

THE CRISIS
in the
COMMUNIST
PARTY

By James Casey



Price 10c

THREE ARROWS PRESS
21 East 17th Street
New York City

CHAPTER I

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT AND MEMBERSHIP

The Communist Party has always prided itself on its "line." It has always boasted of being a "revolutionary work-class party with a Marxist-Leninist line." Its members have been taught to believe that the party cannot be wrong at any time on any question.

Nonetheless, today this Communist Party line has thrown the membership of the Communist Party into a Niagara of Confusion. There are old members who insist that the line or program has not been changed. There are new members who assert just as emphatically that the line certainly has been changed and it is precisely because of this change that they have joined the party. Hence there is a clash of opinion which is steadily moving to the boiling point.

Assuredly the newer members are correct in the first part of their contention that the basic program of the Communist Party has been changed. They are wrong when they hold that this change has been for the better. Today the Communist Party presents and seeks to carry out the "line" of a People's Front organization. And with its slogan of a People's Front, it has wiped out with one fell swoop, both in theory and in practice, the fundamental teachings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. It, too, disowns in no lesser degree in deeds, if not yet in words, all the preachings and hopes of Nicolai Lenin, great interpreter of Marx and founder of the U. S. S. R.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE IS BURIED

The distinction between Marxism and People's Frontism will be elaborated upon later. For the purpose of this chapter, it must be pointed out that Marx, Engels and Lenin taught social revolution—the inevitable and uncompromising struggle for power between the propertied class and the propertyless Masses.

They taught that in the struggle between capital and labor for a Socialist society—in the revolutionary change from capitalism to socialism, there can be no coalition between employer and employee, no compromise between capitalist political parties and working-class organizations.

People's Frontism swiftly and decisively discards this whole theory as out-dated, not applicable to the needs of present day situations, national as well as international and, therefore, is unworkable and against the interests of the toiling masses. Thus Leninism should be revised. Marx's name need not even be mentioned. People's Frontism has definitely and conclusively changed the Communist Party line from one of professed class struggle to one of open class collaboration. Accordingly, this transformation has turned the Communist Party from a social revolutionary party into a social reformist organization. For the present, at least, the Communist Party has declared a moratorium on the class struggle. There is no more talk of Soviet Power! No more talk of Socialism! The word Communism is not even mentioned despite the fact that the party has not yet found it convenient to change its name.

Communist Party leaders introduced the People's Front in America with a great deal of fanfare and assurances that it would turn the party into a vast mass organization.

THE EXODUS FROM THE C. P. STARTS

One thing cannot be disputed. The radical and sweeping change has had its effect upon the party organism. But what has been this effect? Has the party, as predicted by its leaders, suddenly begun to bloom with the injection of the People's Front virus? The contrary is the truth.

The People's Front line has already driven hosts of members out of the Communist Party. Exactly how many have left the party the leaders themselves do not yet know. However, they have admitted in their own documents that the number runs into thousands.

In August of last year the Communist Party membership totaled 28,000. The statement of Earl Browder, General Secretary, that the membership totaled 40,000, with 11,000 in the Young Communist League, was made purely for public consumption. This was understood by the top leadership at the time when Browder gave out the figures. The fact that the rank and file were not apprised of this little fact was of no moment. Statistics on membership rolls are not the least important of the matters that are concealed from the party membership.

Since the Central Committee admits that the re-enrolment outside New York will be much below the 70 per cent in its best district, a 65 per cent re-registration average nationally should certainly be conceded as a conservative estimate. But Browder has claimed that 5,000 new members

have been enrolled since the summer of 1936. Even adding that announced number (again made for public consumption), the total membership would still be just over 21,000.

It is true that the membership turnover in the Communist Party always has been tremendous. Yet this does not erase the glaring fact that the People's Front line, far from being able to stem the fluctuation and "build a mass party," has driven thousands of members out of the organization.

A COMMUNIST PARTY REPORT

Herewith is a direct quotation from the Central Committee report which was prepared by J. Peters of the organization department.

"The New York District registered only about 70% of the membership in the three weeks of the registration period. The New York district, for obvious reasons has the best apparatus for handling membership and when the New York district with adequate machinery for a thorough preparation, in three unit meetings registered only 70% of the members on record—we feel rather uneasy in waiting for results from the other districts."

The increasing demoralization of the minor functionaries and older members under the new "line" is further shown in the report that little effort was made to keep a check on deserting members. Gone is the old discipline of the organization.

Again, to quote the same report:

"In New York when the registration resulted in exchanging the membership books of about 50-55% of the members on record, and the district apparatus checked with the units about the remaining members, the unit bureaus were unable to give an explanation for the remaining 40-45%. They did not have their addresses, they did not know who they were or how to get in touch with them."

