

# LABOR ACTION

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## U. S. Disaster in Korea: Only Stalinism Gains by Washington's Intervention Line

By MAX SHACHTMAN

The American intervention in Korea, which was a calamity to start with, has turned into a first-rate disaster. The dimensions of the military defeat are exceeded only by those of the political defeat.

The Stalinists were guaranteed a political victory from the very beginning, regardless of the military outcome. This was foreseen and foretold, by us but not by Washington. That they should also have gained such a military victory could have been foreseen by Washington. But it was not, because the government went blindly from an irresponsible adventure to a criminal adventure which threatened to precipitate, almost overnight, the Third World War, a threat which even now is anything but dispelled.

The attempt to place the responsibility for the disaster solely on this or that official, be he in Washington or in Tokyo, is infantile where it is not demagogical. Both Acheson and MacArthur—to take the two most prominent scapegoats of the hour—can no more break out of the limits to which the nature of America's political position confines them than they can break out of their own skins.

### THE BASIC CAUSE OF THE DEBACLE

A new secretary of state, whether installed by Truman or by the Republicans, would have no political weapons in the fight against Stalinism different from those that have been at Acheson's disposal. A new general in the field, even if he were less of a reactionary and a megalomaniac than MacArthur, even if he toed the Washington line in foreign policy, could only try with greater or lesser military skill to execute those policies which basically doomed the Korean intervention in advance.

It is the policies of Washington that produced the disaster. These policies are not the product of the whim or error of one man or any group of them. They are basic to the political position of American capitalism in the world today. They will not, because they cannot, be changed in any fundamental respect by any shift in the cabinet or the general staff, or even by a change from the Democratic to a Republican administration.

We are not for the defeat of "Russia," but we are for the defeat

of Stalinism! Military power is only an instrument and function, only one of the functions, of political policy. A political policy that can defeat Stalinism and assure peace and democracy requires a change in the American government so radical and fundamental in nature that it can make an equally fundamental change in the international position of the United States.

Nothing less will achieve the purpose; anything less is utopian. All that the present government (Republicans included along with Democrats) and its policy have proved up to date, and proved conclusively, is their innate inability to conduct a progressive fight against Stalinism.

Korea is only the latest proof of this. The United States has come out of the war in that unfortunate land as greatly weakened as Stalinism has emerged from it strengthened, and that holds in every respect.

Everyone with a political brain in his head knows that the signal for the war in Korea was given by Moscow. It is utterly inconceivable that the Kim Il Sung regime in North Korea would have risked so tremendously important an action as the attack upon South Korea without receiving the permission of the Kremlin. Far more likely, it was the Kremlin that initiated, directed, planned and prepared the attack.

### INTO AN IRRESPONSIBLE ADVENTURE

The advantages of the Stalinist position can be summed up in the fact that whatever the result of the military action, a political triumph for the Kremlin was guaranteed. The only course that made any political sense from the standpoint of American imperialism, given the circumstances in Korea and Asia as a whole, which Washington had helped to create by its whole past policy, was not to intervene militarily.

Early in 1950, Acheson had made a public announcement of American foreign policy which excluded Korea from the Pacific area which the U. S. was prepared to fight for; and, again even from the standpoint of American imperialism, this made good sense, for the alternative was so obviously senseless. Given no American military intervention, the Northern Stalinist armies would have swept the Syngman Rhee regime out of existence in a trice and consolidated all of Korea into a single vassal state of the Russian slave empire. Such a victory would have meant a heavy defeat for the Korean people, it is

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### They Didn't Go For 'Unanimity' At IUE Parley

By JOHN WILLIAMS

MILWAUKEE, Dec. 8.—The first constitutional convention of the CIO electrical union was concluded here today but not before the delegates had shown that they had something to say in this relatively new union.

The International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (CIO) has just ended a vital year of existence with its two main tasks, on the whole, completed.

The first and most obvious task was the destruction of the influence of the Stalinists in the basic electrical-industry plants like General Electric, Westinghouse, General Motors and others. After a long and vicious struggle lasting for months, during which the Stalinist-controlled rival (the UE) showed surprising strength, the IUE-CIO emerged victorious in NLRB elections in the majority of the big chains and big independents. During the fight those who had expected the UE to fold up

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## Why Truman and Attlee Disagreed

By MARY BELL

Despite all the official jargon and the protestations of "fundamental agreement" which followed the talks last week between President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee, it was difficult to conceal the real divergences that exist between British and American policy on the Korean war, Chinese Stalinism and world problems of war in general.

