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(*Book Review*)

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A Theoretical and Political Magazine of Scientific Socialism

Editor: V. J. Jerome

American People Can Halt the War!

By Richard Walker

ON JUNE 25, 1952, after twelve months of cease-fire negotiations, the criminal Wall Street imperialist aggression against the Korean people enters its third year. This is a grim fact for the American people. In the two years of this aggression 7,000 miles from our shores—according to estimates in the May 30 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*—one million American families have had their sons sent to Korea, 109,000 American youths have been casualties, 17,000 have been killed in battle, 15 billion dollars have been spent, and 16 million tons of goods have been used up for the war. Needless to say, such statistics, although horrifying in themselves, do not tell the whole story. Statistics cannot reveal the individual tragedies caused by this

war, nor even hint at the adverse consequences for such intangibles as the people's feelings of security and human brotherhood.

Nor do these statistics include the millions of Korean men, women and children killed, the millions more maimed and mutilated, the other millions made homeless and propertyless. They convey no hint of the extent of hunger and sickness in Korea today, both above and below the 38th Parallel. Nor of the irremediable woes and mortal agonies of a proud people "liberated" with napalm and demolition bombs.

What is worse, this aggression enters its third year without official Washington having either plan or intention to end it. According to the May 19 issue of *Newsweek* Maga-

zine (p. 37), the Joint Chiefs of Staff on May 9 reviewed the alternative courses in Korea and decided to do nothing. Hanson W. Baldwin, the *New York Times* military commentator, predicted on May 25 that "the truce talks . . . will almost certainly continue," and referred to the negotiations as a "talkathon." And, continuing its statistical survey, the May 30 issue of *U.S. News & World Report* (pp. 11-13) sees the future in Korea as a "bleeding operation," an "endurance contest" that "can go on for a long time" (even 10 years!). For the third year of the war, it predicts 400,000 more American families will have a son in Korea, 11,600 more will receive a casualty notice, and 2,700 more will have a son killed! This, of course, is the *minimum* figure; we are reminded that if the Chinese and Koreans win air superiority, the rate of casualties will sharply increase!

And again, such statistics contain no mention of what may be the consequences for the people of Korea. These consequences may be too horrifying to tell the American people, especially in view of the fact that both President Truman and General Ridgway have flatly denied that large scale experiments in germ warfare have already been conducted against both the Koreans and the Chinese. Yet, the mountainous evidence which the President and the General tried to conjure away with a denial found confirmation in a United

Press dispatch from Washington on May 26, to wit: "The Army has reached the production and stockpiling stage in development of germ warfare weapons, informed sources said today. Other biological warfare experts have said that giant aerosol bombs could be used to spray germ-laden mists over cities or massed troops. Clouds of disease germs also could be laid down by specially-designed shells fired from ground artillery or warships."

Further confirmation of the truth of this evidence was given by the Washington Administration's delegate to the U.N. Security Council, Mr. Gross, in the latter part of June. On June 18 he declared that the United States would not ratify the 1925 Geneva protocol banning germ warfare, characterized it as "obsolete" and a "paper promise," sought to get some of the forty-two nations which had ratified it to revoke their act, and demanded that the Koreans and Chinese be forbidden to state to the U.N. Council their charges prior to Mr. Gross' "refutation" of them! Moreover, as the Truman Administration ordered mass production of atomic weapons and appropriated \$4,000,000,000 for the hydrogen bomb development, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt on June 4 rose in the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations to defend United Press President Hugh Baillie's statement that concentrated use of atomic weapons would be "humane." And an Associated

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Press dispatch datelined May 17, "With the United States Ninth Corps in Korea," said, "The United States Army is carrying out front line tests to determine how efficiently combat troops can operate when faced with the threat of an atomic attack." Clearly, the statistics on the possible consequences of a continuation of the Korean war, which do not include the effects of germ and atomic weapons used by the imperialist aggressors, give a falsely smug version of the dangers in store for mankind unless a cease-fire is achieved.

There is not an iota of evidence that the bipartisan Washington Administration intends to negotiate a cease-fire in Korea. The evidence points the other way, to the fact that Washington intends to protract the negotiations until a political decision is deemed expedient, and that the sole political decision in the calculations of Washington is one which, under the pretense of "ending the war," will actually extend it, possibly to the Soviet Union.

Indeed, on June 23, the very eve of the second anniversary of the war, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered the bombardment of the great hydroelectric power complex on the Korean side of the Yalu River, although it was MacArthur's threat to this complex in his ill-fated "home-before-Christmas" offensive in 1950 which forced the Chinese, whose source of power for their Manchurian indus-

tries was periled, to send volunteers to Korea. And after repeating this provocative act on June 24, Defense Secretary Lovett announced that if the Koreans and Chinese dared to try to defend themselves against such aerial blows, the Joint Chiefs of Staff could bomb China. Such brazen threats were made, it should be recalled, at a time when the United States negotiators at Panmunjom had begun arbitrarily and unilaterally to "recess" the truce talks for three-day periods, a prelude to breaking them off altogether and extending their intervention in Taiwan into a full-scale war against the Chinese People's Republic. Needless to say, should such a development actually be permitted to take place, the maximum estimates of costs in men and materiel predicted by military experts would have to be drastically revised upwards. Even the prospect of renewed large-scale fighting in Korea is fraught with deadly peril for the half a million American boys already in battle position.

Here, therefore, are the only two alternatives the Washington politicians and militarists can offer the American people in regard to Korea. Either the American people must resign themselves to slow bleeding with no end in sight, or they must plunge deeper into the abyss of war in Asia, even risking conflict with the Soviet Union!

But neither of these alternatives accords with the desires of the

masses of Americans, who have repeatedly expressed their need for an armistice in Korea. According to George Gallup, whose periodic opinion polls are generally conservatively weighted, surveys have registered the war's unpopularity since November, 1950. A survey reported by Gallup on April 2, 1952 showed that 51 per cent of voters polled thought the United States made a mistake in going into the war in Korea. In addition, wherever forces of the organized peace movement seek expressions of opinion, a majority sentiment for ending the war in Korea is invariably found. The fact that such expressions continue to find publication in the letter columns of the pro-war press, despite the thought control and atmosphere of intimidation that have crept over the land, is also significant. There are, moreover, more reliable barometers of mass sentiment, such as the statements of Right-wing trade-union leaders and the spokesmen of conservative-led people's organizations. In recent months, for instance, Hugo Ernst, president of the AFL Hotel and Restaurant International Employees Union, and Frank Rosenblum, CIO vice-president and secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, have spoken out for a policy of negotiations with the Soviet Union to end war and the danger of war. Ernst, writing in the March issue of his union's magazine, *The Catering In-*

dustry Employee, called attention to the recent most impressive demonstration of the American people's will for peace, the struggle which defeated the Washington Administration's plans for Universal Military Training.

"In recent weeks," wrote Ernst, "there has been an astonishing example of popular disapproval of the world trend toward war in the mountain of mail under which the Congress has been buried by the folks back home protesting the Universal Military Training bill. Senator Ed Johnson of Colorado told a visiting trade unionist early last month that one of his colleagues had received more mail on the UMT issue than any other in years. Another Senator reported that for a period of time he was getting 7,000 letters a day—nearly all of it calling upon him to vote No on UMT."

In view of this desire of the American people for peace and specifically for an armistice in Korea, what accounts for the fact that after an entire year of cease-fire negotiations, no cease fire has yet been achieved? The explanation of this seeming paradox is important for the light it can shed on the means to an armistice. For, in order to avoid the disastrous consequences of Washington's program for extending the war, the American people must now renew and sharpen the struggle for a cease-fire agreement.

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ON MOBILIZING THE
PEACE SENTIMENT

So that the peace forces of the U.S. shall be able to make their effective contribution toward speeding a cease-fire in Korea, it is necessary to dispose at once of the view that the people lack the power to achieve their desires. This view is generated by circles who have succumbed to notions of the inevitability of world war and fascism. According to these circles, the Pentagon militarists and Washington politicians are immune to expressions of mass sentiment. And an extreme version of this viewpoint contends that the fascist drive has already succeeded, that the United States is already a fascist country, and that it is impossible to mount a popular offensive against any policy the powers-that-be are carrying out.

But this defeatist view, which tends to immobilize the people and to assist the very pro-fascist forces it professes to abhor, is criminally false. The militarists and bought-and-paid-for politicians are certainly contemptuous of the people. But the people's power to compel them to act in accordance with their will was seen in the defeat of the Universal Military Training bill on March 4, when the House re-committed the bill by a vote of 233 to 162. The great campaign against UMT witnessed the participation of labor, religious, youth and women's

groups, whose representatives not only communicated their desire to their Congressmen in Washington, but also testified at committee hearings. Moreover, this campaign was not directed from any one center, but consisted of numerous parallel actions by sections of the people.

The failure to date to win cease-fire in Korea has of course many explanations. Our concern in this article is with the task and role of the American peace forces in this hour. While many significant peace actions can be recorded in our country in the course of the protracted truce negotiations, reflecting the developing peace sentiment, it nevertheless must be said that the full opportunities for organizing this mass will have not yet been grasped. Indeed, it must be said in truth that the situation represents a lag in the organized peace activity.

This is not to say that there have not been important peace actions by the existing organized peace movement. These include the current campaign for a Five-Power Peace Pact, the American Peace Crusade's Pilgrimage to Washington, its referendum campaigns, and the numerous women's delegations to the United Nations initiated by the American Women for Peace. There have been many parallel peace actions by other segments of the population such as the Quakers, the Methodists, the Negro Elks, and various spontaneous activities for a cease-fire coming from

parents and relatives of American prisoners of war. But no one can deny that the chief problem today is how to close the gap between the growing mass sentiment for peace and the lack of wide-range organization to embrace in the millions the people who can be mobilized for an effective fight for peace.

The causes of this lag in the people's struggle for a cease-fire are both ideological and organizational. Despite warnings by the advanced sections of the American peace movement (see, for instance, Joseph Rockman's article in this magazine, August, 1951) that Wall Street imperialism would seek to use the peace negotiations to advance its aims in Asia, the people were thrown off guard by Washington's formal agreement to enter into truce negotiations. The fact that the militarists and banker-politicians had been forced to enter negotiations was correctly hailed as a victory for the peace forces. But these forces did not grasp the fact that while agreeing to negotiate was a tactical concession to the peace forces, Wall Street imperialism was determined to carry on a struggle within the context of the truce negotiations to achieve its aims.

In addition, the reduction in the rate of casualties which followed the beginning of negotiations also tended to lull the peace forces. The demagogic pretense of a sincere desire for peace which was repeatedly expressed

by the Washington Administration sowed illusions concerning its role and aims in the negotiations. And throughout the entire year of truce talks, the Administration lost no opportunity to confuse the issues of the negotiations, and to pour out false versions of the origin, character and conduct of the war. At the same time, campaigns of terror and calumny were waged against advanced segments of the peace forces, in an effort to silence and drive them into passivity.

In this evaluation of the causes of the lag in the struggle for peace, the Left-progressive forces, especially we Communists, should self-critically examine our own participation in the struggle for a cease-fire. We should fearlessly ask ourselves if we fought boldly enough to dispel the illusions of the people in the role of the Washington Administration, and to refute the lies of the imperialist aggressors. We should ask ourselves whether we struggled hard enough in the trade unions and mass organizations to overcome the sectarian attitudes and boldly to help organize joint struggles for peace and immediate demands, of parallel peace actions to mobilize the growing mass peace sentiment.

Indeed, in view of the number and influence of such obstacles to clarity and action on the part of the people, it is little wonder that the struggle for a Korean cease-fire should have fallen far short of its

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goal. Certainly in this connection we should overcome a chronic underestimation of the extent to which all the mass communication media in the United States have become virtually organs of the imperialists' state power.

The fact is that, from the start of the imperialist aggression in Korea to the present moment, the American people have been deluged with torrents of official and unofficial lies about the origin, character and conduct of the Korean war. Radio, cinema, television, and both the periodical and newspaper press, with few and rare exceptions, poured out these lies, and almost as if by conspiratorial pre-arrangement, have suppressed the truthful versions. So revolting to one British correspondent, the *London Daily Telegraph's* Reginald Thompson, were many of these lies that in his book *Cry Korea* (MacDonald & Co., London, 1951) he speaks of the "regrettably unreliable and grossly inaccurate," "grandiose statements" of the United States Air Force (p. 210). He cited MacArthur's "attempts to control the news by feeding it exclusively through the four agency channels of the entourage he carried around with him," and MacArthur's attempt "to expel a total of seventeen journalists for their criticisms" (p. 84). But the most damning indictment of the sources of "news" processed for the American people's consumption is Thompson's observation (p. 39) that

"Most of the war correspondents carried arms, and it seemed that every man's dearest wish was to kill a Korean. 'Today,' said many of them, as they nursed their weapons, 'I'll get me a gook.'" How could the dispensers of this kind of "objectivity" tell the American people the truth? The answer is that they didn't. As Thompson wrote (p. 84) "there were few who dared to write the truth of things as they saw them in their cabled stories. . . ."

It was the imperialist aggressors' suppression of the truth about their aggression, and their total and continuous falsification of the events and significance of their aggression, which contributed so much to the ideological confusion and consequent organizational weaknesses of the American people's struggle for peace. Their lies compounded their crimes; but it cannot be doubted that they also have played a major role in protracting their aggression into its third year.

TASKS IN THE DRIVE TO WIN A CEASE-FIRE

By drawing the correct conclusions from an analysis of the causes of the lack of success in the cease-fire negotiations, the American people can more effectively wage their struggle to end the war. If the necessity to wage this struggle is obvious, the opportunities for doing so are also becoming more clear. The military and political stalemate in Korea is

itself a reflection of the great crisis of the Wall Street imperialists' foreign policy. The events of recent months—the war alliances with Japanese militarism, German imperialist revanchism, and Spanish fascism—have not ameliorated this crisis, but on the contrary have sharpened it. As Wall Street imperialism's real world war-organizing aims more frequently emerge from behind the demagogic lip-service to peace and national security, the people's uneasiness is beginning to find more outspoken and militant expression. The working masses are realizing that Wall Street's refusal to negotiate differences with the Soviet Union and its feverish preparations for world war are pauperizing the American people first of all, and nullifying their Bill of Rights. Even the Right-wing leaders of the C.I.O. Steel Workers, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and Packing House Workers reflected this growing rank-and-file understanding in recent national conventions of these unions. There is again an upsurge of popular demands for a re-examination of foreign policy.

In line with these developments, the Progressive Party on May 27 projected a nation-wide campaign demanding an immediate cease-fire in Korea. The campaign call, issued by C. B. Baldwin, the Party's secretary, declared that "it would seem that the Korean war is being deliberately prolonged in order to push through

the unparalleled arms budget which has raised taxes and prices and resulted in sharp cuts in the living standards of the American people and in economic disaster abroad.... There must be no third year of the Korean war." The Progressive Party spokesman challenged Democratic and Republican candidates to join with Progressives in demanding immediate peace in Korea. This challenge indicates a way in which the organized peace movement can force the issue of immediate cease-fire in Korea into the election campaign. No candidate for national, state or local office should be allowed to keep silent on this issue, nor should any issue in the campaign be discussed without linking it to the issue of a Korean armistice. The campaign, therefore, offers rich opportunities for mobilizing voters on behalf of peace in Korea, and of breaking through the dollar curtain of lies to the truth about Wall Street's imperialist aggression.

The opportunity for expanding joint struggles for immediate demands growing out of the economic consequences of the war was strikingly demonstrated last April by the big Connecticut demonstration in Washington. The delegation of trade unionists, Negro leaders, housewives, mayors, state representatives, judges and businessmen which descended on the Capitol to tell the Connecticut Congressmen their demands, was organized on a broad

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initiative including the Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers Union, around the central issue of unemployment in the state's "Brass Valley." The people generally saw the relation between the growing danger of joblessness in the brass industry and the Korean war. It is not an exaggeration to say that there are no immediate demands which today are not related to the imperialist aggression in Korea, and which do not offer the possibility for similar joint struggles.

In addition, parallel peace actions such as prayer meetings, petition drives and mass meetings, even if sponsored by conservatively-led organizations, should be welcomed and encouraged.