And there you have one of the "triumphs" of People's Frontism right out of the mouths of the Central Committee of the Communist Party! "In one big section in New York", says the report, "100 members did not register after the three weeks of preparation." It must be mentioned that preparation includes a canvassing of members at their homes, districts, section and unit letters, appeals through the Daily Worker and the other party publications.

The report laments further, "There are only a few districts and sections that are functioning properly. The units have no records of the members;

they do not know who is transferred in, who is transferred out; who is recruited, who has dropped out.”

The report offers a glimpse of the clash festering within the party. It says:

“Arguments are going on between the units and the districts on the figures; the lower bodies always deny they have so many members in the party. They have no record and only guess.”

Of not the least importance is the revelation that older party members, if they do not drop out completely, become apathetic and refuse to take part in the party’s activities. Time was when these older members always fought to be on the front line and they were ever cautioned to give the newer members a chance. Today, however, the situation is reversed. Here is what the official report says:

“In New York in one section, the comrades found that the large percentage of the unit leadership is composed of members who are only a few months in the party without any previous experience in organization, while there are scores of very able, loyal, developed comrades in the party and other organizations who are not being used.”

THE RANK AND FILERS MAY CRITICIZE THEMSELVES

For many years the Communist Party members have been taught that self-criticism is always welcomed. Through bitter experience they had learned that this self-criticism must apply only to themselves. In all those long years, never have they dared to criticize the “line” without being expelled as “disrupters, unfit elements, counter-revolutionists, etc.”

Their criticism, these older members have learned and new ones are learning today, must be confined to the simple proposition: “Are we or are we not carrying out the line of the party?” As for the line itself, that already has been decided upon and must not be debated. But by whom had this line been decided? By the party membership? Certainly not!

At this juncture one cannot refrain from an interesting commentary on the Communist Party with its new “line.”

In the days before the emergence of the People’s Front fervor for “democracy,” members were not expected to know nor to inquire into what transpired “behind the scenes” where the leaders manipulated the machinery.

A deadly inner regime had made it sufficiently clear that members must regard themselves highly honored by being allowed to carry out the assignments of a "revolutionary organization." Theirs was "to do or die." And that regime, grown bolder and more bureaucratic after "periods of purges," issued an open letter to the membership to seal the fate of any possible opposition from within. This letter commanded that functionaries detected in criticizing decisions of the party be immediately "liquidated." A complete stopgap was placed on any possible criticism or factional activity by any functionary opposed to the bureaucratic regime.

The Communist Party no longer talks about social revolution. It wants democracy! Democracy! Well, then, should not this democracy be practiced, as an example, within the organization? Should it not begin at home? Why does not this new democratic Communist Party allow its members to elect their Central Committee—and their political bureau, equivalent to the National Executive Committee in the Socialist Party. Indeed, why do not the Communist Party leaders, bursting forth with an intense passion for democracy, permit their members to know the composition of the Central Committee, and would it be too "democratic" to acquaint them with the mysterious members of the Political Bureau, who hand down commands from the top?

ON THE "FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY"

The Communist Party members are urged to fight for democracy. It is conceivable that the new members may not consider it counter-revolutionary to expect a little democracy in their own party!

Or do the Communist Party leaders believe that the new members they are seeking to attract on the basis of People's Front "democracy" will be content to pay their dues and ask no questions.

Perhaps, it is not at all an accident that the old-style membership books, which devoted a full page to an explanation of the organizational form and goal of the Communist Party, have been destroyed.

The new book has not one word about the aims of the Communist Party. It only tells the member how much dues he must pay each month and allows space for the stamps.

In short, if you have the financial wherewithal, you are welcome into this People's Front party, whether you are a manufacturer, a merchant, a building contractor or what not.

Jim Farley must be singing in his sleep: "Heil the People's Front!"

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT AND THE DAILY WORKER

Early in September of 1936, an announcement was printed in the Daily Worker to watch for the appearance of the "new Daily Worker."

For three weeks thereafter, gallons of printed ink were used up to persuade the readers not to miss the great "coming out event." Then came the day! On a cool September morn the new princess appeared. She was simply grand! This "new Daily Worker" was all dolled up in brand new bright type, with plenty of fancy pictures, even with a pretty damsel's face here and there, as though to suggest to Hearst's Daily Mirror to look out for her laurels. But the debut of the "new Daily Worker" was marked by an obviously more significant mixture of political and journalistic degeneration. The new Daily Worker had wiped off the front page the inscription under the masthead, attesting that it was the official organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In its place blazoned this legend: "People's Champion of Liberty, Progress, Peace and Prosperity."

THE AIMS OF THE NEW DAILY WORKER

Instead of the call for class-struggle, the new Daily Worker offered the social-patriotic drivel of liberty under capitalism.

Instead of mobilizing workers in the fight against imperialist war, with Lenin's teaching that such wars must be turned into civil wars, this new Daily Worker openly launched the People's Front preachment of peace under capitalism.

