Grasp
The Weapon of Culture!

by V. J. Jerome

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

V. J. JEROME, the author of this pamphlet, is the editor of the Marxist theoretical magazine, Political Affairs, and one of the seventeen Communist leaders facing trial under indictments secured by the government following the Supreme Court’s decision upholding the pro-fascist Smith Act. He is also author of numerous articles, pamphlets, and books, including Culture in a Changing World, The Negro in Hollywood Films, Intellectuals and the War, and The Treatment of Defeated Germany.

His forthcoming novel, A Lantern for Jeremy, will appear in February under the imprint of Masses & Mainstream.

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Let Us Grasp the Weapon of Culture

by V. J. Jerome

The Draft Resolution,* in its concluding words, calls attention to the "shameful degradation of culture now taking place" in the United States. This stress must be seen in relation to our central task of today, the struggle for peace, as well as to our major policy of Party concentration among basic industrial workers.

As a first step, therefore, let us examine the capitalist culture that surrounds the American worker today. Let us describe some of his likely experiences.

The paper he reads on his way home from work beats the war drums and shrieks about the peril of the "Red hordes."

He has a family. He owns a radio. Perhaps he has even bought a television set on installment payments. Captain Video—Master of Life and His little boy of seven sits watching Death—Super-Scientist, Defender of the Good and Enemy of Evil. With his super-science weapons he fights Evil wherever it appears. And Evil has a way of cropping up in China—in the image of the "hordes." There are eight million television sets now in use in the United States, and eighty-five million radio sets.

The worker has a girl of twelve. She comes home from junior high school troubled. In her class the pupils, in daily rotation, are made to serve as secret "F.B.I." agents—so designated—each in turn secretly spying on the other pupils and secretly reporting to the teacher.

On his birthday, the little boy gets a toy atomic gun that lights up brightly as it shoots the "death-rays." During the day he plays soldier. But at night he tosses in fear of the atom bomb from which he and his classmates hid crouching under the desks in "defense" drills.

In the evening the worker sits down to read—a Western or a comic book, in which Bugs Bunny becomes the captor of a "spy ring"; or a homicidal hair-raiser with a tough agency dick as hero—slick

* Reference is made to the Draft Resolution of the 15th National Convention of the Communist Party, held in New York, December, 1950. This article is reprinted from the February, 1951 issue of Political Affairs.
thrillers glorifying violence, brutality, and war.

He may take his family to the movies. The features are a slapstick comedy and a murder mystery, or maybe an underworld melodrama. The children are offered a special treat in the animated cartoons, so full of the fun of torturing Donald Duck and Pluto the Dog. Or perhaps they see the New York Film Critics' prize picture, All About Eve, in which woman is degraded and the arch-villain of the drama, Eve, is revealed at a certain point as having a Polish- or Jewish-sounding name, by which we are supposed to understand her special baseness. Or perhaps they see a "good thriller," Asphalt Jungle, in which the Police Department is on the side of the angels and all the villains somehow bear non-Anglo-Saxon names. The one tall, blond Nordic gangster, Dix, emerges as the hero at the end, dying in his sweetheart's arms, back in the old homestead. . . . In one scene he says:

That squarehead, he is a funny little guy. I don't get him at all. Maybe it's because he's a foreigner. Those guys, they don't think like us.

If the worker goes to church, he may listen to messages like the following, rendered this morning by the Rev. George Weymeyer in his Communion Sunday sermon:

"God is warning us to return to Him." How is He warning us? The wars, the deprivations, the high taxes and prices, the militarization of the youth, and the threatening atomic havoc should be accepted, exhorts the minister, as "blessings in disguise." For these are God's warnings of retribution for mankind's ingratitude, which is evident in "the multitudes" all over the world "who are leaning toward godless Communism, who didn't appreciate what they had, but chose to trust in man rather than in God."

If the worker is a Roman Catholic, he may, in addition, be told to add to his dogma the Papal announcement of Mary's bodily Ascension. He may hear Cardinal Spellman's Pastoral Letter exhorting him to "prove our love of God and Mary," to hate the "pagan robots," to "strengthen ourselves with the impregnable armor of fearless faith and conquer atheistic Communism with godliness and prayer."

Such are the "cultural" impacts which daily and incessantly bombard the worker and his family.

Can we imbue the working class with understanding of its class responsibility in the fight for peace, can we help to build its class alliances and effect its unity with the Negro people, can we hope to develop its class consciousness, without struggle against this "cultural" environment?