But it is the ideological struggle which offers the peace movement the biggest opportunities for striking telling blows against the imperialist design to spread the war in Asia. The masses of Americans distrust the Big Business press, even if they buy it and are influenced by it. Especially do they distrust the contradictory and preposterous reports of the fighting in Korea, even if these reports are the sole information the majority have received. But they are eager to learn the facts, to discuss the issues, and the reports of peace partisans who have talked with the workers, Negro people and farmers in every section of the country reflect a hunger for the truth.

It is especially incumbent on the advanced Left-progressive sections of

the peace forces to carry the truth to the people—through newspapers, letters-to-the-editor, leaflets, pamphlets, direct conversation, and in discussion groups and mass meetings. It is necessary to challenge the imperialists' false version of the Korean aggression in its entirety, marshalling the evidence as to the origin and character of the war, and the aims of the imperialists as revealed during the truce negotiations.

Of special pertinence in the weeks and months ahead, when it is possible for a great mobilization of the people to impose a cease-fire on the Washington Administration, is the truth about the imperialist aggressors' hoax of "liberating" the Korean people, their hoax of "voluntary repatriation" of war prisoners, and their pretense of seeking peace in the truce negotiations.

Both President Truman and General Ridgway repeatedly claimed to be sincerely concerned with effecting a truce during the year of negotiations. But the record of the truce negotiations effectively demolishes these claims. This record has been presented recently in several publications (*The Daily Worker*, May 9, 1952; *New World Review*, May 1952; and partially in I. F. Stone's *The Hidden History of the Korean War*, Monthly Review Press, 1952, pp. 274-348.) This record shows that the Washington generals and politicians have sabotaged the truce negotiations throughout, producing one "crisis"

after another, always at the moment when agreement seemed most feasible. The record reveals that every resumption of the negotiations after such "crises" has been achieved by the initiative of the Koreans and Chinese, usually at the cost of concessions to the Washington militarists.

Particularly to the point is the latest ruse of the imperialist aggressors to sabotage the negotiations—the so-called "principle" of "voluntary repatriation." This hoax is particularly nauseating to all decent people, inasmuch as it has provided Truman and Ridgway, who have not scrupled to destroy entire provinces with demolition bombs and incinerate hundreds of thousands of helpless women and children with napalm, with the opportunity of posing as "humanitarians." In his "final offer" to the Korean and Chinese negotiators on May 7, Truman shed crocodile tears over the 100,000 Korean and Chinese war prisoners whom the imperialists refuse to repatriate, on the ground that if they are repatriated they will be returned to "slavery" and mistreatment. Behind this disgusting hypocrisy were the facts, as exposed by the Kojé Island war prisoners themselves in heroic self-sacrificing actions, and by a report of the International Committee of the Red Cross which was suppressed by the Big Business American press and first published in Geneva in the April issue of the Red Cross' *Revue Internationale*. In this

country, it was first published in the May 27 issue of the New York *Daily Compass*. A story about it appeared in *The Worker* of June 1, and it has been reprinted and distributed as a public service by the Progressive Party.

The facts behind this hoax are as follows: In order to fill the depleted ranks of the troops of Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek with fresh cannon-fodder and forced labor-power, the Washington militarists, in violation of the Geneva Convention of 1949 guaranteeing the rights of prisoners of war, began a process of "screening" the prisoners, which they held in Kojé Island and other prison camps. For this purpose, Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek officers and troops were used. When the prisoners objected to this unwarranted and illegal violation of their rights, they were subjected to torture, beaten, abused, starved. And when they organized to resist the process, United States troops were ordered to fire upon them. Under the threat of death or torture, thousands of prisoners submitted to the screening process, whereupon they were tattooed with slogans saying: "Fight Communism and Resist Russia," and were told that if caught by the Koreans and Chinese they would be considered incorrigible Rhee or Chiang soldiers and killed.

This shameful process turned into a daily massacre of the Korean and Chinese war prisoners, with hundreds

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killed and thousands wounded and injured by their captors. Even the Big Business press reported incidents which reflected on the sheer savagery of the imperialist aggressors, such as the Associated Press report on June 5 of "United States infantrymen supported by tanks," "three Patton tanks ahead of one company of soldiers wearing gas masks and carrying fixed bayonets," moving into a Kojé Island compound of 3,340 prisoners to cut the enclosure in two. The *New York Times'* report from Kojé Island on June 4 cited the use of "flame throwers." "The Communists tonight received punishment in addition to their woes," said the report. "General Boatner (the American commander) followed up the raids on compounds 85 and 96 with delivery of sand in rice sacks instead of food, as a stern reminder to the prisoners that they were going to be disciplined for their defiance." Such examples of the brave "battle-toughened" American troops moving against unarmed war prisoners with flame-throwers, and gas, and tanks are hardly likely to inspire the youth of America with respect for true heroism. Nor is the spectacle of a Pentagon General filling the rice bags of war prisoners with sand likely to engender admiration anywhere for the "American way of life."

The point has been made that if the imperialist aggressors had any intentions of agreeing to a cease-fire and a peaceful settlement of Asian

problems, they would not resort to such outrageous and barbaric methods of recruiting fresh supplies of cannon-fodder and forced labor-power for Rhee and Chiang. Indeed, if such were their intentions, Rhee and Chiang would not need more soldiers and laborers from any source whatsoever. But in view of the slaughter, brutalities and hunger inflicted upon the war prisoners by the Pentagon militarists, the Washington Administration's professions of "humanitarianism" and sticking to "principles" stand exposed as the shabbiest kind of lies. They are lies, however, which serve the imperialist aggressors' purpose of preventing a cease-fire and extending the area of aggression.

The definitive refutation of this particular lie about "voluntary repatriation" was given as a consequence of the self-sacrificing heroism of the Kojé Island prisoners themselves. This heroism attained a climax on May 7, when the prisoners seized General Dodd, the camp commandant, and declared they would free him only if they received assurances that the Geneva Convention would be strictly observed henceforth.

On May 10, after General Colson gave such assurances and admitted the truth of the prisoners' terrible charges, General Dodd was released unharmed and declared that he had been treated courteously. But the Washington Administration, infuriated by the exposure of its savagery

and hypocrisy, ordered Ridgway's successor, General Clark, to repudiate the pledges given by Colson.

Clark complied, both Dodd and Colson were "busted" and a Southern-born-and-bred "tough" commandant, General Boatner, brought in para-troops and tanks and launched punitive attacks upon the unarmed prisoners which killed many and wounded hundreds.

Following an entire month of almost incredibly brutal attacks on the prisoners with flamethrowers, tanks, grenades and bayonets, on June 19 the Washington Administration turned over 29,000 prisoners, allegedly deserters from Rhee's army, to Rhee's tender mercies. And, proving that its earlier claim to have counted 100,000 war prisoners who "refused" to return to China or North Korea was a lie, Washington let it be known that General Boatner was screening 45,000 prisoners on Kojé Island!

Such were the great "principles" the Wall Street militarists and politicians were "defending" at Panmunjom, by walking out on the truce talks and laying the basis for breaking them off altogether.

Especially important, also, is the truth about Washington's pretensions to "liberate" the Koreans, to save them from "Communist aggression." For the truth in this case exposes the real character of the war—an imperialist aggression, full of racist-inspired barbarities against the victims, civilian as well as military, the

aged and the newly born, the strong and the infirm, women as well as men. This truth must be told to the American people. Because, as CIO vice-president Frank Rosenblum on Jan. 5 told the Minnesota Joint Board of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, the "plain people . . . do not want wars, global, limited or any other kind of wars. But if they do not watch out they can be conditioned, 'educated' and finally led into bloody conflict not of their own choosing, and that can only spell death, destruction and no future for their children." If the American people knew with certainty the kind of war the imperialist aggressors are fighting in Korea, they would be all the more determined to end it.

The truth about how this war is being fought is contained in a series of documents issued by several international commissions which have made on-the-spot investigations. The first such document was the Report of the Women's International Commission for the Investigation of Atrocities Committed by U.S.A. and Syngman Rhee Troops in Korea, issued on May 27, 1951 by the Women's International Democratic Federation. Members of the commission included some of the most distinguished women of the world, coming from 17 countries in Europe, America, Asia and Africa. The second document was the report of a commission of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, issued on April 2,

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Again, the members of this commission included outstanding and respected lawyers from many countries of Asia, America and Europe. On March 31, a Chinese Commission for Investigating the American Crime of Waging Bacteriological Warfare issued a report. This body also included some of the most distinguished scientists and cultural workers in China. In addition, reports have been issued by the World Peace Council, Women's International Democratic Federation, World Federation of Trade Unionists, and numerous other bodies.

The women's commission concluded its report with these words: "The people of Korea are being subjected by the American occupants to a merciless and methodical campaign of extermination. . . . These mass tortures and mass murders surpass the crimes committed by Hitler Nazis in temporarily-occupied Europe." The Chinese commission said: "The bacteriological and biological weapons for mass destruction of peaceful Chinese people, their domestic animals and fowls and crops. . . . The predatory aggression carried out by the U.S. government with bacteriological weapons presents a grave threat not only to the Chinese and Korean peoples, but also to human justice, to civilization and to world peace. It is a grave threat to mankind as a whole." The lawyers' report declared its findings showed that the imperialist aggressors were

guilty of "a most grave and horrible crime," and that: "The use of such inhuman weapons as bacteriological warfare must be taken to indicate a new degree of savagery in the conduct of so-called civilized states which must threaten every man, woman and child."

These documents are detailed with names, dates, places and full descriptions of the incidents investigated. The details will be, for most Americans, horrifying and revolting. But unless the American people know what is being perpetrated in their name, they can be unwittingly led into supporting actions for which they must later atone before outraged humanity. It was undoubtedly the recollection of how the German people were deceived and made accomplices of the Hitlerite war criminals that moved the Federation of American Scientists last April to call on the Washington Administration to declare that it is "willing and anxious" to conclude an agreement with other governments formally repudiating any use of biological warfare. But in its action in the Security Council, on June 18, as already mentioned, Washington replied to the appeal of the American scientists with a defiant "No."

It is vitally necessary that these documents exposing the facts of the imperialist aggressors' "liberation" of the Korean people reach the masses of Americans. A bold and determined

exposure of the crimes and plans of the Wall Street imperialists and their Washington lackeys will be a powerful weapon in the struggle for a cease-fire.

Such a struggle for clarity among the American masses and for the organization of their peace sentiment will be facilitated, moreover, by the daily facts of life. As the people see the mounting profits in the coffers of the Wall Street billionaires and

feel in their own stomachs the declining living standards of the masses they will understand whom a continuation of the war in Asia benefits and who must pay for it in blood and sacrifice. And victory in the struggle to end the war in Korea will be a long step toward a political settlement in Asia, toward the resumption of negotiation with the Soviet Union, and the establishment of conditions for a lasting peace.

By Jo

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Tasks in Broadening the Fight for Peace

By Joseph Rockman

WHAT IS THE SITUATION today with respect to the danger of war and the fight for peace?

A basic estimate must include the following three factors:

- 1) *American imperialism has dangerously accelerated the tempo of its preparations for a new world war.*

The White House-Pentagon cabal continues to block a peaceful settlement of the war in Korea in order to prevent any "let down" either in the atmosphere in which its war preparations are carried on or in the preparations themselves. Instead, it adds to the record of its infamy by the introduction of bacteriological warfare against the Korean and Chinese peoples. In the absence, thus far, of a people's movement strong enough to compel it to abandon this course, the cabal continues its sabotage of the negotiations. It does this in order to prevent a settlement in Korea from whetting the appetites of the people for an over-all settlement of issues and in order to maintain a base for its projected expansion of the war in the Far East.

In the meantime, the war economy

is being developed to the utmost in the United States. The military budgets proposed, as well as the size of the actual military establishment, continue to be expanded and readied for various frankly stated "target dates." The system of military and naval bases with which Wall Street is girdling the globe has been augmented year after year. New high levels for arms production and military build-up for the Marshallized countries of western Europe have been set as a result of the Rome and Lisbon meetings.

Perhaps even more important politically are the decisions which have already been made with respect to Japan and which are now being forced through with respect to Germany. The rearmament and remilitarization of these two countries constitute the hard core of American imperialism's war preparations. This past year has seen the conclusion of a separate peace treaty with Japan, actually a treaty of military alliance, accompanied by other Pacific military pacts. We have just witnessed the most frantic efforts of the State Department to blitz through a "contractual agreement" with West Ger-

many, incorporating it into the North Atlantic Treaty alliance military set-up.

With its actions in Japan and Germany, Wall Street has passed over from various peripheral aspects of its plans to prepare for war (Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, etc.) to the central and decisive aspects of those plans.

2) *The world peace camp has grown decisively in strength during this same period.*

First, there is the greatly enhanced and constantly growing peace role of the Soviet Union. Against the background of unprecedented successes in expanding its socialist economy, the Soviet Union, by its policies and actions, is successfully blocking Wall Street's war drive and stimulating millions to join the fight for peace. Since last summer alone, this has registered its impact, among other things, in Malik's initiative for negotiations in Korea; in the Soviet UN delegation's fight on disarmament, atomic control, and other matters; in the blow delivered to Wall Street's barriers against east-west trade, in the Soviet Union's proposals on a unified, democratic and peaceful Germany.

The peace camp derives its growing strength, further, from the expanding role of People's China, as well as the Peoples' Democracies of eastern Europe, which are solving their economic and political problems in close collaboration and friendship with the USSR.

The fight for peace by the govern-

ments of these countries, comprising a total population of over 800 million people, is an enormous force with which the imperialists must reckon daily and hourly.

Secondly, during the past year, there has taken place a vast, new upsurge in the liberation movement of the colonial and dependent countries. In addition to the continued heroic armed struggles of the people of Viet-nam, Malaya, the Philippines, there erupted the well-known events in Iran, Egypt, India, South Africa, Tunisia. Reflecting this mass upheaval is the tendency within the UN for the formation of an Arab-Asian-African bloc which increasingly opposes, or differentiates itself from, the policies of U.S. imperialism on a growing number of issues.

Third, there has taken place during the past year a stormy growth of resistance by the people of the Marshallized countries of Western Europe to the burdens of the war economies foisted on their subservient governments by the State Department. This people's resistance has already given rise to a chronic cabinet crisis in France, to a broad swing among the masses in Britain against the Churchill government and within the Labor Party against Attlee, in the growth of a popular majority against the De Gasperi government which registered outstanding victories in the recent municipal elections in Italy, in the tumultuous growth of "neutralist" sentiment among the people of West Germany.

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there is still no broadly organized peace movement, the past year has multiplied the signs of deep-going sentiments for peace among the American people. Among these may be counted the following:

The strong desire for putting an end to the war in Korea increases despite the Truman-Pentagon provocations and sabotage at Panmunjom. The unpopularity of the Korean war, amply attested to in the past, was given new emphasis by the sudden revelation that 979 reserve pilots had refused to obey flight orders because this meant the probability of assignment to Korean duty.

Results of a special Gallup poll reveal that 75 percent of the American people favor a meeting of the Big Three — and this despite the ceaseless propaganda against negotiations. The strong sentiment for negotiating differences is beginning to break through the surface in a number of trade unions, notably Packing, AFL Butchers, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Hotel & Restaurant Workers.

Not a single important section of the trade union movement has a good word to say any longer about the Marshall Plan which they so dutifully sold to their members only a short four years ago. Instead, within the framework of continued adherence to the bi-partisan policy of war preparations there is increasing criticism of individual aspects of this bi-partisan policy, especially those which openly reveal Wall Street's partnership with fascism (deal with Franco,

rearmament of the Nazis, etc.) and those which openly reveal Wall Street's role as the main prop of the tottering colonial system (Tunisia).

This peace sentiment of the American people, especially the working class and the Negro people, is reflected in the beginnings of a noticeable differentiation in high circles of labor, Negro and liberal leaders who, on the whole, still support the foreign policies of the Truman Administration, such as Potofsky, Rosenblum, Jimerson, Gorman, Ernst, Helstein, Stellato, Dr. Mordecai Johnson, Reverend James H. Robinson, Supreme Court Justice Douglas, etc.