Attlee came with disclaimers of "appeasements," even if there was hardly an analogy to stand on, aware of the "Drop the bomb now" cries of the troglodytes of both parties. But it was largely the president's hapless statement to the effect that he was considering use of the A-bomb that hastened Attlee's transatlantic trip. If the "police action" in Korea had brought the world to the verge of World War III, there was no question but that use of the A-bomb would precipitate it.

Attlee's desire to see the president, after a visit from the

French premier, Rene Pleven, was a reflection, however pallid, of the very great fears of the European and other nations that the world might be so soon plunged into war.

The talks and the communique published at the end of them, announcing Anglo-American agreement, nevertheless reveal the differences between the "tough," provocative policy of the United States officialdom and the anx-

ious desire to negotiate a peace and stave off war on the part of the Europeans. Acheson, so false-belabored by the reactionaries for being soft on Stalinism, has put forward (with Truman's agreement) the American policy of "limited negotiations," inclusive of Korea but exclusive of Formosa, the Chinese government's seat in the UN, etc. If these fail, then the alternative proposed is "limited war."

### ATLEE'S PRESSURE

On his part, Attlee proposed negotiations to include Formosa and the Chinese government's UN seat, the British having been for the latter in line with their recognition of Mao Tse-tung. The argumentation surrounding this line of policy had much to do with the relationship to total war.

Attlee argued that Mao Tse-tung is not Stalin, and would oppose any policy calculated to

solidarize the two. The Americans would equate China and Russia. Attlee feared, in addition, that any limited war of economic sanctions and boycotts such as the Americans proposed would open the road to Russian reprisals in its own form of limited war by means of armed attacks and possibly to total war. Further, the Americans would throw themselves into the Russian trap, involving them in endless and fruitless war in China, that endless land mass and bottomless reservoir of manpower.

There are others in the UN bloc of Western nations more strongly opposed than Attlee to the American policy, not to speak of India, whose Nehru had early warned that the march above the 38th parallel would bring about Chinese intervention. There is no doubt that Attlee, who is far from the strongest representative of the sentiment opposed to

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# U. S. Disaster in Korea — —

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hardly necessary to say. Also, it would have meant a defeat for Washington, but a minor defeat and, in any case, one that was more or less unavoidable.

**Instead of accepting this choice, the Truman administration decided to risk the major defeat. It plunged into what was an irresponsible adventure; and, by confronting the United Nations with an accomplished fact, dragged its reluctant allies into the adventure. Washington had only a chance of winning a military victory in Korea; a political victory it had no chance of winning, least of all in Asia, as should now be amply clear.**

Immediately the U. S. was in a position that aroused the increasing hostility of the Asiatic peoples, a fact which has been more than sufficiently documented even in the American press of the last several months. It appeared in the first place as the sponsor and patron of the Rhee regime, one of the most widely and deeply hated of the reactionary police governments in all of Asia. It appeared at the same time as a foreign invader, which all the peoples of Asia have had, centuries of rich and rightful cause to detest as oppressive and exploitive imperialism. This feeling was only deepened by the ruthlessness of the American military campaign, which proceeded to the systematic destruction not only of the industries but of the homes of the Korean people and their innocent inhabitants.

## NO GREATER BOOST FOR STALIN

But worse was to follow. The blind adventures in Tokyo and Washington paid no attention to the mounting opposition to their course throughout Asia and Europe. Intoxicated by their first military successes, they finally reached the 38th parallel. They had proclaimed its existence so sacred that honor, integrity and peace demanded their armed intervention to maintain it. Many people here and abroad, especially in India and England, entertained the illusion that Washington would, at least at that late date, show a tiny shred of political sense and stop at the 38th parallel, in the hope of recouping by a show of forbearance the political ground it had lost. We admit that the possibility was entertained by us for a while—which will teach us, we hope, not to underrate the stupidity of American imperialism.

Once at the parallel, Washington decided to cross and drive to the Korea-China frontier. Stalin could have asked for no greater favor. He was therewith not only able to stimulate a big Chinese military mobilization against the United States, and explode overnight the puny, purile and ludicrously transparent efforts of Washington to "win" Peiping from Moscow, but also to precipitate an open break between Washington and the Indian government and in general to disrupt the carefully nurtured American bloc in the United Nations.