Instead of the fight for Socialism, this new Daily Worker sprouted out as the champion of the people for prosperity under capitalism. And this People's Front Daily Worker also came out with a sports page six full columns strong, with six sports writers to boot, one for each column. This was indeed a People's Front with a vengeance!

"How do you like the new Daily Worker," the readers were asked. And slowly, but surely, the readers answered with telling effect.

In 1935, the old Daily Worker had reached the highest circulation in the paper's history going to the 38,000 mark with a 44,000 press run. With the birth of the People's Front, the circulation started to swing downward.

The Communist Party leaders began to grow nervous. As an outlet for their strained nerves, they intensified their attacks upon anyone and everyone who opposed the People's Front. The columns of the Daily Worker fairly sizzled with phrases such as "Hearst's agent, Liberty League stooge, Fascist dog, counter-revolutionist and just plain smut of a personal nature. But still the circulation crept downward and downward.

AND THE CIRCULATION STILL DECREASED

Communist Party leaders instituted a new campaign simultaneously with similar drives by Communist papers in other countries—a campaign on "Trotskyism." During this wave of hysteria, almost everybody who was not a close sympathizer of the Communist Party was in danger of being called a "Trotskyist dog," a counter-revolutionist, or an agent of Hitler, who was plotting the overthrow of the Soviet Union. Norman Thomas, Socialist Party leader, was singled out as being influenced by the "Trotskyists." The Socialist Call was being run by the "Trotskyists" and the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party was being contaminated by "Trotskyism." Thus, this new Daily Worker raved and ranted and snorted like an old, fuming locomotive. Day after day, columns upon columns were devoted to those base and senseless tirades. And, still, the circulation went down and down.

About this time an innocent reader of the new Daily Worker sports page wrote in to the editor to inquire why the Daily Worker used a photo of the Hearst picture service. The editor glibly replied that it got in by mistake. But there was no mistake! And there is the unspeakable crime—against the Communist Party membership and the American working-class as a whole. The Daily Worker, raging against Hearst, and calling workers who oppose the People's Front, agents of Hearst, actually HAD A WORKING AGREEMENT FOR PHOTOS WITH THE HEARST INTERNATIONAL PHOTO SERVICE. Every member of the Communist Party Political Bureau knows this to be a solemn and hideous fact. So does Mr. Hearst!

BOYCOTT HEARST! THEY CRIED

Boycott Hearst, the Communist Party leaders shouted to their members and to others, while they themselves were quietly carrying on a business with the fascist publisher and shamelessly lying about it at the same time.

It is pertinent here to ask a few questions.

Was this business with Hearst conducted for the defense of the Soviet Union. Can Earl Browder, William Z. Foster and the other leaders disclaim responsibility for the business of the official organ of the Communist Party in its relationship to the Hearst organization?

Just how will they succeed in "clarifying" these ugly facts to their membership? Suffice it to say that all the Hearst pictures have not helped the new Daily Worker in its appeal to readers.

THEY RAISED MONEY TO FIGHT HEARST

During this period of class treachery, the paper was conducting a drive for \$100,000 to fight Hearst, Hitler, and reaction. In February, 1937, the Central Committee came out with a statement on the front page of the Daily Worker, warning the readers that the paper's financial condition was "dangerously critical." At that time more than \$60,000 of workers' money already had been collected by the middle of February and a conference was called of 100 Communist Party leaders to try and halt the decline in the paper's circulation. On March 2nd, the drive closed with \$83,000 contributed.

The week before the end of the campaign, members of the Daily Worker editorial and business staffs received no pay "because there was no money."

That same week the business manager of the Daily Worker was removed and his post was taken by the treasurer of the New York District of the Communist Party! Members of the Communist Party have been told of the sharp decrease in circulation, but the whole story of the crisis has not been revealed to them. In a word, the circulation of the Daily Worker which had totaled about 38,000, had slid down to below the 21,000 mark, a drop of about 17,000.

The members have been told that each and everyone is expected to pay for a subscription to this "new and improved Daily Worker." Organizers have been told to pass the order down the line. There will be no way out of it.

In keeping with the party instructions, members will have to subscribe. However, they can nurture one consolation. It is doubtful whether the Communist Party leaders will be able to make them "confess" that although they pay for the paper, they do not read it.

CHAPTER III

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN ACTION

The antics of Earl Browder in the 1936 election campaign formed easily the most shameless and, at the same time, the most disgraceful chapter in the history of the American Communist Party. Although the campaign is now many months old, the repercussions are still plaguing the worn structure that was once proudly called a revolutionary working-class party.