Finally, we must take into account the growing wage and strike movements as a most important form of struggle against the effects of the war economy and a sign of the rapidly declining moral authority of the "national emergency" hysteria invoked by Truman. Likewise, the beginnings of active struggle against the effects of the war economy on the growth of unemployment is to be seen in the Ansonia "Brass Valley" conference, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers fight against the union busting contract policy of the Pentagon, and the struggle of the auto workers for the Moody-Dingall bill.

- 3) *The clash between the world camp of peace and the war plans of American imperialism has already resulted in several major defeats for the plans of American imperialism and is increasing the difficulties in the way of their realization.*

The most serious defeat was sustained by American imperialism in Korea. Although militarily a stalemate, the situation in Korea represents a stunning political defeat for Wall Street.

The efforts of American imperialism to impose new high levels of war preparation on its European satellite governments have met with serious opposition on the part of many of these governments themselves. Its project for a European army, although pushed energetically, has not produced the divisions originally anticipated. The impending "integration" of West Germany in the so-called Atlantic Community and the incorporation of a resurrected Wehrmacht into a European Army has thus far been stymied by a resistance which is even penetrating into Adenauer's own top circles. The State Department policy of barring east-west trade suffered a major blow as a result of the recent International Economic Conference in Moscow.

Contradictions between American and British imperialism increase in intensity manifesting themselves on a whole host of issues such as:—policy toward China, east-west trade, incorporation of British forces in the European army, access to atom bomb production control, Atlantic naval command, standardization of rifles, policy toward Iran and Egypt, etc.

These defeats also accentuate contradictions within the camp of American monopoly capital itself. While taking place within an area of com-

plete agreement over the major objective of world domination, they nevertheless break out increasingly on a whole series of tactical questions:—orientation to Europe or to Asia and Latin America; tempo of arms expenditures; attitude to European Social-Democracy, etc. The speeches of Hoover, Kennedy, Phillip Reed, Ford and others reveal the serious nature of these growing contradictions within the camp of American monopoly capital.

Finally, the bi-partisan war planners have suffered two important defeats in Congress during the past period:—first, the House of Representatives scaling down of Truman's request for military appropriations by approximately ten percent; and, second, the defeat of UMT.

Thus the present international situation is characterized by three main features:—first, the dangerously accelerated tempo of war preparations by American imperialism; second, a decisive strengthening of the world peace camp; third, a series of important political defeats suffered by American imperialism in the unfolding of its war plans.

* * *

It is against the background of such a relation of forces that we can fully appreciate the political importance and the wisdom of Stalin's reply to the questions of a group of American editors and newspaper executives.

Among other things, Stalin replied negatively to the question of whether war was closer today than two or three years ago. Stalin's calm estimate

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of the present situation contrasts with the feverish hysteria engineered by the White House and Pentagon with their "target dates" of 1952 and their hysteria-breeding nightmares a la *Collier's* special issue. It is an estimate rooted in a Marxist analysis of the international situation in which the relation of forces between the camp of peace and the camp of war has not changed in favor of the war camp during the last two or three years. And we should add also, that it contrasts with the gyrations in the estimates of some of our own comrades, who exchange optimism for despondency in accordance with the waxing or waning of newspaper and radio-stimulated hysteria instead of maintaining a political steadiness in their estimates which can be guaranteed only by a sober Marxist analysis of the relation of forces which actually exists.

But it is equally essential for us to remember that Stalin did not say that the outbreak of war was more remote than it was two or three years ago, that is, that the war danger had lessened in any degree. *The danger of war remains and is a grave peril threatening all humanity with dire catastrophe.* The fight for peace remains today, as it was yesterday, the major, central task before our Party and before the whole working class and people of the United States. We must strenuously combat any tendencies in our own ranks to relax in the fight for peace under the illusion that, because war is not closer today than it was two or three years ago,

there is nothing to worry about, or that everything is "under control."

The danger of a new war flows from the drive by American imperialism to dominate the world. Only the most active, persistent and resolute struggle by the masses can prevent American imperialism from bringing about such a qualitative change in the relation of forces between the camp of peace and the camp of war as to bring the outbreak of war closer. Therein lies the crucial importance of struggle against each and every aspect of Wall Street's war preparations and policies whether they be aimed at domestic or international objectives. For there are certain objectives of American imperialism which, if achieved, could conceivably change the international relation of forces and thus bring the outbreak of world war closer.

Such, for example, would be the extension of the war in Korea to China; or the settlement of the West German question definitively and irrevocably in favor of U.S. imperialism; or the establishment of a fascist dictatorship in the United States, or in France or in Italy. The achievement of such major objectives by American imperialism would necessarily compel us to re-examine the question of whether the outbreak of war should be considered closer. But at the present moment our task is to activate the masses in the fight for peace in order to frustrate these plans of American imperialism, to prevent the outbreak of a new world war.

THE PEACE STRUGGLE TODAY

How do things stand with respect to the fight for peace in the United States?

What emerges most forcefully from any analysis of this problem is the great gap between the peace sentiments of millions of American people and the narrow base of the organized peace movement. From this, our task follows quite simply, to begin to close this gap, to begin to set into motion the millions who want peace.

What stands in the way of serious advances here?

Of course, there are certain objective factors with which we must reckon. Among them, for example, is the widespread influence of the big lie that the Soviet Union is preparing aggression. The influence of this big lie, assiduously peddled by Right-wing Social-Democracy everywhere, is responsible for the fact that many millions who are for peace nevertheless do not oppose various measures of Wall Street war preparation because they think that such measures will help prevent war. We cannot close our eyes to the effects upon the masses of the demagogic "peace" propaganda with which the Truman Administration accompanies its war preparations.

At the same time we must take note of the fact that the big lie is beginning to be whittled down to size, so to speak, by the experience of the masses. Sections of the American people—all too small, as yet—

are beginning to ask themselves the simple question which the masses in Europe have already asked and answered:—If the Soviet Union is bent on aggression, why does it wait obligingly until Western Europe increases its military strength? The European masses have answered that question for themselves long ago. They do not believe that the Soviet Union intends to attack the western countries. They are convinced, instead, that the danger of aggression comes from American imperialism. This understanding is also beginning to seep into the minds of the American people. This process has been helped along somewhat by the valuable admissions which have been made in the course of the struggle between the Truman-Dulles gang and the Hoover-Taft cabal. The full exposure of this big lie is one of the most important tasks in the fight for peace. Imperialist propaganda among the masses about the inevitability of war is based on this big lie.

What else stands in the way of serious advances in closing the gap between the peace sentiment of the millions and the narrow base of the organized peace movement?

WEAKNESSES IN OUR WORK

Certain grave weaknesses in our own work.

At the head of the list we must place the influence within our own ranks of the theory that the peaceful coexistence of the socialist and capitalist systems is impossible, that a

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new world war is inevitable. Within our own ranks, of course, this theory has a different origin than among the masses. Within our own ranks, there is a correct understanding that it is Wall Street which is preparing a war for world domination. But this correct understanding is coupled with an incorrect estimate of the strength of American imperialism, an overestimation of that strength, and hence a tendency toward fatalism, toward capitulation before the war drive of American imperialism. The reverse side of the coin is an underestimation of the peace sentiments and desires of the American people, an underestimation of the readiness of the American people to fight for peace. This is the main feature of the Right danger within our Party in the fight for peace.

How does this Right danger manifest itself?

In relation to the outbreak of the war in Korea, for example, there were tendencies to consider that the die had been cast for World War III. There were sentiments, sometimes expressed, sometimes unexpressed, that from Korea the war would inevitably spread to China, from China it would in time spread to the rest of the world. Hence, there were tendencies to regard the demand for a truce and for negotiation of the issues in Korea in a purely formal sense without serious expectation that American imperialism could be forced into negotiations. When the Truman Administration was compelled to enter into negotiations there

was, and still is, a completely insufficient struggle to bring about the intervention of the masses in these negotiations in order to influence their successful outcome. Instead there was, and is, a reliance on spontaneity in our approach to mobilizing the masses for an end to the war in Korea. When there is an upsurge among the masses owing to some development or other, we give our activity a little spurt; when this upsurge subsides somewhat, our own activity subsides. Fundamentally, this reliance on spontaneity stems from a fatalist attitude toward the possibility of compelling, through mass pressure, an end to the White House-Pentagon sabotage at Panmunjom and forcing the conclusion of a truce.

In relation to the petition campaign for a Five-Power Peace Pact, we must state quite frankly that there was resistance to entering this campaign from the very beginning. This resistance stemmed, initially, from some hesitation within the national leadership of our party itself which considered that this campaign was not sufficiently "indigenous" to register among the masses. This viewpoint, of course, has been amply refuted not only by the results of the Gallup Poll but by the results achieved wherever serious efforts have been made to collect signatures.

In relation to specific measures of war preparation submitted to Congress by the Truman Administration, there was, and is, hardly a token of serious effort to bring about their defeat. It is said that nothing can be

done with this Congress; anti-parliamentary moods prevail. But, without any serious participation by our Party or the Left forces generally, UMT is defeated in Congress. Little or no struggle of any kind is launched against the staggering military budgets submitted by Truman. But without our intervention, the pressure of the masses against mounting taxes is so great that the House of Representatives cut Truman's military budget by 10 percent.

In relation to our fight to win the masses for peaceful coexistence of the two systems, an extremely formalistic attitude prevails. It remains a slogan which we do not attempt to translate into various forms of practical-political activity. This is the fundamental reason for our failure to grasp the full significance of the International Economic Conference recently held in Moscow, and the extensive possibilities of winning mass support among large sections of workers for breaking down State Department barriers to east-west trade. The offer of the Soviet government to do four hundred million dollars worth of business with the United States each year for the next three years, plus the undoubted readiness of the People's Democracies in Europe and the People's Republic of China to open up similar prospects for trade, has a powerful attraction for the masses of unemployed workers in the depressed civilian industries like textile, radio and television, shoe, furniture, etc., as well as in industries which would immediately

expand employment as a result of such trade as maritime and long-shore.

We are, all of us, ready enough to explain that the slowness with which the American workers are entering into the struggle against war preparations stems to a considerable degree from the fact that the war economy has given jobs to millions of workers. Why, then, are we so slow to understand that these very same bread and butter considerations of jobs and employment can also buttress opposite movements and tempos among workers if they are linked with a policy of trade with the Soviet Union? If a job created by the war economy has one effect, then a job created by a policy of peace and trade with the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic, and the Peoples' Democracies of Eastern Europe will have a different effect. The fight to break down the barriers erected against east-west trade by the State Department can enlist the support of hundreds of thousands of unemployed textile, clothing, shoe, furniture, household appliance, maritime and longshore workers.

Then we sometimes find a combination of views which, despite an expression of belief in the possibility of preventing a new world war, demobilizes the struggle for peace because it is predicated on the expectation that the world peace forces will do the job all by themselves. The American people, according to this opinion, can be written off the books; if a new war is to be prevented, it

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will be done without, and in spite of, the American people. Those holding such views lustily applaud the Soviet Union, the North Korean and Chinese people, the struggling masses in the colonial and dependent countries, the powerful Communist Parties and people's peace movements in Western Europe—but turn their backs on the American people. As far as they are concerned, the prevention of a new war is so little dependent on the American people that the world peace forces can be relied on to do the job, even if a fascist dictatorship should be established in the United States; and they, more or less, consider that such a fascist dictatorship in the United States is quite inevitable after a few last ditch struggles.

It is, of course, basic to our work to have a high appreciation of the strength of the world peace forces. But we will do the world peace camp a greater service if we also have deep confidence in the American people, in our ability to arouse and activize them in the fight for peace. Any tendency to write the American people off the books as a vital factor in the fight for peace is sheer capitulation before the admittedly great difficulties in the way of combating the drive of American imperialism to war. It is a form of political myopia which sees only the difficulties and does not see the rapidly emerging new possibilities. To write the American people off the books is a defeatist substitute for conducting the necessary examination of our own weaknesses and mistakes in the fight for

peace.

At the root of such weaknesses in our fight for peace is the influence, in one form or another, of a skeptical attitude to the possibility of the peaceful coexistence of the two systems, of a fatalist attitude toward the possibility of preventing a new world war, an underestimation of the deep-going peace sentiment of the American people. This fatalist attitude, unfortunately, is present also in the labor movement generally, including Left and progressive sections. Our leadership nationally and in the districts must undertake to develop a serious ideological-political campaign on these issues in order to unleash the full energy of our Party in the fight for peace.

ELIMINATE SECTARIANISM!

At the same time, we must begin to correct a widespread and deep-rooted sectarianism in our approach to the united front in the fight for peace. For, no matter how adequately we grasp the possibility of preventing the outbreak of a new world war, no matter how much confidence we have in the readiness of the American people to fight for peace, we will not make any appreciable headway if we narrow down existing possibilities by sectarian approaches to the policy and tactic of the united front.

Essentially, this sectarianism manifests itself in a failure to understand fully the relationship between the existing united front centers of struggle for peace and the emerging move-

ments for peace among the millions who, under present conditions, will not join or follow these existing peace centers. Such united front peace centers as the American Peace Crusade, the Labor Peace Conference, the American Women for Peace, unite forces of diverse political tendencies, both Communist and non-Communist, in activities around a minimum program for peace. Having set themselves the aim of initiating projects and actions around specific issues such as ending the war in Korea, the Five-Power Peace Pact, etc., these centers have made an outstanding contribution to the fight for peace in the United States. They have contributed in no small degree to the changes which are clearly observable among large masses of workers and Negro people with respect to the fight for peace.

The influence of these centers is not limited exclusively to those who directly follow their leadership and support their campaigns. By their numerous and extensive activities, they have helped to stimulate the activity and understanding of masses in Right-led unions and mass organizations of the most diverse type. Hence these united front peace centers are fully justified in their sustained efforts to build themselves, to expand their influence and increase their activities, to fully realize their great potentialities in the fight for peace. They are fully justified in resolutely combating certain tendencies to liquidate these centers, or to allow them to die out, because it is possible

to build broader movements, either now or in the future.

At the same time, we must clearly recognize the limitations within which these existing centers operate. These limitations are inherent, at the present time, in the fact that they group together various non-Left—even certain conservative—forces who are willing to work together with the Left and Communists in a formal united front. This is one of the most important characteristics of these centers. It is a characteristic of the united front struggle for peace which is bound to grow in the future, despite the Red-baiting and divisive work of the war-mongers. In fact, here and there, the urgency of the struggle around one or another issue has shown that such tendencies are beginning to manifest themselves, e.g., the broad united front conference in Ansonia, Connecticut, against war economy unemployment; the official support by conservative C.I.O. and A. F. of L. forces to the strike of the U.E. in Wasau, Wisconsin; the foundry conference of three U.E.-F.E., U.A.W. and A. F. of L. locals of the Harvester chain.

As yet, however, these tendencies are the exception. In general, the atmosphere in the country is such that many millions who are prepared to participate in the fight around one or another aspect of the struggle for peace are not prepared to do so in formal unity with the Communists or with the Left generally. In many cases, this has nothing to do with the subjective political inclinations of sec-

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tions of the trade unions and Negro people's organizations. The workers in a particular local, for example, may themselves favor uniting with the Left in some project initiated by the Labor Conference For Peace. But they are inhibited from acting according to their convictions by fear of reprisals from their district or international office. One or another labor or religious or Negro people's leader may not personally object to establishing a formal united front relationship with the existing peace centers. But they also are compelled to reckon with a relation of forces which, at the present time, effectively prevents them from uniting with the Left except under penalty of being threatened with the loss of the influence and leadership they now exert.

Hence, it is unreal to expect that the organized influence of the existing peace centers will expand uninterrupted by the constant absorption, so to speak, of the increasingly new, large sections of the American people and their organizations who are entering into the active struggle for peace.

What shall be done in such cases, especially since they affect the majority of workers and Negro people desirous of fighting for peace? Should they be abandoned until the political climate changes at which time they will be ready and free to unite with the Left, or act under the leadership of the existing peace centers? Merely to put the question is to answer it.

The task in this situation—and

it is the main situation with which we are confronted—is to encourage and facilitate the development of movements on specific issues among the masses in the Right-led unions and other people's organizations which will parallel the activities of the existing peace centers even though such movements, in the beginning, are based on unclarity or confusion on important questions; even though such movements, in the beginning, may be influenced by the anti-Communist views of individual leaders of various Right-led unions and organizations.