Taking a leaf out of the American book, the Chinese Stalinists also intervened militarily in Korea. The armed forces of the United States were routed in what has been described, without much exaggeration, as the worst and most humiliating defeat ever suffered by the United States. To find the cause for this in the defects of MacArthur's "military intelligence" is absurd; it lies much more in the lack of any political intelligence in Washington.

**The American ruling class and its government do not understand the feelings and hopes of all the oppressed, war-weary and war-frightened people or how to cope with them. They know only that world capitalism has its back against the wall but they do not know how to save it for the very good reason that there is no way of saving it.**

# At IUE-CIO Convention —

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met a big surprise. Even to this day the politically trained and hardened Stalinists remain a force to be reckoned with.

The second and equally important task was the winning of contracts from the big chains, in order to establish the union on a sound working basis, to keep it in condition to resist both the enemy outside, the corporations, and the intra-labor enemy, the UE.

The union has been run by a temporary administrative committee headed by James Carey, a former president of the UE (before the split) and at present the secretary-treasurer of the CIO. The fact that the whole year's activity has been financed in the main by a \$800,000 subsidy from the national CIO put Carey in an important strategic position, and he proceeded to use this advantage to the hilt.

## "UNANIMITY" DRIVE

At the time the convention went into sessions, Carey was in fact pretty much in control, because he had control of the purse-strings and because no other figure of Carey's general ability had even

begun to emerge in the union as yet.

Fred Kelly, the candidate put up by the pro-CIO forces against the Stalinists at the last UE convention, had revealed himself as an incompetent nobody, and had ruled himself out of consideration by his activity in his own Lynn, Mass., local.

The big issue at the convention was the raising of the per-capita tax on locals from 50 cents to 75 cents. The issues on this point had been presented in three numbers or so of the union newspaper, the IUE-CIO News, although not too clearly or ably. Yet, despite this, many delegates came to the convention with instructions from their locals to vote against the proposed increase. Some took this stand because they felt that priority should be given to building up the locals rather than the international. Some were simply not informed on the obvious need of the international to operate as a self-sustaining union.

The first two days of the convention saw Carey going after "unanimous" votes on every single question, even to the point of demanding, on the most inconse-

quential questions, a public explanation from those one or two negative voters who arose.

This pressure for unanimity soon ran into obstacles from delegates who had learned to stand on their own feet in the course of the struggle against the Stalinists.

## DUES ISSUE

The first real reaction against an artificially "unanimous" convention came on the discussion dealing with the mail-order form of referendum on the election of president and executive secretary.

Paul Jennings of Local 450 raised the question that mailed ballots did not constitute the clear expression of democracy. A central machine could easily control it. Other delegates from District 4, the district which had licked the Stalinists in their New York and New Jersey strongholds, joined in the criticism.

Seeing his "unanimous" system wittingly, Carey passed some facetious remarks about a District 4 caucus having been held the night before, and at this District 4 delegates and others gave him a warm reception. This did not stop the adoption of a mail referendum for the high offices, but it did break ground for a later discussion which took place around the question of raising the minimum dues of locals from \$1.50 to \$2.

This proposition had been introduced to placate those delegates who felt that, if the international took 75 cents out of the \$1.50 dues, there would not be much left for the local. The increase, which would raise the income of the local also, would take the heat off the local men, since everyone could then blame the international for the increase in dues.

The opposition to the \$2 dues did not rest their case on any

claim that the international did not need money. They argued that this particular proposal had not been previously submitted to the membership, and that the ranks would feel that it had been slipped over on them. They demanded and won the right for each local to decide its own dues over and above the present minimum of \$1.50. The vote was 1090.4 to 952.6.

**NEED FOR LEADERSHIP**  
The 75 cent per-capita tax on locals was passed overwhelmingly. The delegates who voted against it declared that they were not so much voting against an increase as honoring their locals' instructions. Carey had demanded that local instructions be disregarded. Carey was elected president and Hartnett executive secretary.