To Browder was given the task of formally introducing the People's Front to the capitalist politicians and the American masses. This was, to say the least, an unenviable ordeal for one who, in years gone by, had talked Socialism and Soviet power; to one who had vigorously berated as social fascists, and worse, any and all those who dared to say a kind word about a progressive senator or a liberal mayor.

Every time the presidential candidate was asked for whom the Communist Party was campaigning nationally, Browder was forced to turn a verbal somersault. The Communist Party did not want Landon. The Communist Party did not ask the people to vote for Thomas. The Communist Party was certain that its own ticket would not be elected. "Well, then," Browder would be asked, "are the Communists supporting Roosevelt?" And Browder would reply in a solemn voice: "We must defeat Landon at all costs."

It is no wonder that a few days after Election Day, when Browder was scheduled to speak at a general Communist meeting at St. Nicholas Palace in New York City on the "Lessons of the Election Campaign," the chairman announced that the standard bearer was too ill to appear.

HOW THE MEMBERS REACTED

Browder's People's Frontism had provoked varied reactions among the Communist Party members.

In New England, for example, Andrew McBane, president of the Vermont Marble Workers' Union, and a member of the Communist Party, went from meeting to meeting during the campaign months openly urging trade unionists and others to vote for Roosevelt. When functionaries of the Communist Party District Committee sought to caution

McBane against such open support for Roosevelt, the trade union leader, who is a simple, honest and conscientious worker, replied: "I know whom we are backing and I am going to speak for him. There is no use beating about the bush."

Other Communist Party members in the New England District campaigned in the same fashion. It might be interesting to note how this state of chaos reacted upon the members in the affected areas. Before the campaign there were nine Communist Party units operating in Vermont and New Hampshire. Shortly after Election Day, the number had been reduced to two.

In New York City, the Communist Party members had been instructed to join the American Labor Party, whose only candidates were Roosevelt and Lehman. In one Brooklyn section, 15 members joined the American Labor Party. They then dropped out of the Communist Party. In Manhattan and the Bronx, many Communist Party members acted similarly. The Communist Party organizers are alarmed over the exodus of older members from the party.

But it is a tradition of the Communist Party leadership never to admit a mistake had been made or that anything was wrong with the organizational or political machinery. It was on this premise that the campaign "clarification" discussion had been started and carried on.

The burden of this "clarification" revolved around a persistent denunciation of the Socialist Party as "sectarian" and a campaign to drive the "Trotskyists out of the Labor movement." By "Trotskyists" the leaders referred, of course, to all trade unionists and mass organizations who opposed the People's Front.

It was notable that during this "clarification" period Communist members were not told why the party paid \$3.37 for each vote cast, while the Socialists whom they denounced as "sectarian" had paid only 20c. and received far more impressive support. On the basis of the amount of money spent the Socialist vote could be counted as a dozen times and more greater than that received by the People's Front Party.

PEOPLE'S FRONTISM IN THE WORKERS ALLIANCE

As though they had learned absolutely nothing from their new line in their disastrous election campaign, these Communist Party leaders proceeded to extend their People's Front activities. People's Frontism reached out into the Workers Alliance and its tactics for class-collaboration in the administration of relief have dealt a smashing blow to rank and file

harmony in the organization. The Communist "fractions" have opposed vehemently the program of Socialists and other militant groups in the Alliance for sit-down strikes, against W. P. A. lay-offs and for more adequate relief. Instead, Communist leaders have instructed their members to initiate a policy of "deals" with relief supervisors.

In New York, where the only recognized organization fighting in the interests of the unemployed has its largest membership, the Communist leaders have tried again and again to carry through a program for an arbitration board to consider and act on relief cases. Under the plan, the board would, out of 12 members, have only three representatives from the Workers Alliance. Thus, at the very outset, the Workers Alliance would be hopelessly in the minority, the workers would be shackled by agreement, and "relief" would be given at the will of the authorities. But even should the Workers Alliance have a majority on such a board, the final decision could always be made by the City and Federal officials.

There could be no more unmistakable sign of surrender of the class struggle on the part of the Communist Party than this attempted maneuver. Prior to the People's Front era, Communist Party leaders had warned that arbitration boards were merely ruses to trick and sell out the workers. Only through struggle can the workers win concessions from the ruling class or its agents, these same Communist Party leaders had said.

Today the term "class struggle" had been erased from the vocabulary of Communist functionaries. In view of these facts, there is sound ground for the growing suspicion that the whole unemployed movement is becoming an embarrassing hindrance to the Communist Party in its eagerness to gain "respectability."

In the trade unions, its tactics are becoming shadier with each succeeding day. Upon the organization of the Committee for Industrial Organization, the Communist Party policy was to blame the American Federation of Labor bureaucrats for any possible split that might occur in the ranks of organized labor. Now the Communist Party leadership is beginning to hedge and straddle. Today the People's Front policy is driving the Communists to a policy of unity "at all costs!" **UNITY WITH THE GREENS, THE FREYS, THE WOLLS, THE HUTCHINSONS, AND OTHER STRIKE-BREAKING REACTIONARIES.** This is the aim of the People's Front!