But this is precisely what we have not been doing. Instead, almost all our attention and energy has been devoted to the existing Left-progressive peace centers. This is one of the chief reasons why millions who are for an immediate end to the war in Korea have not been able to articulate their demands. That is why millions who are for a meeting of the Big Five, or for the conclusion of a peace pact, have not been able to make their influence felt in this struggle.

UNITED FRONT FOR PEACE

Both nationally and in the districts and sections, we must subject our whole approach to the united front peace fight to a searching re-examination in order to eliminate completely the baleful influence of such sectarian approaches and practices. A few illustrations will establish this point.

The main character of the work that is being done to involve trade unions in the fight for peace differs very little today from what it was a year ago. Efforts are made to get delegates from local unions to conferences organized by A.P.C. or by the Labor Peace Conference; or these unions are asked to join in, or give support to, projects initiated by these two centers. This is all to the good; but it is woefully insufficient.

The desire for peace, and the fear of war, has grown so considerably among the masses of workers that in a growing number of cases even the leadership of Right-led internationals has been compelled to heed this sentiment and give it public expression. Such is the case with Gorman and Jimerson of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters, A. F. of L.; likewise with Potofsky and Rosenblum of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; likewise with Hugo Ernst of the Hotel & Restaurant Workers, A. F. of L.; likewise Stellato of the Ford local, U.A.W. In these cases, the issue of the peaceful coexistence of the socialist and capitalist social systems has been advanced as a cardinal point of foreign policy by the leaders of the unions mentioned.

If Gorman, Jimerson, Potofsky, Rosenblum, Ernst, Stellato declare themselves for peaceful coexistence, it is because of the pressure of the moods of their membership. How can these moods be transformed into activity? Certainly not by reliance on the top leaders of these unions. But—and this is what differentiates

the present moment from a year ago—not necessarily in collision with these leaders. The activation of these workers in the fight for peaceful coexistence is greatly enhanced because the central issue on which this activity is based is no longer in conflict with official union policy. But if we insist that the local unions of these internationals affiliate with A.P.C. or L.P.C., or sponsor the projects of these centers, or officially participate in their campaigns, then we are placing needless obstacles in the way of activating these workers in the fight for peace.

These workers and their local unions should be encouraged to devise their own activities, their own organizational forms, their own projects independently of the existing peace centers. Only in this way can they be brought into the struggle for peace and a new step taken along the road of building an eventual peace coalition in our country.

This same consideration applies in the case of those unions in which the leadership does not differentiate itself from the foreign policies of the Administration, or even actively supports these policies as in the Steel Union, the Auto Union, the Railroad Brotherhoods, etc. Here it will certainly be easier to cope with the opposition of the union leadership to the peace activity of the members and locals of the various internationals if the struggle revolves around *the issue* (e.g., ending the war in Korea, a meeting of the Big Five, etc.) rather than around *the form*

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The desire for peace among the members and followers of Negro people's organizations has been enhanced by the signal contributions of such figures as Paul Robeson and Dr. Du Bois. This role has been outstanding in heightening the conscious desire for peace, not only among the Negro people, but among the masses of the population as a whole.

This being the situation, why have the masses of Negro people not been more actively involved in the fight for peace?

This question, in reality, involves two questions:

1) Why have the existing peace centers not won greater support among the Negro people?

2) Why has the full peace potential of the Negro people not found adequate forms of expression?

One of the main, if not the chief, reasons, for the failure of the existing peace centers to expand their influence among the Negro people, is the influence of white chauvinism within these centers and within the various organizations composing them. The articles of Comrades Pettis Perry and Claudia Jones in *Political Affairs* have held these white chauvinist influences, in their various forms of manifestation, up to the light of day and brilliantly dissected them.

When a white trade-union leader can say, at a conference of one of such peace centers, that "there have been too many Negro speakers," or "too much discussion of the Negro

(e.g., support to affiliation with, or delegates to an A.P.C. conference) since this question of form raises political issues of a different character which the workers may not be prepared, at present, to fight on, *i.e.*, unity with the Left.

THE NEGRO PEOPLE AND THE PEACE STRUGGLE

So it is also with the masses of the Negro people and the fight for peace. It is an indisputable fact that the peace sentiments of the Negro people are fundamental and deep-going. The very character of the drive toward world domination and war by American imperialism has brought about an intertwining at many points of the struggle for peace with the struggle for Negro rights and against white chauvinism. The upsurge of the national liberation movements of the colonial and dependent peoples in Asia and Africa gives stimulus to the Negro liberation struggle in the United States. The struggle for Negro rights finds itself from the outset confronted with a virulent increase of chauvinism and racism which stems directly from the expansionist program of American imperialism. While it would be incorrect to lump together, in an undifferentiated manner, the struggle for Negro rights and the struggle for peace, equally, it would be wrong to overlook the close interrelationship of the two and their mutual strengthening which is one of the chief characteristics of the present

question," then it is not to be wondered at that the white chauvinist orientation behind such remarks will affect the ability of such centers to influence masses of Negro people desirous of joining in the fight for peace.

When the close connection between certain aspects of the struggle for Negro rights and the fight for peace is not taken into account in order not to "alienate" certain white forces, then we again have displayed the influences of white chauvinism which explain why such centers have not succeeded in gaining greater support among large sections of the Negro people.

The struggle against white chauvinism within these peace centers is of prime importance in facilitating the adherence of greater sections of the Negro people to their programs and activities. Such a struggle must be led by the white forces within these centers. And in leading this struggle, they can confidently count on support among the white masses. For it is a most serious mistake to underestimate the readiness of the white masses to join in the struggle against white chauvinism *when they are given a clear lead to join in this struggle in their own self-interest.*

The virulent increase of vile, white chauvinist, racist propaganda which accompanies Wall Street's war preparations is not the only feature of the present moment which influences the white masses. They are also influenced by another feature of the present moment, namely, the demonstra-

tion *in practice* of the hollowness of "white supremacy" in Asia and Africa where the allegedly "inferior" colored peoples have thrown off, or are in the process of throwing off, the shackles of the "white man's burden" and establishing their full equality. White supremacist habits of thought among the American masses were given a bigger jolt at the Yalu River and at Panmunjom than quite a few long speeches that we have been making here.

Furthermore, the glaring contrast between the noble aims which Wall Street hypocritically announces as its purpose for preparing and waging war and the opposite practice at home of oppression of the Negro people, Jim Crowism and lynching, creates its own contradictions for the bourgeoisie and their servile Socialist Democratic agents. This contrast brings international pressure to bear upon the white masses in the United States. When Governor Dewey is compelled to make a speech in Singapore about the Cicero events, this has certain important effects upon white Americans also.

The propaganda of white chauvinism has increased; but so have the possibilities for counteracting it. We must be supremely confident that if we do not underestimate the readiness of the white masses to join the struggle against white chauvinism but instead boldly and skilfully show them how it is in their own self-interest to struggle against white chauvinism, that these white masses will respond.

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But these existing peace centers cannot, and should not be expected to, channelize the peace sentiments of the millions among the Negro people who are against war. Nor can the Negro people be moved en masse into the fight for peace by the establishment of additional Left-progressive peace centers or committees especially set up to mobilize the Negro people for peace.

We place an impossible task before ourselves if we attempt, under present conditions, to insist that the Negro people fight for peace under the leadership of the Left or not at all. Although fear of unity with the Left is not so influential a factor among the Negro people as it is among the mass of white workers, farmers, middle classes, it is, with the current barrage of demagoguery, nevertheless still powerful enough to affect the form of their mass action.

Just as there is a new situation today compared with a year ago among the trade unions, so there is a new situation today among the organizations of the Negro people. This desire for peace among the Negro people—further sharpened by the intensification of their oppression—has grown to such proportions that it is bringing about, just as in the trade unions, a process of differentiation among Negro people's leaders who, by and large, still adhere to the general program of the Truman Administration.

One of the outstanding examples of a leader of the Negro people who is differentiating himself from the policies of the Truman Administration while not yet completely rejecting them, is Dr. Mordecai Johnson, President of Howard University.

The new situation among the Negro people, compared with that of a year ago, is symbolized by the position of Dr. Mordecai Johnson, who in turn reflects the pressure of the Negro people. But these masses of Negro people will not move into action in the fight for peace only under the leadership of the Left. They will do so mainly through their own organizations and through movements and committees led by Dr. Johnson and others of similar views. The responsibility of the Left-progressive forces active among the Negro people is not to counterpose themselves to this process, but to facilitate its development.

What is true of the trade unions and of the organizations of the Negro people is true of every section of the population—farmers, women, religious groups, youth, national groups, professionals. Everywhere, in varying degrees, the problem is the same—to set millions into motion in the fight for peace—not necessarily under the leadership of the Left or in formal unity with the Left, but under conditions where these millions are prepared to fight for peace.

Puerto Rico and the Fight for Its Independence

By Pettis Perry

(The concluding installment of this article will appear in our next issue—the Editor.)

IN APPROACHING THE issue of Puerto Rico, the direct colony of U.S. imperialism, it is the duty of the working class of our country to express the greatest amount of international solidarity in support of Puerto Rican independence. This is indispensable. One must reject all such "statistical" arguments as that Puerto Rico is a "little" island, with only two million people. Area or size of population is not the criterion for the position of the working class of the oppressor nation with respect to its responsibility to the colonially oppressed peoples, for Marxists have always held that no nation can itself be free as long as it oppresses other nations, whether these be large or small. The right to unconditional independence must be defended as the right of *all* colonial peoples. In addition, one cannot think seriously of anti-imperialist solidarity with the rest of the 150 million people of Latin America without taking a firm stand in behalf of the complete independence of Puerto Rico. To the rest of Latin America which is under the yoke of Yankee imperialism, Puerto Rico serves as a warning of the fullest extent of Wall Street colonialism.

* * *

When Puerto Rico was discovered in 1493, the Spanish conquerors found the country aborigines at the stage of primitive communal life. They used stone tools and drew their subsistence from agriculture, hunting, and fishing. The social relations were patriarchal. However, in that pre-class society the beginnings of a slave society were already evident.

In 1508, Juan Ponce de Leon came as the first governor to the country, and the conquest of the aborigines by the Spanish colonizers began. In 1509, by royal decree, the system of *Repatriamiento* and *Encomienda* was imposed on the 60,000 Indian inhabitants. By that system, the land was distributed as grants to Spanish feudal landowners, among whom the Indians were distributed as slaves and peons.

For the first time there were exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed, in Puerto Rico. The Indians, under the leadership of Guaybaná, organized themselves for the reconquest of their land. By 1511 there was open revolt of the Indians. The rebellion was widespread, with thousands frequently engaged in open warfare. Pitted against the unspeakable savagery of the Conquistadors

dores and their vastly superior instruments of warfare, the valorous Indians were slaughtered in large numbers. Resisting enslavement, the majority of the Indians fled to adjacent countries. By 1530, as a result of the incessant warfare and an epidemic of small pox, the Indian population in the country was reduced to 1,148!

The fierce resistance of the Indians, from exile and from within the country, together with the decimation of their numbers, compelled the Spanish colonizers to import slaves. In 1518 the first Negro slaves were brought to the Antilles. Soon after the landing of the first Negro slaves, common resistance between them and the Indians developed. Together they fled to the hills and continued to harass the colonizers.

The importation of slaves continued, although in much lesser numbers than in the other Antilles due to the slow development of the sugar industry which was not introduced in Puerto Rico until 1533. But from the very inception of slavery in the country there set in an unending series of slave revolts which were brought to a close only with the abolition of slavery in 1873.

* * *

The independence struggles in Puerto Rico developed in conjunction with the struggles in monarchical Spain. When Napoleon invaded Spain in 1810, the Latin-American countries rose in rebellion against the Spanish monarchy. The revolu-

tion of 1810 in Venezuela—and the Haitian revolution preceding it — sparked the liberation movements in all Latin America. These movements had received inspiration from the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789.

The revolutionary struggles which developed in Latin America woke the Puerto Rican people to more active political struggle. In 1810, agitation began in Puerto Rico for participation in the Spanish Cortes (parliament). In 1812, representation to the Cortes was achieved. With the unsettled state of Spanish political affairs, the Puerto Ricans rose in rebellion in 1825 and again in 1834.

The existing class relations of that period were complex. From 1810 to 1868, in the feudal setting, slavery, particularly for the Negro, still persisted; peonage laws were in force; the propertyless people were forced under penalty to work the land for the landowners at wages fixed by the government. Alongside the feudal landowners, a native bourgeoisie was rising. By 1873, when slavery was completely abolished, all slaves — Negro, Indian, and white — had merged to form the ethnic composition of the Puerto Rican nation.

A new situation arose unfolding struggles for Puerto Rican nationhood. The struggle against the super-exploitation to which the colony of Puerto Rico was subjected was, in broad historic terms, the fight for the development of the country's productive forces, for the creation of an

inner market, and for free trade relations with other countries. This process came into clash with the feudal mode of production imposed upon the country by Spain. Thus the funds to maintain fortifications, public works, government employees, and the army came from the royal treasury in Mexico, center of Spain's empire in the Americas. With the 1810 Mexican revolution, this subsidy stopped, creating great difficulties for the Administration. In turn, this stimulated new demands of the rising bourgeoisie. As a result, Spain was compelled to grant a number of concessions: representation in the Cortes, the establishment of a separate treasury, the issuance of currency, the creation of several new ports to expedite the export of products, freedom of foreign trade. Puerto Rico began to export in increasing quantities, cattle, tobacco, sugar cane, and coffee.

The political subjugation of the country, the continuing slave relations and peonage hindered the further development of the bourgeoisie. The Lares Revolution of 1868, expressing the aims of the native bourgeoisie, sought to abolish slavery, the feudal laws, and colonial rule. The workers participated in the revolution, marching with red banners, and publicly committing to bonfires the hateful peonage registration books.

The mass revolution was drowned in blood. It failed to achieve independence. But the struggle continued for the abolition of slavery, for the

abolition of peonage laws, and for genuine political representation. The national unity attained by the revolution of 1868 continued to manifest itself in revolutionary activity. The thirty most bloody years in Puerto Rican history followed in the wake of this revolution. As stated, slavery was abolished in 1873 to be followed shortly thereafter by the abolition of the peonage laws. The leaders of the Lares revolution were exiled. A new political party, the Reformist Party, was organized advocating reforms within a reactionary environment of absolutism. Its leaders were persecuted and imprisoned repeatedly. This culminated in a general inquisition against all Puerto Rican reformists in 1887. By then the Reformist Party had changed into the Autonomous Party. Puerto Rico finally wrested from the Spanish oppressors an autonomous form of government in 1897.

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The history of U.S. enslavement of Puerto Rico goes back 54 years, to 1898, when Puerto Rico was taken by force from imperial Spain. (U.S. troops landed in the country on July 25, 1898.) The bourgeois scientist, Josue de Castro, in his work, *The Geography of Hunger* (1952), refers to that period as follows:

When the United States took possession of Puerto Rico in 1898, following the victory over Spain, it found a population which, if not exactly swimming in wealth and abundance, was far

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from the misery and hunger that it suffers in our times. The ensuing catastrophe is worth analyzing (pp. 122).

In his brief analysis the author states further:

It is not extreme, indeed, to compare the island of Puerto Rico so far as the living conditions of its people are concerned, to the island of Hongkong in the Chinese seas. The English established themselves on Hongkong by the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. But until today they have done nothing to improve the living conditions of the Chinese who subsist there, bound in mire and misery like the natives of this other 'island slum,' as Vogt called the territory of Puerto Rico.

In spite of the postwar measures at increasing industrialization and promoting diversification of agriculture, Puerto Rico remains a kind of Hongkong for the Americas (p. 126—Emphasis mine—P.P.).

The autonomous government was abolished by the U.S. imperialist authorities, a military government was imposed. To this date, troops of occupation are quartered in Puerto Rico. The struggle for national liberation continued, now directed against American imperialism. In May 1900, the U.S. Congress passed the Foraker Act. This Act instituted a civil government in place of military rule, under U.S. domination. The Act gave to Washington control over commerce and the tariff and to the President the power to appoint all officers of the Puerto Rican govern-

ment. With the institution of civil government, the organized labor movement, which had just arisen, conducted militant strikes and demanded legislation for the eight-hour work day. While the bourgeois Federalist party challenged the Foraker Act and the limitations imposed upon the Puerto Rican people, by the new organic charter, it tried to use the oppressive laws formerly directed against it by monarchical Spain, against the rising labor movement.