The convention showed that there is an independent-thinking force in the union which is jealous of its democratic rights. It was born in the struggle against Communist Party dictatorship in the old UE. These men will not easily submit to dictatorship by Carey or anyone else. As yet they have not developed their spokesmen or program. As in the union itself, there is a deep need for top and secondary leadership. Inexperience abounds everywhere. There is simply no one outside of Carey who has the necessary training to lead the union. The union itself will grow, and new leadership is in the process of development.

For the present most of the union militants are in the main concerned with the consolidation and building of the union. On that issue there was real unanimity. As a result of this convention, it is safe to say that a bureaucratic halter will not easily be slipped around the IUE-CIO.

## WITHDRAW MILITARY FORCES!

**Washington finds it hard to reconcile itself to this fact. It finds it hard to make the decision which is urged upon it not only by reality but even by some of its allies, namely, to withdraw its military forces and give up any plan to continue a war which has now so obviously become futile from any standpoint, except the criminal standpoint of face-saving and prestige.**

Washington, as the spokesman of the only capitalist country left in the world that is capable of playing a decisively independent policy, has again showed the bankruptcy of capitalist politics in the struggle against Stalinism.

Stalinism is a deadly menace not only to socialism and the socialist movement, but to democracy and the labor movement in general. We know this better than anyone else. But we also know that Stalinism thrives on the continuing decay and bankruptcy of capitalism, and thrives on it to the extent that the labor movement ties up its fate with capitalism, capitalist governments and capitalist policies.

Stalinism can be dealt with only by arousing a movement of millions and tens of millions, a movement of hope and progress, of fundamental social change, a movement not allied with or dependent upon Syngman Rhee, Chiang Kai-shek, Bai Dais, Charchills, Adenauers, Francoes, the Vatican and their like.

**It is not that American imperialism "does not want" such a movement. It CANNOT have it; it cannot mobilize it; it cannot even appeal to it.**

The American labor movement, if it broke completely with American capitalist politics and proclaimed its political independence, could inspire and lead such a movement. A world of responsibility rests on its shoulders. How many more disasters like the Korean does it need before it realizes this historic responsibility and proceeds with its invincible power to discharge it?

# Truman and Attlee —

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that of the U. S., compromised in the talks with Truman (The bipartisan statement of Senator Tom Connally and Senator Alexander Wiley, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and ranking Republican of that committee respectively, said they were satisfied "that the British and American positions are substantially closer than would have appeared a week ago.") But it is also true that, representing as he did the pressures against war of the European peoples, he placed a staying hand on the clenched fist of American power policy. This, plus the utter rout of U. S. forces in Korea, means a return, however temporary, to struggles on the diplomatic plane.

Another reflection of European concern over the course of U. S. involvement in the Far East was the discussion over American stockpiling of vital materials which has caused shortages and hampered both peace and war production in Europe, producing record high prices. Much of the discussion between Attlee and Truman concerned the allocation of vital materials and the problem of prices. Behind this too was the concern for Europe and its battered economy. American involvement in the Far East or the precipitation of World War III would soon make the present austerity resemble a land of milk and honey.

## POSTPONING WAR

It appears that the way has been cleared for negotiations. The Big Two agreed to continue to fight on in Korea until forced out, to build up the North Atlantic defenses, to appoint a supreme commander for the latter, to issue a "cease fire" on the 38th parallel and negotiate, with no surrender of Korea, Formosa, Hong Kong or of Indo-China by the French. As part of the compromise, the British agreed to abstain on the question of a seat for Stalinist China in the UN. Both agreed to compromise on a Korea divided at the parallel, occupied by the UN in the South and the Chinese in the North. The five-week-old Russian proposal for Big Four European talks on the unification of Germany is also being warmed over by European diplomats in the hope that broader questions might be included.

Of course, the only virtue of the British policy of Attlee is that it postpones the inevitable, and that is a virtue, however small, when the inevitable is so appalling. The absurdity of this type of bourgeois power politics seems to be sensed by James Reston of the N. Y. Times when he writes that "The trouble with this is that, while everybody is now working on a no-provocation, no-appeasement compromise that will satisfy Washington and London, Paris and New Delhi, there is a growing realization that in this situation a compromise may be worse than either extreme."

The issues may well be conched in terms of either provocation or appeasement until the nascent anti-war forces, of which Attlee was only a faint and distorted echo, make their voices heard in a new chorus: against both Washington and Moscow, for a third Socialist alternative against world slaughter and against totalitarianism.

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