On the political field, the Communist Party through the People's Front is plunging itself even more obviously into a deep crisis.

In Philadelphia, the Communists had been ordered to enter the

Primaries of the corrupt Democratic machine of the city. The Democratic program will also be the Communist program. People's Frontism in all its glory! In Minnesota, the members have been ordered into the Farmer-Labor Party. That this party may make new deals with Jim Farley or other capitalist party politicians is of no concern to the C. P. leadership. In the circumstances, Communists may find themselves voting for corrupt machine candidates at the behest of their People's Front bureaucrats.

THE SITUATION IN NEW YORK

In New York State the situation is even worse. The whole membership had been instructed to join the American Labor Party in a body. This enrollment, members had been told, was to be completed by the first week of March, 1937. The Communist Party leaders have decided to swing the support of their membership behind all A. L. P. candidates, regardless of whom they may be.

Inasmuch as the A. L. P. is openly for bargaining with the old Wall Street parties, it is quite possible that Communist Party members may be finding themselves in the humiliating position of supporting a Tammany candidate in one section of the city, and a Fusion-Republican in another.

THEY FACE A NEW DILEMMA

These actions, the Communist Party leaders would no doubt characterize as wiping out "the last vestige of sectarianism." However, much as they may succeed in their "clarification" discussions, they will have to reckon with a far more formidable factor. The Communist Party leadership is aware it faces a dilemma that cannot be solved by any number of "clarification" discussions.

The Communist Party in keeping with its People's Front policy, has merged units into large branches which hold open meetings. It is a known fact that Dubinsky, Hillman and other guiding bureaucrats of the American Labor Party have ruled against permitting into the ranks workers aligned with any other political organization. It is true that Communist Party members have been warned, in filling out applications, not to mention that they have other political affiliations. But the Communist Party, with its People's Front line, is no longer the disciplined organization that it was.

Should the A. L. P. bureaucrats launch a terrorist drive against the Communist members they could easily identify them by the mere process of sending their representatives into the Communist Party's open branch meetings. On the other hand, should the Communist Party seek to revert

to its old policy of closed unit meetings, the leaders would find to their dismay that the new elements attracted by People's Front "democracy" would not welcome closed sessions and would very likely desert the ranks.

With the advent of the People's Front Line, large numbers of lawyers, doctors, and dentists have joined the Communist Party because it became a "respectable organization." These new elements may well be called members of the "first class."

They scorned the very idea of regular party assignments. They are not interested in a disciplined political organization. Unlike the members of the old Communist Party, they would not consider canvassing homes with copies of the Daily Worker or distribute leaflets at a relief bureau.

The party's new "respectability" has aroused the resentment of workers who had given years of their labor to the working-class movement. While they are dropping out or losing interest in the doings of the branches "the new elements" are having a grand time.

Sit-down strikes are being discouraged, demonstrations in the interests of the working class are now few and far between. For every dozen protest actions held two years ago, one is now reluctantly sponsored under the People's Front Line. The new party element is interested in music clubs, dramatic groups, and athletic teams. The Communist Party and Young Communist League branches have been encouraged to promote this sort of activity as a substitute for the intensive revolutionary work of other days. In some branches refreshments are served at each meeting to build up a sort of "Rotarian" regular fellow spirit among the membership. This, sketchily, is the People's Front in action in the branches.

Many older members hold on to their books like a mother fondling her child, suddenly deformed, and hoping against hope that some miracle might bring it back to normal health.

These older members are asking themselves and one another: "Whither are we driving?" "When and how will all this end?"

CHAPTER IV

MARXISM VS. THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

To justify their tactics, hurtful and even ruinous to the American workers, the Communist leaders have told their members that the People's

Front line is vital to the period in which we are living. This line, they say, is being carried out on an international as well as a national scale. Because of this declaration, it is essential to show a more complete picture of People's Frontism and examine its implications in relation to the fight of the world's toiling masses for liberation from capitalist oppression and for Socialism.

The Communist leaders hold that we must fight for democracy, and against war and fascism and that the only way this can be done successfully is through the People's Front. In offering this proposition, they presuppose or at least, delude the workers into believing that imperialist war could be thwarted by some form of People's Front mobilization. They propound further the theory that by fighting for capitalist democracy (not for working-class democracy) they can prevent the coming of fascism. And finally, they argue, that in the event of war, the workers must be ready to take the side of one imperialist nation as against another. Thus they have begun to peddle about the propaganda of "good wars and bad wars."