In the period of the first imperialist world war, the Jones Act was enacted, according U.S. citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico. The Jones Act, motivated in part by the need for cannon-fodder, amended the Foraker Act as the organic law governing U.S. relations with Puerto Rico. This law, which granted certain limited reforms not only did not end the colonial status of Puerto Rico, but riveted tighter the hold of Wall Street on the economic, social, and political life of the country.

* * *

Puerto Rico has, indeed, suffered retrogression with the advent of the vaunted democracy from the United States since its conquest in 1898. Many people of this country are quite unaware of this appalling fact. But the Puerto Rican people are very much aware of it and are struggling to free themselves from the fetters of imperialist domination.

The economic aspects of this oppression are stark. A major evidence of the enforced economic retrogres-

sion, as a result of Wall Street's super-exploitation, is the systematic reduction of Puerto Rico from a land with a potentially varied agriculture into one with a grinding and impoverishing monoculture — the sugar industry controlled by the U.S. trusts.

In 1949, according to former U.S. Congressman Vito Marcantonio, Puerto Rico produced 1,277,482 tons of sugar. How much of this sugar was Puerto Rico permitted to refine? Fifteen percent of its total production! The other 85 percent was refined in the United States. This is the rankest kind of economic oppression. Marcantonio told Congress: "Under the colonial system of exploitation which I have just described, we have now in Puerto Rico over 300,000 unemployed out of a total population of 2,200,000 inhabitants. That would amount, more or less, to 21,000,000 unemployed in the United States."*

The Puerto Rican Monthly Statistical Report for January-February-March 1951, published by the Office of the Governor, San Juan, Puerto Rico, gives the labor force as 785,000 for January and 789,000 for March, 1951: of the entire labor force, 408,000 worked 30 hours or more in January and 470,000 in March. Those working less than 30 hours in January totalled 190,000, and 179,000 in March. The number having jobs, but not at work were 25,000 in January and 24,000 in March. Of the total labor force in

January, 20 per cent were unemployed. If one takes the last three categories, those unemployed, those working less than 30 hours and those with a job but not at work, we get a total of 377,000 persons fully or partially unemployed. This would be 48 percent of the total labor force! These figures are taken for January, the month when unemployment is the greatest in the sugar industry. It illustrates, however, how sugar plays havoc with the people of Puerto Rico. But even when sugar is at its peak, let us say in March, the unemployment situation is still very serious. For if one takes the month of March as the lowest point in unemployment, the total being 98,000, that would be over 12 percent of the total labor force unemployed, not including the partially unemployed.

Latin American Facts, a progressive publication that specializes in Latin-American affairs, states in its issue of February, 1951:

In 1949, 30,000 families were receiving public relief and 41,000 more had applied for relief, a total approximating one in every six of the families on the Island. The public assistance grants to families from insular funds (this means the funds in Puerto Rico itself) are \$7.50 per family per month, irrespective of the number in the family (the average family in Puerto Rico is 5 per family). These figures were taken from the report adopted June 23, 1950 by the Federal Security Agency Interdepartmental Committee on Children and

* Vito Marcantonio, in his speech before the 81st Congress, 2nd session, March 16, 1950.

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The people of Puerto Rico are subjected to wholesale misery and starvation, thanks to the "American way of life."

In 1946-7, according to a special study made of Puerto Rico, more than two-thirds of the country's families had an annual income of less than \$1,000 a year, while 40 percent had less than \$500 a year. According to a country-wide study of "patterns of living in Puerto Rican families," about 76 percent of rural and 54 percent of urban individuals sleep with 3 or more persons to a room, and 39 percent and 14 percent respectively, sleep in rooms shared by five or more persons. Ninety-four percent of urban persons sleep without benefit of mattress."

The Irving Trust Company, in its report, "Conditions in Puerto Rico," issued January 5, 1950, states the following on wages in Puerto Rico: "Wages are low and represent the main advantage the island has to offer for industrialists. Skilled workers average 43 cents per hour against \$1.40 in the United States. Unskilled railroad workers get 30 cents per hour." And so we get the brutal admission that the greater the misery of the Puerto Rican people, the more advantageous it is for Yankee Big Business.

It may perhaps be thought that these miserable wage levels are "bal-

anced off" with low price levels. What are the facts? The cost of living actually is more than 50 percent higher than in the United States. The first quarter of 1951 indicated that the consumer price index for all items increased 9.9 percent since June 1950. The Wholesale Price Index for rice soared 28 percent; and for beans 23 percent from March 1950 to March 1951. Rice and beans are two of the most important staples in the diet of the Puerto Rican masses.

An additional means of the super-exploitation of Puerto Rico is its exclusion from the world market. Puerto Rico could undoubtedly buy things much cheaper on the world market than it is forced to pay to the United States. Ninety percent of Puerto Rico's imports come from this country. In 1948, Puerto Rico bought from the United States 337 million dollars in goods and sold to the United States 199 million dollars worth of goods. Obviously such an unequal trade balance heavily favors the United States monopolists.

The reader might remember that William Z. Foster, the National Chairman of the C.P.U.S.A., who has the distinction of being the only Marxist in this country to give systematic attention to Latin America, made a trip to Puerto Rico, and upon his return published an Open Letter to President Truman, called "El Fanguito." In this letter he showed that there were some of the worst, if not the worst, slums known to

mankind in Puerto Rico. He sharply demanded that Truman and his Administration address themselves to these horrible conditions. But to no avail. At that very moment, Truman was too busy cooking up war and squandering the taxpayers' money for monstrous armament preparations.

* * *

One of the most deplorable situations in Puerto Rico is the status of education. Within a population of 2,200,000 there are over 600,000 children of school age without adequate schools. Dr. Mackenzie of Columbia University reported at a hearing before a Congressional sub-committee of the Committee on Education and Labor that it would require 65 million dollars to support the educational system in Puerto Rico, on the same average per pupil as obtains in continental United States. Dr. Mackenzie observed ironically: "If we think we have a crisis in the United States, then Puerto Rico has a famine."

The average child in the rural areas of Puerto Rico gets the equivalent of two years of schooling in the United States. Only six or seven of every 100 students finish high school. Over four-fifths of the children are limited to half-ration education, since they attend school only half a day.

Dr. Virgilio Brunet, President of the Puerto Rican Teachers Association, told the same committee:

The American people want their

teachers to receive salaries which will insure an adequate flow of the right kind of new teachers into the profession. The teacher in Puerto Rico receives an average annual salary of \$1,577, or \$131 per month. Any other employee of the insular or Federal Government, with an academic and professional preparation equivalent to that required for a teacher, a B.A. degree, and with much less responsibility than that assumed by a teacher, receives a salary twice as large. He went on to complain: "Of course, one of the reasons why we have been able to open enough schoolrooms for 54 percent of our school population is that we have reduced efficiency by imposing impossibly heavy loads on low-salary teachers. We realize that if salaries were increased to double the amount now paid, and if the pupil-teacher load were not so heavy as it is now, more than three-fourths of our school population would have no chance to enter school."*

Dr. Brunet then described the pension system for Puerto Rico, showing that the pension now received by teachers ranged from \$20-\$50 per month, and suggesting that such pensions were scarcely enough to pay house rent. But this Committee, chaired by John Lesinki of Michigan, showed that it had very little interest in the Puerto Rican educational system.

Thus it turns out that a serious economic and social problem posed to this Committee with respect to

* Hearings before a Special Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Rep., 81st Cong., Nov. 16, 1948, p. 202.

conditions in Puerto Rico received nothing but disregard and scorn at its hands. How this epitomizes the white chauvinism and imperialist racist arrogance so rampant in this country, and which is stimulated so vigorously by the war drive of the men of Wall Street!

And yet the Puerto Ricans are told that they are citizens of the United States, that they enjoy "our way of life," that therefore they must be ready to offer themselves as cannon fodder for Wall Street's wars. At present, Puerto Rico has proportionately more youth in Korea than any other country, including the

United States, sent there to fight for "democracy" and for "our way of life." It is pertinent to ask: For whom are the Puerto Ricans asked to fight to attain democracy? Is it for the starving and enslaved people of the Island of Puerto Rico? Is it for the 15 million oppressed Negroes in the United States? Is it for the 60 million exploited workers in the United States? Is it for the millions of toiling farmers in the United States? Not at all! It is for the Wall Street bankers, the trusts, the Dixiecrats and Southern Bourbons. It is for the Big Business interests that hold Puerto Rico in enslavement.

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The Strike of the Steel Workers

By George Morris

THE GREAT STRIKE of the steel workers is of basic importance to the working class as a whole, especially in the fight against the wage freeze. Steel wages have traditionally been a strong influence upon wage movements generally. This holds particularly in this period when free collective bargaining is pretty much supplanted by the imposition of government-dictated wage policy.

The steel workers' union is viewed by the workers as a heavy battering ram, powerful enough to break through the government roadblocks set to bar wage raises. It need hardly be added that the big employers of the country place a strong confidence in the powerful steel corporations to hold down wages, and hold up the high profits and the high price level.

At this writing, the steel workers are out, and after seven months of negotiations, unions with millions of members are watching the outcome of the struggle in steel because their own stalled or approaching wage talks will be influenced by the "pattern." Moreover, as is now apparent to all, what began as a fight for a wage raise for steel workers, developed also into a major political

struggle over issues affecting the labor movement as a whole.

As the strike progressed, it also became apparent how correct William Z. Foster, chairman of the Communist Party and leader of the first general steel strike (1919), was when he wrote in his series of articles in the *Daily Worker* (May 6-14) that "there has been altogether too much reliance upon the Truman Administration and too much acceptance of the notion of a 'national emergency' which really does not exist."

Forced to strike after seven months of fruitless negotiations, the workers on numerous picket lines echoed Foster's assertion that Philip Murray "was wrong when he ordered the men back to work without their demands being granted, simply upon the request of President Truman."

The strike also confirmed strongly Foster's warning that the "urgent question confronting organized labor, therefore, is whether it will submit to having the workers' demands arbitrarily taken over by reactionary government officials, courts and wage boards, or whether it will insist upon the workers' full right to strike when they deem this course necessary."

Foster said the "seizure" method is among the "new strikebreaking techniques" that are being developed. What is "badly needed in the labor movement is a rebirth of its fighting spirit of the 1930's when the CIO was being built," he stressed.

A steel worker who has gone through his experience since last Fall is bound to appreciate Foster's advice that "it is in the most fundamental interest for the working class and its allies to put an end to the so-called status of national emergency" and fight the attacks of the war-mongering bi-partisan Administration upon the working class.

BACKGROUND OF THE STRUGGLE

The steel wage struggle came to a head nearly two years after the Korean war broke out and more than a year after the proclamation of the so-called "emergency" and the "stabilization" and wage freeze limiting raises to 10 percent that came with it.

The leaders of the AFL and CIO had agreed to the "stabilization" program and its freeze on wages. They assumed a share of the responsibility of enforcing it by serving on government boards as labor representatives. Together with the representatives of business and "public" on the Wage Stabilization Board, these labor representatives voted for a statement of policy that declared it the object of the WSB to keep prices "stabilized",

by siphoning off the purchasing power of the masses by means of holding down wages and by more taxation to pay for the war program. They justified this stand on the basis of the worthless assurance of the government that prices and rents would be held down.

While there still was some leeway within the earlier 10 percent limit formula for possible wage increases, illusions persisted among the workers in the stabilization program. But when price increases over pre-Korea levels shot past the 10 percent line—already 15 percent according to even the BLS index—and new tax levies were slapped on pay envelopes while Congress went further in emasculating price control, the "stabilization" program became rapidly discredited among the workers. The parallel drop in sentiment for the Korean war and the entire Truman war policy, also served to increase doubts among the workers whether there is a valid reason for Americans to feel in a state of "emergency."

The rising tide of wage struggles, with that of the steel workers a new high point, reflects the change of sentiment that is taking place. For some months prior to steel negotiations, as the combusive pressure was increasing beneath the wage ceiling, breakthroughs were scored on some sectors of the wage front. Most important among them was the victory won by the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (unaffiliated) in unity with

AFL craft unions after a strike last summer of its copper mining and smelting workers. They won a package of better than 20 cents an hour. Such precedents encouraged the workers to feel that even if the freeze is not smashed, the "stabilizers" can at least be forced to turn their wage formula into a several-way stretch. The government was compelled to yield a few directives allowing raises to go beyond the 10 percent limit to the extent of the rise in the BLS index; approving annual "productivity" raises and correcting inequities or inequalities within or between plants of an industry.

THE DEMANDS IN STEEL

When the steel workers formulated their demands they were credited by "stabilization" bookkeepers with a possibility of getting about five cents an hour because they had gotten almost all of the allowable 10 percent a year earlier. It was therefore apparent to the steel workers that they either had to smash through the wage freeze or stretch the wage formula far enough to allow a substantial raise.

The workers paid no attention to the freeze limits. When the steel union's wage policy committee met to formulate demands, its officers disclosed that thousands of resolutions were received from locals expressing their proposals for the new contract. No analyses or breakdown of those

resolutions was provided, but it is known that the most common specified wage demand was for a raise of 25 to 30 cents an hour.

The workers were equally interested in other contract changes affecting both earnings and working conditions. The expiring contract, but for several wage reopeners and the pension-insurance plan, was unchanged for five years. When it was signed in 1947, Murray was already in quite a "sacrificial" mood because of the interest he had begun to show in the "Truman Doctrine" and the newly advanced Marshall Plan. Important objectives of the steel workers, that had been enjoyed by other workers for years, were again side-tracked. Subsequent extensions stretched the two-year contract to a total of five years.

In the meantime, steel workers remained without paid holidays, while other industries had six paid holidays; continued on straight time for Saturday and Sunday work, while the standard practice elsewhere is time and one half and double time; enjoyed a second week vacation after three years and a third after 25 years, while others did much better; received shift premiums of only four cents for afternoons and six cents for night shifts, while others did twice as well or better. Those conditions affected substantially the earnings of all steel workers, because they continually rotate their work schedule, so that about two-thirds of their

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weeks fall on weekend days during a year, and most workers are affected by shift premiums.

Another widespread demand voiced in local union resolutions was for a fair employment practices clause protecting both hiring and promotion rights for Negroes and other groups suffering discrimination. The number of Negro workers in the industry, always large, has increased of late. The most serious problem is upgrading and promotion rights. The traditional practice in the industry has built up a sort of jimcrow condition in many plants fencing off the Negro workers to certain departments and wage classifications and limiting their seniority and promotion rights within those departments. While through slow progress some inroads were made into the "forbidden" areas, the situation is far from satisfactory. The locals that had been pressing for an FEP clause had a right to expect favorable consideration, because only a few weeks before negotiations began, the CIO convention had passed a civil rights resolution calling upon all affiliates to negotiate such clauses in their contracts.

The wage policy committee, on recommendation of the union's officers, advanced 22 demands, covering fully or in part most of what the locals asked, but with the demand for an FEP clause entirely excluded. This caused widespread resentment.

The wage demand, at first for a "substantial" raise, was subsequently

spelled out for 15 cents across the board and an additional $3\frac{1}{2}$ cents to widen the stepup in each of the 32 wage classifications from the present 5 cents to $5\frac{1}{2}$ cents an hour. The union also asked for eight paid holidays; time and one-half and double time for Saturday and Sunday; increase of shift premiums to 10 and 15 cents; improvement in the vacation plan; elimination of the 10-cent hourly Southern differential; revision of the antiquated incentive plans and a guarantee of 32 hours pay a week during lay-offs, less what the worker collects for unemployment insurance.

THE CONDITION OF THE STEEL WORKER

Lest anyone think the above demands would put the steel workers far ahead of most workers, the union put before the WSB a volume of data showing that winning of those demands would mean only a "catch-up" with others in comparative industries.

The union showed that the increase for steel workers in hourly earnings since January, 1950, (11.9 percent) was surpassed by the increases won for the period by the coal, copper, electrical, meatpacking, shipbuilding and auto workers. The picture was the same for the period since 1939.

