L., C. I. O., Railroad Brotherhoods, Coal Miners and the reactionary independent unions, as well as of various other people's organizations. For the most part, brazen advocates of capitalism, they constantly poison the minds of the workers with imperialist slogans. They are road-blocks against every step forward by the working class and its allies. Many of them, undoubtedly, if their monopolist masters demanded it of them, would march right into fascism and war,

and also try to drag or coerce the labor movement to follow them. They would do this on an even broader scale than was done upon the approach of fascism, by the Right Social-Democrats in Italy, Germany, Poland, and elsewhere. Their betrayal is doubly dangerous in this period of rising fascism in the United States.

It would nevertheless be a grave mistake to conclude from all this that these reactionary bureaucrats have a death grip upon the labor and progressive movements and that nothing can be done about it. On the contrary, in the post-World War II period, a pronounced feature of the situation in many capitalist countries has been, under the pressure of the Communist Party and the awakening masses, that the great organizations of labor can be spurred into action and sections of the trade-union bureaucracy forced to take some kind of a progressive position. This differentiation in the ranks of the union leadership will grow with the increase of the fascist menace. But it will not come without struggle. In our own country, a striking example of such a progressive movement was that which gave birth to the C.I.O. twenty years ago. Already, with occasional labor leaders speaking up on various issues, signs are beginning to multiply that such developments will take shape in the serious struggles lying immediately ahead of the American labor and progressive movements.

ANTI-FASCIST, PRO-PEACE POLITICAL ACTION

The passage of the Communist Control Act signifies a serious sharpening of the fascist danger in this country. From this increased menace, the Communist Party and the whole labor movement must draw not only the necessary analytical, but also tactical conclusions. This means that in order to fight the warmongers and the fascists every people's organization must be stirred into action and the fight conducted with redoubled energy upon every field of the class struggle. Especially these democratic-peace forces must also be united for a central political struggle, in a broad popular coalition, as our *Program* puts it, "based upon the joint and parallel action of the working class, the working farmers, the Negro people, and small and middle-sized business."

The imperative need for such a broad political movement confronts, however, the chronic difficulty that the broad working masses in this country have no independent political party of their own. It is clear that the working class and its political allies cannot begin to play a maximum political role until they have a great political organization of their own—a broad Labor-Farmer Party, eventually to form the basis of a people's front. It is a tragic weakness unparalleled in any other industrial country, that the toiling masses in the United States still remain tied to the political parties of the bour-

geoisie. This hamstringing all their political action. But the present anomalous situation will soon come to an end. The development of the growing economic and political crisis of American imperialism must result in such a sharpening nationally of the class antagonism between the workers and the capitalist class as to result in the former cutting the latter's leading strings and embarking upon a course of independent political action. A broad Labor-Farmer party is on the not distant political agenda in this country. The Communist Party must persistently explain and champion this cause.

The forces making for such a great party—of the working class, Negro people, working farmers and other democratic elements are, however, not yet matured, and the formation of this broad party is not yet the immediate issue. The overwhelming masses of these elements are still supporting the candidates of the Democratic and Republican parties, especially the former, and it is within the sphere of the two major parties that they must be organized. This the *Program* of the Communist Party makes clear.

The *Program* states:

The key to both the crucial 1954 and 1956 elections lies in the ability of organized labor to come forward as a distinct political force even within the framework of the present two-party system. Labor must come forward with its own clear-cut progressive program for the nation, its own ties and allegiances with other independent elec-

toral forces, and its own highly organized and efficient election machinery. Its objective must be to help bring about a regrouping and realignment within the Democratic Party nationally and within the Republican Party in local areas.

In various places, the *Program* indicates, independent tickets may be required, to be formed through such organizations as the Progressive Party, American Labor Party, or united labor tickets.

The immediate objective in 1954, [continues the C. P. *Program*] must be to prevent the Eisenhower Administration and Congress from taking the country further down the road of McCarthyism. Defeating McCarthyism requires turning the present Administration out of political power, first by changing the composition of Congress in 1954, and then by electing a new Administration in 1956. This requires a new political majority so strong that it not only changes Administrations but imposes on a new Congress and a new Administration a new course in domestic and foreign affairs.

But the *Program* continues that, "The answer to our national plight is not a switchback to another Truman-type Administration. . . . What is needed is a new Administration which starts to build again where the New Deal left off." As the *Program* stresses, it is upon the basis of such political activities "that the perspective of subsequently electing a new type of government, a farmer-labor government, will begin to arise in our country."

It cannot be the purpose of this article to evaluate the application of this election tactic in the 1954 elections, because as this is being written, the election struggle is just getting well under way, and the article will be on the press when the election proper takes place. What is necessary, however, is to restress the correctness of the general election policy stated in the Program of the Communist Party, particularly as some have seemed to think that this policy has become invalid after the passage of the Communist Control Act. The reality is that this fascist law makes even more urgent the resolute application of the general election tactic laid down in the Program.

Communists work among the masses, and they work among them within the Democratic Party, not because it is a progressive party but because great masses of workers are there. The top leadership of the Democratic Party, despite the millions of workers who are following their general lead, have entered into a sort of competition with the heads of the Republican Party to suppress the McCarthy issue and also to determine which are the most virulent Communist and Soviet haters. Thus, we see Truman, Stevenson, Douglas, Harriman, *et al.*, trying to make as chief issues in the election campaign the contention that the Republican Administration, by its "soft" international policies, has lost world imperialist leadership for the United States Government (which they had built up) and that, by its alleged re-

ductions in armaments appropriations, it has sacrificed the national defense in the face of the "enemy". And thus, in Congress, there was the bizarre spectacle of Humphrey and other Democratic leaders dynamiting through Congress the Communist Control Law, with penalties so ferocious that even the Eisenhower Administration had to oppose them. Without this Democratic intervention, the Administration could not have passed its reactionary Butler Bill, which is a central feature of the Communist Control Act. All this, however, is not a signal for us to abandon to such reactionary leaders the workers following the Democratic Party, but, on the contrary, to fight for them all the harder along the line laid down in the Communist Party Program. Particularly because organized labor is following them, the reactionary Democrats must be exposed and fought.

Such a struggle within the Democratic Party, as our Party *Program* warns, will not transform that Party into a farmer-labor party. Labor must set its sights in the direction of a great party of its own. But the struggle can unite the masses of toilers now following the Democratic leadership, force divisions in that leadership, and prepare the workers for the next big step forward. This consideration makes necessary the strengthening of the American Labor Party and the Progressive Party.

The workers and other democratic forces in this country are now going

through a process of political awakening, under the increasing pressures of the worsening economic and political situation of American imperialism. Nor can the strong fascist trends now being cultivated by monopoly capital, disrupt and repress this growing movement of anti-fascist, anti-war resistance and of defense of the people's living standards. During the 1930's the workers of this country, especially in their historic drive to organize the basic, trustified industries, gave a decisive example of their high fighting qualities under heavy economic political pressures. Such pressures are now accumulating upon an ever greater scale and the response of the workers and their allies will eventually be even more sharp and far-reaching than it was during the years of the New Deal. But reliance upon mass spontaneity would be a disastrous mistake.

The vast workers' organizations must be won for this struggle. It is the supreme task of the Communist Party to give all its possible practical leadership to these stirring masses, despite every persecution by the Government. This means it will have to heighten its militancy and improve its methods. It must fight both the Right and "Left" dangers because both flourish in the present situation. The American labor movement is heading into a great forward stride, one that will bode ill for those reactionary forces which want to sink the United States into a deadly morass of fascism and war.