Not only is all this People's Front doctrine viciously anti-Marxist but, in spreading it, the Communist Party leadership seeks to debase all the scientific teachings of Lenin in the fight against world imperialism. These Communist leaders talk now as though Marxism belonged to a bygone age and Lenin had neither studied nor understood Capitalism in its imperialist stage and how its attacks should be met by the world's working masses.

First, it must be pointed out that People's Frontism is not really some new strange animal. It is not the creation of Stalin, Thorez, Blum or Browder. Marx had repeatedly warned against and condemned "combinations" between toilers and their ruling class oppressors.

LENIN WARNED AGAINST COALITIONS

Later, during and after the World War, Lenin dwelt on the consequences of such "coalitions." Lenin explained very clearly that when the social, financial and political structure of capitalist nations became weakened through the contradictions of the profit system, the capitalists were quick to invite the assistance within their governmental apparatus of working-class leaders. Being better organized and more experienced in politics, Lenin said, these capitalists were fast to take advantage of vacillating compromising elements within the ranks of labor.

Here are Lenin's own words on this question:

"The revolution teaches all classes with rapidity and thoroughness unknown in normal peaceful times. The capitalists, better organized and

more experienced in the affairs of the class-struggle and of politics, learned faster than the others. Seeing that the situation of the government was untenable, they resorted to a measure which, for a number of decades after 1848, had been practiced by the capitalists of other countries to fool, defeat, and weaken the workers.

This measure is the so-called coalition government (i.e.) a united cabinet composed of members of the bourgeoisie and renegades from Socialism. In those countries where freedom and liberty have existed side by side with the revolutionary labor movement longer than in other countries, namely, in England and in France, the capitalists have used this method many times with great success. The Socialist leaders having entered a bourgeoisie cabinet inevitably proved to be the pawns, puppets, screens for the capitalists, instruments for deceiving the workers. The democratic and republican capitalists of Russia resorted to this very method.”*

The foregoing, then, is one of many instances of Lenin’s sharp and unreserved opposition to coalitions (such as the Peoples Front in France and Spain).

But Lenin is equally assertive in his battle against workers’ capitulation to the imperialists in a war crisis.

In volume XVIII of his works, in which he deals with imperialism, he takes up a war crisis such as the world is passing through this very hour, Lenin wrote:

“Under Capitalism, particularly in the imperialist state, wars are inevitable . . .”

“A propaganda of peace at the present time, if not accompanied by a call to revolutionary mass actions, is only capable of spreading illusions and demoralizing the proletariat by imbuing it with confidence in the humanitarianism of the bourgeoisie and of making it a plaything in the hands of the secret diplomacy of the belligerent countries.”**

Lenin also lashed out against representatives of social patriotism and political opportunism who talked of “good wars and bad wars.” Answering Kautsky, the then foremost spokesman for a stand identical to that of the People’s Frontists of today, Lenin wrote:

* Lenin’s “Toward Seizure of Power.” Book 1, Page 87.

** Lenin’s “Imperialism.” Book 1, Page 149.

"But one may say Marx himself while condemning wars took, for instance, in 1864-76, the side of the warring countries, when contrary to the will of the Socialists, war had become a fact. This is the main contention and the main trump card of Kautsky's pamphlet. It also is the position of Mr. Potresov, for whom internationalism means finding out whose success in the war is more desirable or less harmful from the standpoint of the interest, not of a national, but of the whole world proletariat. The sophism of these reasonings consists in substituting for the present epoch another long past historical epic."*

LENIN RIDICULES PEOPLES FRONT PHILOSOPHY

Lenin then discusses Potresov and Kautsky's attacks on the Stuttgart, Basle resolutions on war, and continues: "Let us hope that Potresov and Kautsky or their followers will propose to substitute for the Stuttgart and Basle resolutions something like this: 'Should the war break out in spite of our efforts, we must decide from the standpoint of the world proletariat: what is more advantageous for it, that India be robbed by England or by Germany; that the Negroes of Africa be poisoned by alcohol and stripped of their goods by the French or by the Germans; that Turkey be oppressed by the Austro-German or by the Anglo-Franco-Russian Alliance; that the Germans should throttle Belgium or the Russians, Galicia; that China be divided by the Japanese or by the Americans.' **"

Thus Lenin inveighed against the People's Front era of imperialists.

But, shout the Communist leaders, we must defend the Soviet Union, and all those opposed to the People's Front are enemies of the Workers' Republic. Let us examine this charge. A People's Front government has been established in France. What has it done for the masses? It continues to exploit the colonies of French imperialism as did its preceding concededly reactionary government. It has voted war credits for French imperialism. With England, Germany, Italy and the approval of Soviet officialdom it has blockaded the ports of Spain to prevent shipment of food and munitions to the bleeding Spanish toilers. It has refused to allow French workers to cross the frontiers into Spain to help the loyalists, while Hitler and Mussolini have been pouring troops by the thousands into that war-torn land to aid Franco's fascist hordes. Nevertheless, French workers have been defiant of their government and crossed the border to fight against fascism.