Most revealing, was the union's data refuting the much publicized

\$1.91 an hour, \$78.30 a week, average shown for steel workers in the BLS index. It was shown, first, that this hourly average includes overtime. The straight time average is \$1.85. The union noted that the BLS four-person family "modest but adequate" budget brought up to November, 1951, requires \$79.46 a week. It may appear from the BLS average that the steel workers are not faring so badly. But the union points out:

More than half—nearly 60 percent—of all steel workers earn less than this average weekly earnings figure since the weekly earnings average is pulled up by reason of the high incentive earnings of a few employes.

The union notes, for example, that classification 1 of the 32, is rated at \$1.31 (\$1.21 in the South), which gives the workers only \$52.40 a week and would require a boost of 67½ cents an hour (not the 15 cents asked) to bring up his weekly earnings to the BLS budget. The union further points out that 34.5 percent of U.S. Steel's 288,000 employees are in classification one to five—\$1.31 to \$1.51. The average earnings of this group is \$1.41 an hour. It was further brought out that 97.5 percent of U.S. Steel's employees are in classifications 1 to 16—earnings \$2.01 an hour or less. This leaves only 7,000 of the 288,000 of the corporation's hourly workers to earn a rate that would enable them to do as well or better than the BLS "modest but adequate" budget.

Within this picture, it need hardly be added, the Negro workers are concentrated largely in the first five classifications. And this is the situation as the industry enjoys full-blast production. The above economic facts should indicate the tremendous dissatisfaction that was pent up in the steel workers as they approached negotiations—a dissatisfaction that neither their leaders nor the Truman Administration dared ignore in this election year.

THE STRATEGIC LINE

The trump card of the union leaders was once more reliance on the Truman Administration. They did so despite past experience when recommendations of government bodies were turned down by employers and the workers had to strike anyway to win them. The leaders were still enchanted by the idea of having the government do much of the negotiating for them. They did not take the Dec. 31 strike deadline seriously. They didn't prepare very actively for a strike. It was taken for granted that Truman would step in and hand the dispute over to the WSB; that the WSB recommendation would be favorable; that because of the armaments drive and fabulous profits, the WSB's recommendation would have the force of a compulsory award; that the government as the chief customer of the steel companies would easily settle the price issue with them.

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Apparently the steel union's leaders felt sure that Taft-Hartley injunction procedure would not be followed, as was done in the copper strike. A T-H injunction would hardly be helpful to the Democrats in an election year when they can ill afford to antagonize the unions.

If the steel workers thought they would enter real and "free" collective bargaining for their demands, that illusion was shattered on the very Nov. 15 when their demands were drawn up. Benjamin Fairless, president of U.S. Steel, said in a speech in Cincinnati:

Whether our workers are to get a raise, and how much it will be if they do, is a matter that probably cannot be determined by collective bargaining, and will apparently have to be decided in Washington.

As the public was soon to learn, there was no collective bargaining. The line of the employers was to refuse to settle or even negotiate seriously, until they were able to extort a price increase that would not only cover an added labor cost, but also give them a steep raise on their already fabulous profits. The only real negotiations they engaged in were in secret with Charles E. Wilson, then still mobilization boss, who as former head of General Electric, understood their case perfectly and most sympathetically.

This greed for more profits comes

in face of the following facts submitted by the union to the W.S.B.:

Profits before taxes for the 20 largest companies producing more than 95 percent of the country's steel, rose from \$156 million in 1939 to \$1,803,800,000 in 1951. The profit level last year was five times that of 1945—the last war year. Profits after taxes for those 20 companies, were \$125 million in 1939; \$186 million in 1945; \$596 million in 1951.

The net worth of these companies increased from \$3 billion in 1939, to \$3,376,000,000 in 1945, to \$5,536,000,000 in 1951.

Payment of dividends by those companies rose from \$16 million in 1939, to \$87.5 million in 1945, to \$236 million in 1951.

The productivity of the steel workers, as revealed in a survey of B.L.S., rose by mid-1951 to 40.5 percent over the 1939 level for each man-hour worked.

This unrestrained profit-lust of the steel companies, their patently vested interests in perpetuating the armaments program and the killings in Korea, exposed the hypocrisy back of the "emergency." More than any other factor, it served to expose the "emergency" as a deliberately devised false alarm to justify a wage freeze and heavy taxation upon the masses in order to keep the troughs overflowing for the profit hogs. And, furthermore, it served to discredit the Truman war policy among the workers or the early dreams of a

prosperity for the steel workers based on an armaments economy.

The steel workers had already given an indication of their mood in the wave of "wildcat" strikes in the months preceding the negotiations. The smallest issue was enough to cause walkouts and shutdowns. Hardly a large steel mill escaped them. But this mood among the workers, while often an expression of distrust in regional officials, was by no means a lack of confidence in Murray.

Opinions may have varied among the workers on the tactics followed by the union's top leaders. Some locals, by their resolutions calling for a strike at the given deadline, expressed doubt in the policy of depending on Truman. But there was not an organized or very strong challenge to Murray's policy. Each time he asked for a postponement or called off a walkout, there was dissatisfaction but no openly manifested resistance. Four times strike deadlines were set and twice back-to-work orders were issued. But it is also important to see that Murray had to take account of the rising anger and militancy among the workers. The special convention called in Atlantic City on January 3 to approve the first postponement of a strike, also adopted, on the recommendation of the leaders, a resolution setting a strike for February 24. The tone of the convention and its speeches was to grant no further postponements.

When the regular convention met in Philadelphia on May 12, approval was sought for calling off the strike that had broken out on April 9, following Judge Pine's reversal of the seizure of the plants. But at the same time a resolution, backed by many militant speeches from the floor and a prolonged demonstration, warned that the workers would not stay on their jobs "indefinitely" while the Supreme Court deliberated on Truman's "seizure" powers.

There was already apparent among the delegates doubt as to the wisdom of the policy followed by the top leaders. There was fear that the Supreme Court might sit on the case for a long time while wages, by the high court's own edict, were held to a status quo. There was further fear that whatever the court decided, the union would still have to strike to get what the W.S.B. had recommended. The one time the delegates really burst out was in the demonstration for the resolution warning that they would not wait long for a court decision. But doubtful as some workers may have been of the policy followed, they refrained from giving open expression to their mood for fear that lack of confidence in the leaders in the middle of the struggle would play into the hands of their enemies.

OUTCOME OF THE STRATEGY

The W.S.B. handed down its recommendations on March 20, four

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days before the next strike deadline, for a general raise of $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents an hour, $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents more effective June 30 and another $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents effective January, 1933; time and a quarter for Sunday work; reduction from 25 to 15 years of the required service to qualify for a third week's vacation; six paid holidays; a cut in the Southern differential to five cents; increase of the shift premiums to six and nine cents; and further negotiation on some sort of union shop agreement.

This was a considerable whittling down of the union's demands. The entire package, cash and fringe gains, amounted to about ten percent, with no reopeners for at least 18 months. Even the government's price index, which doesn't include taxes, admitted a cost-of-living rise of about nine percent for the period since the steel workers gained their last raise.

The union promptly accepted the recommendation and postponed the strike deadline. But the steel companies, backed by all the major agencies of Big Business, released a howl as though the end of capitalism was at hand. The steel companies came up with some hasty calculations, claiming they would need a price rise of \$12 a ton to match their new cost. The government's stabilizers said that an increase of only \$2 to \$3 a ton was allowable under the price law. They countered with calculations showing that \$3 would more

than cover the new labor cost.

In the midst of the wrangle Wilson resigned as mobilization boss, charging the President with having left him out on a limb. The President, he said, had agreed with him on a steeper price boost for a smaller wage increase, which he had already promised to the steel companies. At a later date it did, indeed, transpire that the stabilizers were ready to give the steel companies \$4.50 a ton.

A new turn came on the night of April 8 as the workers were already walking out of the plants. The President announced his seizure of the industry and Murray promptly ordered the workers back to work on the President's request. The President also delivered his broadcast that night in which he upbraided the steel companies for trying to increase their already fantastic profits.

The speech and the seizure action were received with joy by the union members and leaders. It was taken for granted that the first act of the Government's administrator, Secretary of Commerce Charles Sawyer, would be to put the W.S.B. recommendation into effect. Three weeks passed until Federal Judge David Pine's decision invalidating seizure, without a move by the government to give the workers even a penny raise. The workers became bitter. A news flash on the Pine decision on the afternoon of April 28 was enough to spark the strike in many

plants. When Murray confirmed the strike order some hours later the tieup became complete and the plants stayed tied up for three days until Pine's decision was reversed by the Court of Appeals and Murray again ordered a return to work.

Then the Truman Administration, more concerned with obtaining dictatorial powers for the President than with the wage raise of the steel workers, took its case to the Supreme Court. Truman's angry words over the air didn't hurt the steel corporations. But his deed tied up the wage case of the workers for another month in a legal snarl that was not of their making.

Before long even the leaders of the union began to view Truman's "favor" in a different light. Two weeks after seizure, when Murray closed the steel workers' convention, he acknowledged that regardless of what the Supreme Court would decide, the workers would still have to fight it out with their employers for a contract. He also blasted Sawyer, Truman's administrator over the mills, as "no friend of labor" but its enemy. He noted a letter from Sawyer blaming the union for damage to certain blast furnaces allegedly caused by the sudden walkout of April 8.

It was evident that the steel union's leaders were not quite sure of the situation. They encouraged the convention to take a militant tone because they hoped it would influence

an early decision. The steel owners were in no hurry, however, and were not too concerned with the seizure issue after the high court declared that wages must not be touched while the case was under consideration. But if the steel union's leaders still staked the union's fortunes on a Supreme Court decision granting the President new dictatorial powers, they were certainly mistaken.

The high court on June 2, in a six-to-three opinion, scrapped the President's seizure order and upheld the Pine ruling. Hardly was the news flashed over the air than walkouts began at the plants. Tens of thousands of workers were already on strike by the time Murray issued the official strike call, about an hour later. Within hours, 650,000 steel workers were out. Never in the best-prepared strike were the singleness of will and the unified response so demonstrative. A feeling of relief pervaded the workers, because they were depending on their own power for a change. They walked out furious that they were at a point in the struggle where they should have been five months earlier—and that instead of striking for their original demands, it was the much reduced W.S.B. proposal that became their maximum objective.

The struggle of the steel workers carries tremendous implications for labor as a whole. The steel compan-

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ies, as is quite evident, are spearheading a general Big Business drive upon the unions. The stand of the steel corporations set the tone for the current frenzied anti-labor propaganda drive through advertisements, radio, TV, and a shower of new anti-labor bills in Congress. The atmosphere resembles very much the hysteria of the 1946-47 period that paved the way for passage of the Taft-Hartley Law.

Even the W.S.B. proposal is termed "socialism" in the current line of propaganda and the union shop is called "subversive." A sample of the type of new anti-labor legislation on Big Business' preferred list is the bill introduced by Representative Howard Smith, author of the 1946 Smith Act. The new Smith Bill would make use of a Taft-Hartley injunction compulsory, with a court empowered after the 80-day "cool-off" to put affected companies and unions under receivership, with the no-strike injunction made permanent and no wage changes allowed. Another of the bills being pushed forward would ban industry-wide bargaining.

This vicious anti-labor drive is also becoming the pattern for the election campaign of the most reactionary forces in the country.

The progressive groups in the steel union, although not large in number and hardly organized as an effective force in the union, nevertheless, were an influential factor in the developments. Significantly, it was the

locals well known for their traditional progressivism that sparked the wage and other demands. The militancy of those locals helped bring a fighting tone into the struggle—something very much needed in a union that usually has a dormant life.

Those progressive-influenced locals, characteristic for the large percentage of Negro workers in their membership and leadership, were also the most active for an F.E.P.C. clause—a fight they did not drop. In the steel workers' convention the F.E.P.C. issue was sharply raised in a floor discussion. Murray was put on the defensive and promised greater efforts to develop the union's F.E.P.C. program, although he did not explain why the demand was left out of contract negotiations.

It is the steel union's progressive groups that were most prominent in warning the membership of the consequences of a policy of tailing behind the Truman line. The events have fully confirmed the correctness of the position of these militants in the union.

CONCLUSIONS

At the writing of this article, the steel strike is still on and the forces involved have not yet played their last cards. But some conclusions can already be drawn.

The steel workers are realizing that, as Foster warned, the policy

of clinging to the coat-tails of the Truman Administration does not serve the best interests of the workers. Had a no-contract no-work rule been militantly applied on December 31, the steel workers could have forced a much earlier showdown with the likelihood of a better ultimate settlement than appears in sight. As it turned out, the government was given months in which to whittle down the union's demands and stall its action. When, following the Supreme Court's ruling, the steel companies resumed talks directly with the union, they said it must be with the understanding that they can still *deduct* from the W.S.B. compromise. By the time those talks broke down, the employers actually succeeded in getting some tentative concessions lowering the WSB proposal.

The workers were led into this position by the policy of their union leadership which puts support of Truman's foreign policy and his Democratic Party as the primary consideration. It begins with the concept that there is a real "emergency" during which a strike is unthinkable and even major grievances are secondary. The course of the steel workers' struggle and the facts the union itself brought before the W.S.B. have pretty much discredited the "emergency" concept. The response of the workers certainly did not indicate that they feel under an "emergency."

The failure of the Administration to apply the W.S.B. raise when it had an opportunity to do so, only showed that Truman's real interest was not to get the raise for the workers but his court bid for unprecedented strikebreaking powers. The union leaned upon the Truman Administration from very start of the struggle, as though the workers were already on the defensive and too weak to face the steel companies with their independent power. The exact opposite was the truth. Never in its history was the union in a stronger position to wage a strike and win it quickly. The effect of Truman's delaying maneuvers was to hold the workers back while the steel companies, spearheading for the big employers in general, picked up steam for their anti-labor offensive.

Truman's anger at the steel companies over the price issue sounded like a good campaign speech, but a closer analysis showed it to be demagoguery.

Significant is the fact that Truman's stabilizers are giving way substantially to the extortioners of the steel industry, although before the public and for election campaign purposes, Truman poses as a champion against inflation.

In allowing themselves to be tied to Truman's fight for "inherent" constitutional powers to seize plants, the officers of the steel workers' union and with them the C.I.O., have put labor in a bad position in the

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current political campaign. While reactionaries are demagogically making "Truman dictatorship" the issue, because they wanted him to apply the Taft-Hartley Law, these labor leaders are put in the position of expressing preference for new dictatorial government authority, in addition to the tremendous power it already has over collective bargaining.

While on the employers' side there is unity in support of the steel magnates and anti-labor legislation, there has so far been no display of such unity by labor in support of the steel workers or against the crop of anti-labor bills. More serious even, are the signs of increasing C.I.O.-A. F. of L. tension in their strife over control of a number of industries and their differences in several fields. Unless the labor movement does join forces to meet the threat we shall surely get a Congress that will even more readily respond to the will of Big Business than did the Taft-Hartley 80th Congress.

Finally, the steel struggle showed that the steel workers are not warm to the war program. They are not willing to sacrifice for it. Their attitude reflects the change that has taken place since the start of the Korean war when efforts were begun to put the thinking of the steel workers on a war footing and build in their minds illusions of a "prosperity" based on an armaments economy. They are obviously conclud-

ing that such "prosperity" is a fraud.

It is most important to see that the attack of the steel corporations upon their employees, was seized upon by the big employers, and their organizations, for a general drive against the labor movement as a whole. The breakdown of negotiations during the second week of the strike over the union shop issue is an indication of both the employers' anti-union attitude and the union's fear for its security.

But a union shop clause, even if won, will hardly be an effective armor against the kind of weapons the employers are fashioning. In addition to their whole arsenal that they brought into play, with the "emergency" used to the limit for anti-union purposes, they want new legislation that will take the country further on the road of fascism. Moreover they aim to apply already passed legislation, especially the Smith and McCarran Acts, on a broader scale than ever—against unions. They want to do it in the name of the "emergency" with the labor movement as a whole the target.

The new Smith Bill is an indication of the next plans of the reactionaries. Senator Taft's next major project is a bill to outlaw industry-wide bargaining or strikes. The Truman Administration's only alternative to those plans is more dictatorial power to the President over collective bargaining.