It is from the viewpoint of these urgent political tasks of our Party that we must examine some of the main ideological trends in American bourgeois culture today. This report will indicate some approaches
that may serve to help us translate the intent of the Draft Resolution into our constant practice.

I. THE "AMERICAN WAY" OF CULTURE

The main features of bourgeois cultural decadence in the postwar stage were noted by the Party-sponsored conference of Marxist cultural workers in 1947. Today these features of arrogant world-empire building and Anglo-Saxon racism; of rabid anti-Sovietism and Red-baiting; of violence, sadism, and anti-humanism, have become sharper and more openly geared to the war drive and the drive to fascism at home. At the same time, they are more and more camouflaged with demagogy, which calls war, "peace"; imperialism, "democracy"; aggression, "defense of freedom"; and the road to fascism, the "American way of life."

Never in all their shameful career of subverting science and the arts to the life-destroying policies of imperialism, have the war lords of Wall Street so debauched the cultural media, as now in their fiendish drive to enslave the world. What matters decency, what matter truth, integrity, art, so long as the kept press, the less-than-objective critics, and the rigged prize donors can keep going such anti-Soviet and Communist-defaming "cultural" monstrosities as the films, *The Iron Curtain*, *The Red Danube*, and *I Married a Communist*; as the plays, *The Traitor*, *Red Gloves*, and *Darkness at Noon*, which is soon to disgrace the stage; as the radio broadcasts, *Communism, U.S. Brand* and "counterspy" F.B.I. thrillers.

The degradation of content to suit the needs of imperialist aggression is necessarily accompanied by fascist-like measures of repression and regimentation of cultural workers.

The blacklist and censorship have become a pattern throughout all the mass propaganda media—radio, television, films, theatre, magazines, newspapers, and publishing houses. It is now spreading to all workers in these areas, to the point that at C.B.S. loyalty oaths are required of all employees, including building maintenance men and office workers. This pattern is reaching out, as our Party warned, beyond the "Left" to all who will not be completely regimented behind the war drive. Even a reactionary radio commentator like Drew Pearson loses his contract for not going along with Senator McCarthy all the way. This signifies the process of fascization of culture. It is an attempt to follow Hitler's pattern, to establish a U.S. version of the Nazi National Chamber of Culture.

As Wall Street rings the globe with its armies and military bases, as it invades and seizes and violates territories, as it perpetrates Nazi-like atrocities upon soldiers and civilians, its statesmen and apologists thicken the camouflage with
assurances like W. Averell Harriman’s declaration at the 1950 New York Herald Tribune Forum:

For the first time in history, the most powerful nation in the world is dedicated to peace and in partnership with other nations is mobilizing its moral force and its resources for world security.

Even so did Hitler’s expansionist drives take on the name of “New Order.”

Thus Wall Street seeks to mask its chauvinism with bourgeois cosmopolitanism. With catchwords about the “obsoleteness of nations,” and the need for a “world nation,” it attempts to break the resistance of the nations to being sucked into the American world empire. Its propagandists strive to belittle, in order to destroy, the national pride and national culture of other peoples. Anglo-Saxon chauvinism would force Wall Street’s ideas and debased cultural products upon peoples the world over, commandeering to that end its newspapers, magazines, books, and broadcasts; its Hollywood, Tin Pan Alley, and coca cola. On the home scene, no less, the Anglo-Saxon supremacy myth pervades all cultural areas, down to the standardized types used in advertising displays. It is U.S. imperialism’s superman cult to “justify” its pretensions to global hegemony—that blessed state of “Pax Americana” which, in the words of The Christian Century, “would do for the planet what Rome once did for the world of the Mediterranean.”

With every propaganda medium and agency at its command, the Wall Street “master race” ballyhoos its “American way of life.” The lying radio oracle misnamed “Voice of America” blares forth 24 hours a day in 24 languages, besides English. The depraved Hollywood product is undermining native film production in the Marshallized countries. In France, Italy, the Benelux and Scandinavian countries, Hollywood films predominate. The Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs in the State Department reported in November, 1950:

Our film strips and motion pictures [now go] to audiences which, at first, were out of our reach. We have a fleet of jeeps, now, with special rigs that carry projectors, screens, and amplifiers.