* Lenin's "Imperialism," page 173.

** Ibid, page 173.

THE ROLE OF THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS

What has been the role of the French Communists? At the outset of the counter-revolutionary outbreak in Spain they called on the People's Front government to render support to the Loyalists, although the Communist party leaders did not promote continuous nation wide protest demonstrations, to bring sufficient pressure and action.

This failure to mobilize the masses confirmed the contention on the part of the revolutionary Socialists that this appeal to the People's Front government was just a political gesture. The People's Front government is, in reality, a coalition regime instituted to bolster up and try to save a decaying capitalist structure. Premier Blum has himself stated that the People's Front government had no intention of moving forward to Socialism.

This being true, it is patent that the capitalists of France are not interested in helping to bring success to the Spanish workers. Why had not Thorez called on the masses to act themselves for Spain, instead of making representations to a government openly opposed to working-class liberation? People's Frontism in France has betrayed the Spanish revolution, just as it is today betraying its own working-class. People's Frontism is a living testimony that the Soviet Union must depend for its security upon the mobilization of the international working-class and not base its hopes on alliances with imperialist powers. People's Frontism has had the most dire consequences for the Spanish workers and peasants.

There People's Front government was willing to collaborate with "democratic industrialists" while it filled the prisons and shot down workers who opposed class-collaboration and class betrayal. This government was encouraged, even intimidated, into its shameful actions by none other than the representative of the Soviet Union's bureaucratic officialdom, the parent and guide of the People's Front line.

Indeed, the essence of the pressure placed upon the People's Front government in Spain, translated into words, meant that the ruling clique in the Soviet Union would fight the working-class opposition to People's Frontism, regardless of the consequences—regardless of the fact that the Fascist armies aided by Hitler and Mussolini were sweeping on to power!

It is, therefore, cowardly and hypocritical to charge, as People's Frontists are doing, that the workers in Spain who are in the front lines giving their lifeblood for their class and who are fighting this day for working-class unity, are aiding the fascists or are "counter revolutionaries."

WHY NOT POWER FOR THE WORKERS?

These revolutionary toilers know that the land, the industries and the banks are in their hands. Why, then, did the People's Front declaim against the working-class control? Why did the Communist International hold that the workers and peasants in Spain were not ready for Soviet power?

Why did Soviet officialdom angle for class collaboration at home and abroad in Spain, while the Nazis and Italian fascism were overrunning the land and slaughtering the workers and peasants?

Instead of consolidating working-class unity in the fight against fascism, why did the Communists in Spain depend upon class collaboration, non-intervention pacts and appeals to the defunct League of Nations?

The toiling masses of Spain must heed the words of Marx and Lenin, both of whom in unmistakable language indicted and repudiated People's Frontism.

CHAPTER V

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT EXTENDS AN OLIVE BRANCH IN ONE HAND

With the attacks on the People's Front sharpening in America, as in other countries, the Communist Party leaders are utilizing every vehicle of propaganda in an effort to stifle the opposition.

In February, 1937, a magazine was issued with articles by Communist Party leaders denouncing the Socialist Call, the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, Norman Thomas and other members of the Party to whom they referred "as Trotskyists and enemies of the Soviet Union."

Yet scarcely a month after this violent effusion these same Communist Party leaders called the Socialist Party to join with them in a united May Day. Do these leaders not know that such slander and villification as appeared in their magazine is not conducive to creating comradeship between Socialist and Communist workers.

Do they believe that they can retain the respect of their own membership by calling for a parade with Socialist workers on May 1st, and attacking them as "counter-revolutionists" on May 2nd?

These Communist Party leaders should understand by this time, what with the sharp drop in membership, that their own workers are getting tired of scurrilous attacks upon Socialist workers, and of distortions, misrepresentations and fantastic fabrications in the Daily Worker and their other publications.

In their frenzy to defend the People's Front line and arrest the crisis within their own ranks, Communist leaders and the Daily Worker have resorted to the wildest distortions of historic facts.

It is not within the scope of this work to discuss the Stalin-Trotsky controversy, nor the Moscow "confession" trials. But mention must be made of them in citing the panicky outbursts of the Daily Worker editors.

Less than a year ago on Radek's 53rd birth anniversary, the political bureau of the Communist Party used up more than 20 columns of space in the Daily Worker to glorify "the great Bolshevik leader." So he was called by the Daily Worker before the Moscow "Trial." Radek was hailed as the world's greatest journalist. He was called the world's greatest authority on international affairs. Radek was praised as a mighty Bolshevik hero, who had undergone years of hardship and suffering for the Russian Revolution. Radek was called one of Lenin's closest friends and an earnest pupil of the founder of the U. S. S. R.