The above program of Big Business should leave no question as to what labor's perspective for the next period should be. It must be unity of all forces, irrespective of ideological or other dividing lines, in defense of labor's most elementary rights—the right to strike, organize into effective organizations, and for the Bill of Rights itself. The recent labor conventions, especially of the steel workers' union, indicated that unions are beginning to realize that there is no separation of the struggles for union rights and for repeal of Taft-Hartley and to smash the new Smith Bill; for civil liberties and repeal of the Smith, McCarran and other thought control measures; for civil rights, F.E.P.C. and against oppression of the Negro or other peoples suffering from discrimination. Some resolutions listed all those is-

sues as items in the struggle against McCarthyism.

But while many important unions—including the steel workers union—have recognized that the fight on all those fronts is related and vital, they are still ineffective as a force against the current anti-labor attacks because they are not politically independent and do not rely on their own *full and united* strength. In recent months we have seen more evidence of a sharpening division between the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. than steps toward very urgent united action. If the labor movement does not learn the main lesson brought out in the steel workers' struggle and form an immediate joint front, in alliance with the Negro and other groups in the country, then it can surely expect to reap the harvest that the reactionaries are preparing for it.

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The Struggle for Peace and the Negro Liberation Movement*

By Benjamin J. Davis

July 2 makes one year since Comrade Benjamin J. Davis and his fellow-members of the Party's National Committee, convicted in the first Foley Square frame-up trial, have been in jail because they condemned the conspiracy of the warmakers. Comrade Davis is serving a five-year term in a Jim Crow prison of the Federal government, in Terre Haute, Indiana. He is at present ill, having undergone an operation in the prison hospital for an intestinal ailment.

Ben Davis, outstanding Communist leader, is a great son of the great Negro people, to whose struggle against Jim Crow oppression, for equal rights, for the principle of Negro representation on all levels, and for liberation from national subjection he has rendered magnificent contributions.

With Marxist-Leninist understanding which interconnects the constant struggle for Negro rights with the basic struggle for Negro liberation, he has carried on to more advanced stages the fighting tradition of his people.

Ben Davis' contributions as a na-

tional leader of the Communist Party symbolize the beneficent meaning of Negro representation for the American people as a whole. As New York City Councilman, Davis worked with unflinching energy, devotion, courage in behalf of the common people of all New York. He strove to defend and extend democracy, to preserve the Bill of Rights from destruction by the war-mongers.

The people need Ben Davis. The Negro people need him. The working class, the entire American people need his active leadership in the mounting fight for peace and democracy. The demand for Amnesty Now, for Ben Davis and his comrades sentenced under the vicious Smith Act, should sweep the land. The national campaign to win amnesty for the eleven leaders of the Communist Party, together with the fight to repeal the Smith Act, demands wholehearted support from all sections of the people, Negro and white. Let President Truman hear the compelling voice of the people for an immediate amnesty.

V. J. Jerome, Editor

* Extracted from the Report to the Fifteenth National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., December, 1950.

THE INDIVISIBILITY of the struggle for peace and the struggle for freedom—which takes its most basic form in our country in the battle for Negro liberation—was always of major importance. It began to take on flesh and blood during the “cold war.” But since the American monopolists launched their gangster war against Korea and China, this battle has become a matter of vital urgency in the effort to halt the drive to fascism and another world war.

The new element in the relationship between the struggle for peace and for Negro liberation is the growing acuteness of the contradiction between American imperialism and its war program on the one hand, and, on the other, the struggle of the Negro people and their supporters to defend their elementary liberties and to advance the cause of full citizenship. This is by far the most important single new factor of the general political situation to be noted in connection with the struggle for national liberation of the Negro people.

The prompt, skillful and bold seizing of this factor can advance the whole cause of Negro rights and raise the American people's struggle for peace to a new high level, nationally and internationally.

The case of Lieutenant Gilbert, the mass frame-up of Negro soldiers in Korea, the wanton police lynching of John Derrick, Negro veteran, in Harlem, the brutal mistreatment of Negro inductees in the segregated, Jim-Crow camps of the mainland—are the most spectacular expression of the

contradiction between Wall Street's war program and the struggle of the Negro people for freedom and dignity. These are also the most spectacular links between the struggle for peace and the struggle for Negro rights.

This contradiction has become so acute that even imperialism's Negro reformist agents have become impaled upon it, caught between their subservience to the white capitalist warmongers and their fear of the increasing militancy of the Negro people.

Hence the reformist national leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, under fire because of their surrender of the fight for civil rights to Truman's war program, were compelled by the militancy of their rank and file to dispatch an attorney to Tokyo to defend the framed Negro soldiers.

This temporarily brought the national office of the N.A.A.C.P. into sharp clash with the chief spokesman of American imperialism in the Far East, namely, butcher MacArthur. This arrogant representative of the American monopolies issued an edict banning, not a so-called Communist or Left-wing attorney (with an “insolent,” “unruly” devotion to the Bill of Rights), but a safe, decorous Negro attorney who, fully sympathetic to Truman's war, wanted to say a few timid words about the barbarous persecution of his brothers. But hard-hit American imperialism cannot take even such gestures for Negro liberation, especially when they come

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The *Pittsburgh Courier*, largest Negro reformist weekly, which long ago bartered its soul to the war-mongering white ruling class, also reflects this sharpening contradiction. Its main editorial of December 23, a classic of double-talk, declared for the first time since the Korean war:

The fact that the life of the nation itself is in critical jeopardy must have as much meaning to Negro citizens as it does to all segments of the population. The Negro has not shared fully in the fruits of American democracy nor in the largesse of her natural resources. In a very real sense, his citizenship rights have been proscribed and he has been compelled to accept the crumbs from the master's table. Second-class citizenship and poverty are his meed.

How many young Americans were ever consulted about their desire to die in order to guarantee democracy for the South Koreans? How many Americans were ever consulted to determine if they wished to foot the bill for such an enterprise?

What are we doing in Asia? Why must we be there? Do the people of Asia want us?

We don't believe the Asians want us. We don't think they're interested in our democracy or our way of life. We don't think they like us. They look to our record of arrogance and exploitation in the past and they have a feeling of hatred for us. This is as true in Korea as in China.

Only recently it was reported that Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese Communist leader, might be willing to talk with the Western powers if he were accepted as an equal. That is the point that rankles

in the breasts of Asiatics. They don't trust us to treat them as equals. We can't eliminate this distrust by fighting wars in Asia and preaching democracy.

We believe our government should find some way to get out of Asia, including Japan, and leave Asia to the Asiatics.

The vacillating Negro bourgeois reformists must quail before the incessant pounding of the Negro workers and masses for their full liberation from such atrocities at the hands of the American counterparts of the Prussian master race, as have befallen their sons, husbands and fathers in Korea.

Or take the exclamation of the distinguished Negro chemist, Dr. Percy Julian, after the hoodlum bombings of his new home in Chicago: "I'm going to stay right here. I'd just as soon die here as in Korea!"

All of this is but the reflection of the deeper and more militant stirrings of the Negro workers and masses, on every front, where they defend their lives and liberties and seek to advance their rights.

These expressions of the acute sharpening of the contradiction between the war program of the American billionaires and the struggle for Negro liberation can be duplicated on the fronts of civil rights, police brutality and Klan terror, jobs, housing, health and education—with Negro women and youth playing an ever more important leading role. These struggles are taking on an increasingly distinct, though not yet conscious, anti-imperialist character, and are hampering the war plans of

the would-be dollar rulers of the world.

The principal lesson to be drawn from this new and sharpening element is that the Negro liberation movement is objectively a movement for peace and against war, and that the working class and all other peace forces must give the most determined and uncompromising support to this movement in all of its aspects.

To win the Negro people—the Negro liberation movement—as a conscious sector of the people's coalition for peace, is a responsibility and opportunity that falls heaviest upon the advanced white workers, trade unionists and peace forces. It is they who must wage the struggle against the Right danger, against the poison of national and white chauvinism, which is spewed forth by a lily-white ruling class at war with colored, colonial peoples.

Winning the Negro workers and masses for peace is not just winning another section of the country's population. It is mobilizing a people whose right to self-determination and nationhood in the Black Belt, where they are a majority, is denied by the very imperialism which is pretending to liberate another colored nation from so-called "Communist tyranny." We must expose this pious fraud and find the way of raising the timely world-wide demand that the Wall Street "liberators" free the Negro nation imprisoned on the American mainland from the tightening reins of pro-fascist oppression. Let them do this before they pretend to fight

for the liberation of the Korean people!

It is the profound duty of the white trade unionists and peace forces—in the vital self-interest of preventing another world war—to support the national liberation struggles of the Negro people, which are objectively anti-imperialist, even though they are neither consciously anti-imperialist nor consciously anti-war. All-out support and participation of the white workers in these movements is the first pre-condition for helping them to become consciously anti-war and consciously anti-monopoly. Such a participation is necessary for advancing the cause of Negro rights and of advancing the struggle against fascism and war.

First among the dangers which have appeared to hamper these objectives is the substitution of symbols, that is individual Negro leaders, for the involvement of the Negro workers and masses in the peace movement. The second World Peace Congress, even more than the first, was featured by the brilliant, numerically large, and significant Negro participation, including outstanding professional and middle class representatives. While the national character of the Negro liberation movement presents a rare opportunity for an all-class people's peace movement, the principal new concentration and involvement should be of the Negro workers and sharecroppers, who are feeling the heaviest blows of the imperialist war program and who constitute the great majority of the Ne-

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Integration of distinguished individual Negro spokesmen for peace—and this needs to be done on a far wider scale—cannot serve as a substitute for a grass roots peace movement, based upon the Negro liberation struggles, and upon the growing leadership of the Negro workers in that struggle. Otherwise, this becomes a "Leftist" error, which leads to the same consequences as Right opportunism—that is, white chauvinist contempt for the Negro workers and masses.

Such an error led to a major setback for the third-party peace forces in the 1950 New York elections. Here the peace forces integrated into their ticket an internationally eminent Negro champion of peace. But these forces virtually detached themselves from the new upsurge of the Negro liberation movement as such, and directed their main fire in "Leftist" fashion against a community figure who had not yet exhausted his reserve among the Negro masses who still saw him as a militant spokesman for F.E.P.C. and Negro rights. Consequently, the electoral instrument of the peace camp was unable to reflect either the national aspirations of the Negro people or their deep desire for peace.

The second main danger to assuring the fullest support of the Negro liberation movement by the working class beginning with the Left trade unions, and other peace forces, is a mechanical application of the sound Leninist theory that the working class

must lead the Negro liberation movement. In practice this has amounted to holding back the Negro liberation movement to the level of the most backward sections of the white workers. This has nothing in common with the Leninist concept of national and colonial liberation movement, as Korea and the Far East vividly show. This is a gross distortion of Leninism. Whatever the tactical conditions, Leninism is at all times designed to advance national liberation, not hold it back.

Moreover, a militant upsurge of the Negro people's struggle for national liberation, and against the monopolies and their war program, can only come about under the leadership of the Negro workers, constituting one of the most revolutionary sectors of the American working class, the bridge between it and the Negro liberation movement. This is the guarantee of working-class leadership of the Negro liberation movement.

Any such non-Leninist concept of holding back the Negro liberation movement, consciously or unconsciously, not only undermines the fight for Negro rights and weakens the working class, but is completely lacking in a serious approach to building a militant and broad peace movement in time to guarantee the prevention of another world war.

This is the moment to sharpen further the contradiction between the Truman war program and the Negro liberation movement by raising the latter to the level of a national upsurge of the Negro people, stemming

from the Black Belt and uniting the Negro workers and people in the Northern industrial centers.

Our Party must overcome a certain sluggishness in grasping the significance of this new quality in the peace and Negro liberation struggles. A beginning has been made with the development of the civilian campaign for the freedom of Lieutenant Gilbert, for death to the police-lynchers of Derrick, and for the ending of Jim-Crow atrocities in the armed forces. But this struggle must be waged more boldly, expanded and deepened. Every single struggle of the Negro people for their first-class citizenship, no matter on what front or how small, must receive the all-out support of the working class and all partisans of peace. As point 3 of the historic Second World Peace Congress's appeal to the U.N. says, race discrimination is itself a "threat to peace." And we should popularize this Point 3 as a challenge to Truman's reactionary Point 4.

Assistance needs to be given to the establishment and strengthening of peace and freedom committees among the Negro people, based upon their unique urban and Black Belt existence. The greatest stress must be laid upon the Negro Labor Councils—an organized expression of the Negro workers' leadership of the peace and liberation movements—while improving the quality of our attention to the existing mass organizations of the Negro people.

The Council on African Affairs, headed by Paul Robeson and Dr. W.

E. B. DuBois, and the new monthly journal *Freedom*, the latter a new voice for freedom and peace, should receive unstinted support commensurate with their new importance in the struggle for peace and against Negro and colonial oppression. The most important way to pay personal tribute to Robeson is to give concrete expression to the ever-expanding mass base of this man, who is one of the world's greatest leaders of the struggle for Negro and colonial liberation, and for peace! The still-existing jitteriness of the ruling class over Robeson's Paris statement for peace and freedom shows that the warmongering capitalists have a profound dread of the struggle for Negro liberation.

Any routinism on the role of Negro women—among whose heroines are Claudia Jones, Amy Mallard, Besie Mitchell and Rosa Lee Ingram—compounds white chauvinism with male supremacy. Likewise, all talk of developing a campaign against Jim-Crow in the armed forces without the Negro youth and helping to build a united Negro youth movement, is empty prattle.

It cannot be said that the advanced Left and Communist forces within the Negro people's movement have audaciously and promptly grasped the new opportunities for imparting a conscious peace orientation to the increasingly militant activities of the Negro people. This opportunity is provided by the crisis in the Wall Street-Truman foreign policy—a crisis induced in no small measure by the setback U.S. imperialism has sus-

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tained at the hands of a colored people whom it despises.

For a fleeting moment, Wall Street's Right-wing Negro bourgeois reformist agents are rattled by the quandary of their war-mongering masters, and the rising pressure from the Negro masses. This is the meaning of the *Courier* editorial and the gestures of the N.A.A.C.P. leaders on the frame-ups in Korea.

The Negro workers and masses fully demonstrated their readiness to struggle for peace in the Chicago Negro Labor Conference last June and in the exceptional response to the Stockholm Peace Pledge. Now is the time for them to break through the walls of separation which the Negro reformist and Social-Democrats have attempted to erect between the Negro masses and the broad people's coalition against war and fascism. Unless this moment is quickly and firmly grasped it could be frittered away in fresh outpourings of demagoguery, bribery, and McCarran Act terror against the Negro liberation movement. Within the ranks of the Negro people, upon the shoulders of Negro Communists, in particular, falls the supreme task of winning the Negro people's movement directly for the broad people's coalition for peace.

It is necessary to stimulate all forms of peace and freedom committees among the Negro people, based upon their existing organizations and upon the distinctive characteristics of the Negro liberation movement, South and North.

First of all, it is vitally urgent to

help bring to life the Continuations Committee of the Chicago Negro Trade Union Conference. Every assistance should be given to the Negro Labor Councils to establish or fortify themselves in each urban center of basic Negro workers, North and South. These Negro Labor Councils, in addition to their other central tasks, can give indispensable aid to the mass civilian movement for the freedom of Lieutenant Gilbert and the ending of army Jim Crow, whose immediate demand is to bring our boys and their fellow white soldiers back home away from the brutal arrogance of MacArthur.

It especially means plunging more fully into the Negro liberation movement, at whatever point and level affords an entry. It means foreseeing the special economic doom which the war economy is bringing down upon the Negro people, and tackling the job, relief and housing problems of the Negro people now, not tomorrow. It means raising the struggle for civil rights to a new level in the 82nd Congress.

It means above all helping the Negro workers and people to draw the conclusion that the defense of their liberties and the advancement of Negro rights are bound up with the key struggle against a third world war; that the success of all their liberation struggles depends upon the ability of the Negro and white workers and people together to impose a peace policy upon the maniacal, war-mad ruling class and its two corrupt party machines.

"AND THEN THE JUDGES WE WILL BE"

By Joseph North

A Lantern for Jeremy by V. J. Jerome.
Masses and Mainstream, N. Y., \$2.50.