And Edgar Ansel Mowrer, in a recent issue of the Saturday Review of Literature, tells us of the many information and reading libraries maintained by the U.S. Government in foreign countries. “No branch of culture, learning, or information,” he reports, “is overlooked; American periodicals are skimmed and the cream [!!] rushed for consumption overseas.”

As for the cultural product itself, it is a garish, super-colossal public relations job to “Advertise God’s Country” (from the title of Mowrer’s article), to let them all know in what a Garden of Eden the American worker and his family live, where
every worker has a high-paid job, owns a car and a home and a deep-freeze, never knows unemployment, insecurity, or poverty, where all life has the glamour of the Hollywood silver screen. And if this is the worker’s blissful life, it is because “the American businessman” (not capitalist, mind you) “differs somewhat from his cousin in Europe.” As Fortune for December, 1950, is pleased to inform the world, “American businessmen, by and large, do not work for money alone.” In an article headed, “The Moral History of U.S. Business,” Fortune introduces “the businessman as saint,” dedicated to “profit and piety” and “the Gospel of Service.” He is shown to the world as the “trustee of wealth for the poor and for civilization.” We are told of the “considered benefactions of Carnegie, Rockefeller, Morgan,” and of Henry Ford, the “apostle of the more-for-less creed.” The exceptionalism of American Big Business, the two-hundred-year “survey” concludes, lies in “its tireless quest” for “moral motives and purposes” which “has bred a high order of that ‘divine discontent’ which is a sign of man’s spirituality.”

Verily, can anyone challenge the heaven-ordained claim of such a capitalism to take the world under its divine wings!

Equally trimmed for show-window display at home and abroad is the treatment of the Negro people in the United States.

The treatment of the Negro people is, indeed, as expressed by Comrade Foster, Wall Street’s Achilles’ heel before world opinion. To pose as Prince of Peace before the world, the white ruling class resorts to many “cultural” devices to hide the oppression of the Negro people. Thus, the spurious “Negro interest” films, of the type of Pinky, Lost Boundaries, Home of the Brave, and Intruder in the Dust, are given wide export. The Howard University Players are booked for performances in Europe with the purpose of counteracting the influence of Paul Robeson—now robbed of the right to travel abroad—and of “proving” how “well treated” the Negro is in the United States. As the oppressors of the Negro people make use of the Bunches and the Hasties, so they bludgeon into service a Jackie Robinson, a Josh White, a Hazel Scott, in the attempt to bring the Negro people into line for Wall Street’s war program, and to deaden the national-liberation movement of the Negro people with the poison of bourgeois cosmopolitanism. They hope with this “cultural” camouflage to assuage the rising colonial peoples who identify their anti-imperialist struggle with the cause of the American Negro.

The people of every land to which this “culture” is exported can see through this tinselled pretense. There isn’t an audience of sight or sound in any country that is not revolted by this “cultural” dumping: the glorification of the gangster, the lurid spy mania, the slick murder thrillers;
the sickening slanders of the Soviet Union, of Communism, of peace partisans; the overt and covert white chauvinism; the arrogant bellicosity of the America “that cannot lose.”

Clearly, Wall Street cannot today operate in the old way, solely with Big Stick and jingoism, or entirely with Hitlerian racism. While intensifying its use of these methods, it must cultivate illusions of "democratic" America as liberator, as big brother to the other capitalist nations, even while undermining their sovereignty, and as protector of the colonial peoples, even while attempting to rivet their chains.

Among the most vocal counsellors of this policy of colossal deception are labor reformists, Social-Democrats, and Titoites. At the cited New York Herald Tribune Forum, Walter Reuther, President of the United Auto Workers, addressed himself to the gilded array of speakers composed of bankers, captains of industry and insurance, oil, and railroad magnates:

We must convince the people of the world that we propose to share with them our material wealth, our knowledge and our skills.

He appealed to the assembled N.A.M. and Chamber of Commerce presidents, high-ranking diplomats, and top Army brass:

Hundreds of millions of people throughout the world are in revolt against poverty and injustice, against imperialism and colonialism. We must help these people find a democratic alternative or communism will move in to fill the vacuum created by our failure.

Wall Street and its apologists show a growing awareness of the difficulties encountered by this process of deception. At that New York Herald Tribune Forum, the president of Cowles Magazines, Inc. warned the American imperialists against complacency as regards Asia, with this account of his own wartime experience with a group of university students in China:

I referred to the United States, England, France, Holland, etc., as “democracies” in whom they should put their faith. A hostile stir went through the group. Finally, a young Chinese professor asked me how I could possibly refer to England and France and Holland as “democracies” when in fact, so far as Asia is concerned, they were imperial empires treating most of the Orient as a colonial possession.