What does the Daily Worker have to say about Radek today? In its Questions and Answers Column, shortly after the Moscow trial, the Daily Worker "explained" that Radek had always been an enemy of Lenin, that he had always worked as a counter-revolutionist with Trotsky, that he had at no time been an important figure in the Russian Revolution, and in a word, never really amounted to a hill of beans.

Did the Daily Worker lie in its first account of Earl Radek?

Or is the Daily Worker lying today? Just what is the truth?

LENIN CALLED THEM COMRADES

The truth is that Lenin had gone into polemics on many occasions with Radek as he had done with Bukharin, Sokolinoff and others condemned as fascists and counter-revolutionists by the Stalin regime. In those years many roads to the social revolution were discussed. Lenin with his superior mind, his political genius and his accurate interpretation of Marxism, won over to his position these men with whom he had polemical. Lenin had need of these old Bolsheviks to discuss with him, to assist him in his work. Lenin chided these co-workers on many occasions and he attacked their

political perspectives BUT HE CERTAINLY NEVER ALLUDED TO THEM AS COUNTER-REVOLUTIONISTS, AGENTS OF CAPITALISM, NOR FASCIST DOGS. They were his comrades. Those were the days of democracy within a "real Bolshevik Party." There were no shootings of Bolsheviki and there were no disgraceful "confessions" to blacken the name of the Soviet Union before the world.

Should the Communist leaders and the Daily Worker wish to retain their working-class members and win new workers for their party they will have to change their ways and their "line."

Proceeding under their present policy who can tell what may happen a year hence? Perhaps one fine day the Daily Worker readers may be told that Voroshilov, Kaganovitch, and Molotov are counter-revolutionists and agents to Hitler and the Japanese imperialists. And it is not impossible that the Questions and Answers Column may on one fine morning carry a statement something like the following:

"William Z. Foster had never been a follower of Lenin and had never really played an important role in the American Party. He was never the chairman of the Communist Party, as is commonly supposed by many members and had gained the use of that title through cunning and opportunistic methods. Neither was he ever the Communist Party's presidential candidate, although his name was used for reasons which need not be divulged to the outside public. Foster had always been suspected of being an agent of Morgan and a Hearst stooge. His expulsion from the Communist Party is welcomed by all true revolutionists."

AN APPEAL

Communist Party members must not be persuaded by their leaders or the Daily Worker with wild stories about Socialists being enemies of the Soviet Union. They must not believe the stupid charge often made by the Daily Worker that Norman Thomas is working hand in hand with the foes of the U. S. S. R. They must not believe the lying statements that Thomas has been helping Wall Street reactionaries in its fight against the liberalization of the U. S. Supreme Court. They must not believe that Thomas had ever collaborated with the foes of the working-class against the interests of the workers.

They must not believe the attacks by their leaders upon the Socialist Party members in the trade unions and in the Workers Alliance. Socialist Party members seek to fraternize with Communist Party workers, and the N. E. C. of the Socialist Party welcomes a united front on specific issues with the Communist Party.

Socialist Party members call on the Communist Party members to fight together for a higher wage, for better living conditions for the American workers and for unionization of America's industries.

Socialist Party members call on the Communists to fight together for the defense of the Soviet Union and against all imperialist wars.

American Socialist workers ask for comradeship and solidarity in the war against the common enemy—American Imperialism.

Communist workers—join with the Socialists against class-collaboration!

Forward to unity in class struggle!

Forward to working class (not capitalist) democracy!

Forward to Socialism!

CONCISE! COMPREHENSIVE! CHALLENGING!

A network of 100 alert correspondents in key cities of the U.S.A. and Europe gets first hand news from every front for the

Socialist Call

21 East 17th Street, New York City

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS:

Norman Thomas
McAllister Coleman
Herbert Zam
Bruno Fischer
Benjamin Wolf

B. J. Widick
Frank N. Trager
John Newton Thurber
Roy E. Burt
Frank Marquart

Aaron Levenstein
Frank McAllister
Jack Altman
Gus Tyler
Hy Fish

And an Imposing Array of Feature Writers

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

\$1.00 for 6 months \$1.50 for 1 year

SOCIALIST CALL, 21 EAST 17th STREET, NEW YORK CITY

American Socialist Monthly

21 East 17th Street, New York, N. Y.

Vigorously represents the interests of Revolutionary Socialism

STIMULATING ANALYTICAL PROVOCATIVE

Official Theoretical Organ of the Socialist Party

A journal devoted to a Marxian analysis of the most important problems facing the American and International Socialist Movement today, by outstanding writers

EDITORIAL STAFF: DEVERE ALLEN, DAVID B. BERENBERG,
A. J. BIEMILLER, ROY BURT, HARRY W. LAIDLER
ANNA BERCOWITZ, Managing Editor

\$1.50 a year. Special rates for Bundle Orders. 15c. a Copy