A Lantern for Jeremy belongs to the family of books that is in the dock today. It is a novel of power and beauty by a Communist who is an outstanding Marxist theoretician. The work glows with confidence in oppressed and struggling humanity, that quality which is the earmark of the Communist. "Man, that has a noble ring," Maxim Gorky said, and this book of Jerome's is a triumph of socialist realism and humanism. It is a literary achievement of a high order. Here the social scientist is socialist artist, and he continues to teach the great message of abiding faith in the capacity of the working masses for struggle, for heroism, for ultimate victory. That is the meaning of Jerome's life and it is the meaning of this inspiring novel.

Not only is it a moving book in which people are alive and dream and struggle: it affords more than a glimpse into the mind and heart, the motives, of the author. Let America read this book and it will see the essence of a Communist, a Communist defendant, on trial. And let America judge.

The novel is a powerful reply to the current bourgeois literature of America that depicts mankind as brutal, demoralized, and man's aspirations as "a

thing of sound and fury signifying nothing." It refutes this macabre literature of our day which, on various levels and in varying ways, takes murder as the theme and man's degradation, his defeat, as the moral.

A Lantern for Jeremy is the story of a sensitive, proletarian Jewish child in Vokyrts, a remote village of Poland, around the time of 1904-1905. The ghetto and the village come to life in these pages: the stormy tides of the day beat against its isolation. The simple, seemingly artless plot has a conscious, cumulative power: the tensions of conflict mount and the cast of characters move grandly into the crescendo of action that was the 1905 Poland of Czarist Russia. Young Jeremy begins as a characteristic Jewish child of poverty: hard bread is his lot at the book's close; but his character has blossomed through the pages as he witnesses, and shares, the hard yet enlightening life of the working class where the apostles of brotherhood have entered the scene.

Jeremy is the child of working-class parents who have left him with his poverty-stricken uncle and aunt when they moved to England, in the mass migration of those days. The setting for the narrative opens in the typical rickety hut of the poor of Poland, with a tender sketch of Jeremy's aunt Leia, who overcomes the sorrow of childless-

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ness in her love for her nephew. Jeremy visits the tan-yard where his uncle works to tell him that a half-rouble is needed desperately at home. The scene with the arrogant, grasping boss, Mordkha Leib, is one that workers of all lands readily recognize. "Three roubles a week is no mean wage," he growls. In the universal way of the boss, Mordkha Leib links his economic interests with "the Eternal." The worker Oizer mutters, "He and God. Always pairing himself with God against his workmen."

In the next scene a homesick Russian soldier is stationed in Jeremy's hut and sings of his distant folk. Jeremy's uncle, listening, murmurs, "He, too, comes of a people that sows in tears and waits to reap in singing. . . ." In the following chapter Jeremy, the miniature scholar, is grilled by the learned but cunning Reb Noosn who is notorious for the traps which he sets the unwary student. Next we are in the women's gallery at the synagogue where we meet Frimmet, the beautiful girl of sixteen who had "not the merit to be born a boy," although her learning and her fiery spirit have won the respect of most of the villagers, and who rebels against the inferior status of her sex. Frimmet's mother is needed by the grocer's wife because her daughter belongs to the revolutionaries whom the Jews of Vokyrts call the Sisters-and-Brothers because "that's how they speak to the people." Little Jeremy ponders: "Why do they call people their sisters and brothers?" The rest of the book provides the answers.

* * *

Books that have dealt with children are dear to mankind. Little Jeremy is brother to the child-heroes of books like *Jean Christophe* and *Peace Is*

Where the Tempest Blows. To depict the growing mind of a child, to see the world through his eyes, is always an achievement of artistic sensitivity: too often the child is lost in the adult, the memories of childhood recede and are dimmed by the crowded encroachments of the years. But the author has recaptured the pure, direct, luminous mind of childhood. All that the child Jeremy experiences and thinks has the ring of artistic truth, as it is profoundly realized by a master of socialist realism. Herein is the novelist's greatest achievement. The author paints the poverty and the hardship of Vokyrts' poor, but everywhere he has revealed the new, the nascent within the old, the innate power of the people which unfolds as the plot continues. One sees the promise of the future, the people's Poland of today, in the dreams, the heroism, the struggles of yesterday. At first the villagers recognize only their bitter lot; but they are quickened into action by experience and revolutionary leadership. Much happens to Jeremy, in terms of his own understanding, and to the community of the poor after the little scholar, in an unforgettable scene, reads his first newspaper to his unlettered uncle and aunt with the thrill of discovering in the printed words the every-day language of the common people, Yiddish, and comes across the line: "Today, in Byalistok, there began a strike of weavers." What is a strike, little Jeremy wonders, and his uncle strives fumblingly to explain it. The narrative describes how the Sisters-and-Brothers, the militants of the village, lead the harassed, impoverished workers to act for a better life. The cumulative episodes reveal individual and collective growth in all its logic.

The author's method is well worthy of study. Though his chief protagonist is the child, Jeremy, his hero is the people, and each scene, a unit in itself, reveals the people in their action. As the scenes continue, we discover the method of the plot. The scenes are interrelated and interwoven. The following examples serve to illustrate this:

Consider the episode of the first train chugging into Vokyrts. The scene could stand alone as a picture of a backwoods village shaken by the impact of the new, the industrial age. But a seemingly chance act is introduced: two passengers arrive — one, the tannery master, Mordkha Leib, and the other, a peasant. Jeremy overhears Pinyeh's conversation with the peasant and wonders why some of the words sound like Yiddish. Later we learn that the "peasant" is Faivish, a revolutionary in hiding from the Czarist police. Unobtrusively, the author has implanted the basis of this important character's participation in the book through an episode where the people, collectively, are painted.

Big Fulke, the water-carrier, a giant of a man, is driven into army service (the Russo-Japanese War) and is led away, after his resistance, his hands tied behind his back, a revolver prodding him on. The people identify themselves with him and express themselves with elemental eloquence, especially when they discover that Mordkha Leib's son, "healthy as a bull," is exempted for "heart trouble" and that Big Fulke is being driven to the Czar's army to fill the gap. "With money they can laugh in God's face," a mother cries out. Fulke is to return from the war, irretrievably maimed, a symbol of the Czar's contemptuous cruelty: the sight

of his tragedy stirs the workers to decision at a climactic moment.

Depiction of the struggle against the Czar's imperialist war is one of the book's triumphs: it has the immediacy of today's headlines and the urgency of today's paramount issue — peace. The masses—the oppressed Polish people, the oppressed Jewish people do not want war: the scenes of Big Fulke and of Shimmen going off to the front brilliantly reveal the people's understanding and their resistance which assumed the proportions of clashes at the points of mobilization. How many generations have seen the tragic sight of the Shimmens and the Fulkes going off to die in wars that are not theirs, their folk weeping, the people angry, bitter! And the magnificent climax of the scene where the people singing their anti-militarist songs strive to drown out the blare of the military band. "The drums are thunder and the trumpets are a storm blowing," Jeremy moves into the vortex, "But the singing of the people and of the men in the carts trying to get louder than the trumpets and the drums. Oh, get louder, get louder, Singing!" the child urges, and finally the singing drowns out the drums and the people break into the strains of the Red Flag, begun by the Sisters-and-Brothers:

"Shall come the final day of reckoning,
And then the judges we will be."

As the people are forced back by flashing swords, new great shouts are heard "An end to the war!" And from the carts in which the recruits are jammed is heard: "We won't be soldiers for the Czar!"

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in hiding in the attic next door to Jeremy's and the youngster hears mysterious voices through the thin wall at night. The neighbor's voice says, "The Jew must go his way alone." The stranger's voice—the voice of Faivish—replies, "No, Mottl Doovid, not alone, we and they together." The child puzzles over the meaning: "We and they together. Does he mean Gentiles? How can that be? The Polish boys wouldn't let me skate with them on the brook. When I skated alone they tripped me and they laughed at me when I fell."

His question is answered in later scenes when Yanek, the Gentile, his Uncle Gavreel's close friend, joins the Jewish Self-Defense and is killed by the drunken hoodlum pogromists. Jews and Poles walk together in the powerful funeral scene where the rebel, Frimmet, Yanek's sweetheart, speaks. "We stand by your grave Yanek, she cries, "but we do not say the Mourner's Prayer. We clench our fists and call out a curse on those who put axes into the hands that cut down such a young and beautiful tree. A curse on those who divide Jew from Gentile and brother from brother."

So the interwoven scenes proceed, each a cameo of action and character, and all march to the climax, the strike of the tannery workers, which is won by the united force of the poor. They circumvent the scheme of Mordkha Leib to divide them on spurious grounds—the strikers, most of whom are simple devout men, are suddenly dubbed the godless, the "Sabbath Breakers." When this fails Mordkha Leib summons a gang of backward draymen to break the strike; but they are defeated in a picket-line battle where little Jeremy plays his brave part,

rallying the children to help the workers.

In the People's Court scene, with the developing revolution, Mordkha Leib and other offenders are tried for their crimes against the people. Women, hitherto crushed, sit in judgment, and the innate power of the working people is revealed in this glimpse of the future. The book closes with Jeremy about to leave for London to join his parents, wondering if he will forget Vokyrts and his people. Pinyeh All-trades, his friend and mentor, who has taught him much, assures him: "I have no worry for you, Jeremy. You will not forget the bitter bread of affliction for which your Uncle Volfke toiled with his sweat and blood. You will not forget this poor Jewish hut with the crooked walls and the leaking roof, and the floor without boards and only the love that is in it. You will get your learning from the English schools and use it for the people."

Jeremy wonders: "How will Vokyrts look when we throw off our masters," and he sees people walking together along the paths and on the grass, amid the wide-branched fruit trees and sweet-smelling lilacs—"Poles, Jews and Russians," all people together. He sees Faivish and Frimmet and Yanek—the imprisoned and the martyred, the dead, alive again, "talking and laughing and singing" . . . for there is "a republic in our land."

This sketchy summary of the narrative omits many memorable scenes, some touching, some deeply tragic, many humorous and variegated as is the life of the poor: the gaiety, pathos and passion of their everyday life is captured. Such are the tender scenes of the love idyll between the child

Jeremy and his Gentile friend, yellow-haired Ilse, the shepherdess who dies in the storm which she braves to find a stray lamb: the wrath of her uncle, the powerful landowner, has driven her to her death. Or the scene of Jeremy falsely accused of stealing; the brilliant pageant of the Purim players.

The author has caught the music and rhythm of the folk speech, its beat and imagery which he reproduces with poetic skill. The supple richness of the Yiddish language, its wealth of vivid imagery to communicate human relations, is handled superbly. Much in the Yiddish derives from the ancient preoccupation with the Torah and its manifold Commentaries, and the vernacular is studded with idioms related to the prayer books and religious study. Moreover these are Jews who live in the village, their associations are with the peasantry and the soil and their language reflects that as well. For example, in the synagogue scene where Frimmet has revealed her rebelliousness, Miriam, the Grocer's wife complains: "Girls nowadays—that's how their heads are turned. They want beards and prayer shawls—no less. And she's all of sixteen years old." Another woman cries: "Those Sisters-and-Brothers, they want to tell God how to make his creatures. Be careful, Esther, or one of these days your daughter will open your chicken coop, and let all your chickens fly out, while she cries Freedom." "I understand," Miriam says to Esther the Reader, "that your Frimmet would have the Czar off the throne." The women laugh. The jeering continues as little Jeremy thinks of his morning prayer: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that Thou hast not made me a woman." And the chapter concludes,

"the wild crows of Frimmet's eyes swoop down on the words, scattering them. . . ."

This colloquy blends the rural imagery of the Vokyrts Jew—"the chickens will fly out" . . . "the wild crows of Frimmet's eyes"—with the Biblical "they want to tell God how to make his creatures," and Jeremy's morning prayer; but the *content* is a discussion of freedom, the rebellion against despotism, the universal experience of all peoples and its climactic development in the twentieth century. The characteristic imagery of the Yiddish folk speech strikes a universal chord, transmitted as it is in glowing English that captures the lilt and rhythm of the original language.

The author has caught the life of the past in its essence, the historic conflict between exploited and exploiters. The class partisanship, the sense of the dialectic of the time, the drama of the New arising to challenge the Old, differentiate this book from the many writings on the ghetto life of the old Poland wherein the past is viewed in bourgeois-nationalist retrospect colored by nostalgic mysticism.

The author brings into the open the undercurrents of struggle by the Jewish workers against the reactionary synagogue clericalism, the "spiritual arm" of the exploiters within the village's semi-feudal class relations. The growing awareness, the awakening of the people to that alliance rises brilliantly to a climax in the final synagogue scene, "The Blood on the Shirt." The Sisters-and-Brothers, led by Faivish, the revolutionary, appear and indignantly they denounce the blessing that is read for the Czar and his family. When Faivish is called a "denier of Israel,"

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he retorts, "Who has called us by that name? They who lick the boot that stamps on the neck of the people." The Czar's troops, he cries, have just shot into the ranks of 30,000 workers before the Warsaw prison: he holds up before them the blood-stained shirt of a Jewish worker killed among those, and he charges the reigning tyrant with the responsibility for the recurrent pogroms. That day the people's voice is heard for the first time in the synagogue—that only gathering-place of the village community.

It is fascinating to observe how Fainish, Pinyeh and other Socialist workers lead in the struggle against the reactionary clerics, and simultaneously observe profound concern for breadth, for unity of workers at all levels of consciousness. Some of them address the people with apt reference to the Talmud which they know too and in which they have been reared. They speak the language of their folk. "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If not now, when?" Hershke, the speaker for the "Organization" in Lodz quotes as he persuades the Vokyrts tanners that they must strike for their good. The believers recognize him as one of their own, his words are heeded all the more. These are no "deniers of Israel," the people decide: those who "lick the boot" are their enemies. The overriding concern and love for their own, their children, their people, triumphs over the medieval shibboleths of feudal clericalism.

The book is a passionate indictment of those who would degrade woman to sub-citizenship in life. Today's bourgeois literature depicts woman as a hand-maiden to the "master-sex," an "innately inferior" creature whose purpose in

life is to pursue or be pursued. She has little, if any, relationship to the epic forces that sweep the world. Unfortunately, it must be said that this male-supremacist concept of woman mars the works even of many progressive writers in our country. The women in Jerome's book are alive with the struggle, the pain and triumph of the world. Frimmet is revealed as the full equal of the opposite sex: she is beautifully drawn and the author evokes such an interest in her that the reader would welcome several more chapters in which she would figure. For here is the prototype of the young workingwoman who has the qualities to become a Clara Zetkin, a Pasionaria, an Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, a Claudia Jones. The quality, the strength of women is not restricted to Frimmet alone: a gallery of flesh-and-blood women moves before us, like Leia, Jeremy's aunt, and her fervid desire to struggle against the grasping employer; like Freida Malka, the stocking-maker who becomes a judge in the People's Court; they are found in the women's support of the strike, in their anguished outcry against the unjust, imperialist war. Their inspiring qualities permeate the book.

Yes, this book is an affirmation of life, a powerful story, tender, gentle, warm, but it does not lack steel. The workers and all the oppressed will win; but the victory will not pull into the station like the strange new locomotive of Vokyrts. Men must struggle. And the struggle must be organized, led by those—the vanguard party—with the vision to see the road ahead, with the will to unite the people who toil, and with the courage to go forward against all odds. The author is a partisan of peace, and he fights against war, exploi-

tation and injustice, even as the characters he created fought for peace, bread and freedom; not gently, but fiercely, with all the might of the just.

This book reveals again why the author is the perennial target of the cringing assembly of stoolpigeons and renegades before the Un-American Committee. The enemies of the people have good reason to hate Jerome and to fear him. They will hate him all the more for this novel which crowns his works to win equality and enlightenment in our culture—works on the Negro in Hollywood, on the intellectual in the fight for peace, on the theory of socialist realism in the arts.

Masses and Mainstream merits the thanks of all Americans for its publishing venture that is bringing books like

this and Lloyd L. Brown's *Iron City* to our public in this season of shameful censorship. It has taken up the cudgels at a crucial time when, more than ever in our history, such books are needed; at a time when no such book would even be considered for publication by the commercial houses and when such books are deliberately ignored by the critics of the moneyed press.

Yes, let us take this book to the people of America, let them read it and judge for themselves. Its rich humanity and passionate indictment of man's enemies is a judgment on Jerome and the noble men and women who sit in the dock with him, those who aspire to win the sunny days of freedom for the world's Jeremys.

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