And the publisher solemnly added:

I failed to convince those students the United States does not approve of colonialism and wants to see it ended.

This frank statement is not isolated in the reports and comments from abroad. Increasing are the warning signals that the United States is losing the battle of ideas. How revealing is the admission by John Foster Dulles in his book War or Peace that in “the war of ideas . . . we are suffering reverses that cannot be cancelled out by any amount of military power.”
It is this which explains the resolution introduced by William Benton, Senator for Connecticut, for a "Marshall Plan in the field of ideas" and for "acceleration of the work of U.N.E.S.C.O."* whose objectives, he declared, "parallel closely the long-term objectives of U.S. foreign policy." And Benton stated further:

If we work through U.N.E.S.C.O., we cannot be charged with cultural imperialism.

Notwithstanding its bombast and fury, Wall Street’s ideological campaign is motivated essentially by the desperation of a social system fighting a losing battle against history.

THE PERVERSION OF SCIENCE TO MILITARIZATION

Wall Street’s cultural anti-humanism is nowhere so monstrously displayed as in the field of science.

What is happening in science within the United States today can be comprehended only in the light of the calculated drive to mobilize every aspect of science for war, for destruction, not for life.

Military expenditures for scientific research and development jumped from $22,000,000 in 1940 to more than $1,100,000,000 following Wall Street’s military aggression in Korea. These figures do not include the stupendous military expenditures on the atom bomb. At least two-thirds of the scientists and engineers are now working for either the Department of Defense or the Atomic Energy Commission, with a planned sharp increase in this number in the near future. The significance of these facts was frankly proclaimed by Dr. Eric A. Walker, Executive Secretary of the Research and Development Board of the Department of Defense, in a speech to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, December 30, 1950:

The size of the military research and development effort is not only startling but sobering. We are confronted by the fact that the greatest portion of the creative thinking and effort of the nation’s scientists and engineers, is, of necessity, being concentrated on weapons, devices, and techniques of warfare and countermeasures.

This appalling state of affairs compels recognition of the fact that capitalism, having made war its way of life, can foster—indeed, tolerate—only that sort of science which is chained to the war machine. The destructive implications for science are not exhausted in the fact of its bondage to militarization. Militarization means an essential debasement and perversion of science. It means also a progressive demoralization and degeneration of scientists. This point is effectively made by Dr. Theodore Rosebury of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, who made the most exhaustive research survey of weapons of bacteriological warfare during World War II:

* United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.
If you want to understand BW [Bacteriological Warfare] you must figuratively stand on your head. . . BW is an upside-down science, an inversion of nature. Normally we study disease in order to prevent it or cure it. This is bacteriology right-side up. But BW sets out to produce disease. It is not normal or natural, but abnormal and artificial.

And John Kennedy and Charles MacLeod write in their important article, "The Militarization of Science," in the Autumn, 1950, issue of the London Modern Quarterly:

Militarization does not mean the mere passive neglect of other lines of scientific development. It means the active extension of the military grip, not only within the Government's own research establishments, but even into the sacred precincts of "pure" science. . . . The nature of the work itself tends to reduce its scientific value. It has been freely admitted that work on the Hydrogen bomb is devoid of any peacet ime implications.

Such is the reality of the bourgeois fiction of "free science." In the words of T. D. Lysenko, President of the U.S.S.R. Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences:

The barbarians of the Middle Ages burned progressive men of science at the stake. The barbarians of today are anxious, with the help of some scientists, to ravage the whole of civilization with the atom bomb. Yes, in the land of the dollar there are unfortunately reactionary scientists who have sold themselves, and science itself, to the atomic cannibals. . . . What have they in store for mankind? What are they preparing for the tiller of the soil, for the youth engaged in study, for the mother, and for her infant asleep in the cradle? Death.*

As against the death-dealing role assigned to science by capitalism, there has arisen the life-giving science of Socialism. Soviet science, inspired by the Party of Lenin and Stalin, is exclusively the servant and instrument of mankind in its inexorable march to a world of peace, abundance, and truly humanist culture. While the atomaniacs pervert science into an instrument for colossal destruction, the Soviet system ennobles science by directing it toward the transformation of nature into an unlimited source of light and life for Man, the destined collective master of the world. It is this wondrous perspective of Man's true destiny which is at the base of the construction of an epochal network of hydroelectric stations and of the massive soil reclamation projects in the steppes and deserts of the U.S.S.R.

GENOCIDE: THE MALTHUSIAN FORMULA

If the bourgeois scientist seeks "justification" for this utter disregard of human life, the bourgeois philosopher jumps to his aid with the latest version of the Malthus "theory" of "over-population."

Marx long ago exposed the falsity and the reactionary essence of

Malthusianism, which holds that there is a “natural law” according to which population growth outstrips the growth of the means of subsistence. He demonstrated that an absolute law of population does not exist, that “in fact, every special, historic mode of production has its own special law of population, historically valid within its limits alone.”

But this bourgeois staple is brought out periodically to meet imperialism’s current needs and to shift the blame for existing social evils from the capitalist system to “natural” causes. Today, the Malthusian ghost is taken out of the closet to serve the propaganda of Anglo-Saxon supremacy and, specifically, Wall Street’s blueprint for world conquest.

Most notorious in the recent return of Malthus is William Vogt’s widely-publicized tract of fascist misanthropy, Road to Survival, replete with such racist epithets as “these spawning millions,” and “the hordes of India and China.” Vogt expresses the full extent of the brutality of a doomed ruling class when he says:

There is little hope that the world will escape the horror of extensive famines in China within the next few years. But from the world point of view, these may be not only desirable, but indispensable.

By “the world point of view,” Vogt means only the capitalist world point of view, the point of view of the imperialist marauders and oppressors who have literally destroyed the lives of millions of colonial people by their exported civilization of mass poverty, disease, and starvation. And the empire builders of the “American Century,” devise new lethal weapons and new Malthusian ideologies to turn into bloody Koreas land after land, in continent after continent.

The “up-to-date” war-geared use of the Malthusian formula comes from Julian Huxley, first Director-General of U.N.E.S.C.O. Writing in Harper’s, for September, 1950, he supplies the ultra-“Western Civilization” emphasis:

Eastern rates of increase [which he claims are outstripping Western rates], prevail among the majority of human beings now existing—in the populations of Asia as a whole, of most of the Balkans, of the U.S.S.R., of Latin America, of North Africa—and will very soon be prevailing in the rest of Africa too.

From which gerrymandered geography and racist biology we get the bourgeois “humanism”:

... We need a new view of human destiny. Why, in heaven’s name, should anyone suppose that mere quantity of human organisms is a good thing, irrespective either of their own inherent quality or the quality of their life and their experiences?

And who will determine their quality? Naturally, the Anglo-Saxon self-appointed de-populators.

This is not science, but racist geopolitics masked as science to perpetuate colonialism, to “justify”
atomic annihilation of whole “inferior” peoples.

This is racism, to justify wars of conquest. The “colored” peoples are, first, set down as “different,” “inferior,” “over-populous,” living “naturally” on low standards, and “used to dying.” Therefore, we need not feel guilty about killing them.

The bourgeois press reports prominently Maj. Gen. Oliver Smith’s statement in Korea that Chinese intelligence “must be of a low order—and I don’t mean their military intelligence.” Indeed, to what “high” order can the intelligence of the Chinese belong when they treat captive American G.I.’s like human beings and conduct them to safety? These are not the ways of the “civilization” that produced a Smith and a MacArthur.

A Tokyo dispatch, under date of September 17, 1950, informed the world:

General MacArthur drove toward Seoul today, looked down at four dead Communist soldiers and declared, “That’s a good sight for my old eyes.” . . .

Here is civilization!

The shameful plight of Puerto Rico is likewise attributed to the island’s “surplus population,” to its “Eastern rate of increase.” By this perverted logic, the fascist propagandist Vogt deplores the application of the malaria cure in Puerto Rico, “where the miracles of American medicine had been worked, with the chief result that more people were kept alive to live more miserably.”

That the income per person in Puerto Rico is, by Vogt’s own figures, 1/7 of the per capita income in the United States, that living costs are 27 percent higher, that there are half a million unemployed in a population of 2,500,000, that there is one doctor for every 2,550 persons, and that the mortality rate is alarming—all this is chargeable to “over-population”!

The only “over-population” afflicting Puerto Rico is that of the U.S. sugar trusts and shipping companies, which have stunted the native economy with a crippling monoculture for their super-profits; the “over-population” of U.S. finance capital, which is holding down the people in colonial bondage. Neo-Malthusianism today aids Wall Street’s cosmopolitanist propaganda to undermine the struggle for Puerto Rican national sovereignty.

These population “theories” serve American imperialist designs for world conquest, for war, for atomic “equalization” of the “Eastern rate of increase” to the “Western.” From Lebensraum à la Hitler to Genocide à la Western Civilization!

SOUNDS OF DOOM

While serving the arrogant chauvinism of Anglo-Saxon supremacy, the ruling-class “culture” simultaneously reflects the crisis of its grandiose “Marshall Plan in the field of ideas.” More and more, that cul-
ture expresses a frenzied recognition of the handwriting on the wall.

The emancipation of China's four hundred and seventy-five million people from the orbit of imperialism, and the colonial-revolutionary upsurge in many areas of Asia, express not only a political rupture but a revulsion on a sweeping scale to the "culture" of "Western civilization." Not only have the European countries of People's Democracy rejected the shoddy cultural wares of Wall Street, but the popular masses in France, Italy, and other countries have shown little enthusiasm for the racist, brutalizing, and pornographic output that is ballyhooed as "art" and "cultural" amusement.

The historic shift in the relation of world forces in favor of the camp of peace, democracy and Socialism, led by the Soviet Union, is effecting a qualitative cultural leap among hundreds of millions. Not only in the lands of People's Democracy, but in capitalist and colonial countries where Communist parties exert wide leadership, the masses are ever more consciously influenced and inspired by the culture of Socialist humanism of the great Soviet people.

In the face of this situation, a growing mood of dejection and darkness is to be noted among strata of bourgeois intellectuals in the United States, who see in the ascending and the new a "collapsing world," an "apocalyptic age."

If you pick up current "learned" magazines, you will find a pervading sense of doom, of a cultural impasse; a mood of helplessness and despair.

Thus, William G. Carleton, Professor of Political Science at the University of Florida, states in the Antioch Review, summer, 1950, issue:

Contemporary man looks out upon his modern world and is afraid. Not since the declining days of the Roman Empire . . . have such universal dread and despair gripped the mind of the West . . . Men look upon this awful spectacle of a collapsing world and their mood is dominantly one of escape . . . escape from science and the machine. But escape into what? Into nihilism. Into authority. Into romanticism, and mysticism. Into the self.

In the Arizona Quarterly for Autumn, 1950, we read in an article entitled, "Modern Literature and the Sense of Doom":

The literature of our time has . . . reached a dead end. The professional writer is still active, but the artist as hero and prophet seems to have lost both his voice and his function.

Such lamentations are, of course, not new. In a general sense, they began to be heard with the advent of the epoch of capitalism's decline, sounding the basic pessimism of the dying bourgeois class. They had their classic expressions in Spengler's Decline of the West and in Freud's postulate of the "death instinct."

Now this despair is aggravated by the sharpened general crisis of capitalism. Before the advancing colonial-liberation movements and the massive successes of the world Socialist
forces, the "success story" of Wall Street-Americanism "on the up-and-up" is now disturbed by a dirge of doom.

These ideologues of capitalism equate the inevitable doom of capitalist society with an alleged doom of human society: therefore, if capitalism goes under, the world goes under. They shift the blame for all things onto science, the machine, in order to absolve bourgeois science and monopoly-owned technology, which pervert science and use the machine for human exploitation. They strive to block the vision of the new and radiant life in the Socialist Soviet Union, in People's China, and in the European countries of People's Democracy. These narrators of "doom on both your houses" are determined to disorient those who might turn away from the pro-war influence of imperialism and who might regard with sympathy the peace efforts of that great state whose system is Socialism. They seek to confuse the people and hold back their mass awakening to the hideous realities of capitalism in the advanced stage of decline.

The same Professor Carleton, who so sharply described the "doom," describes also the "escape":

There is now an enormous pull to return to the simple faith of Christianity. To an acute sense of distress is added a terrible sense of guilt as man is reminded that his own wandering from Christianity has produced the tragedies of our time. Jacques Maritain tells us that mankind has no choice except between two roads: the road to Calvary and the road to the slaughterhouse. In America, there has been a widening stream of converts to Catholicism. . . Some Americans are urging a return to Thomas Aquinas and Medieval Scholasticism as the core of a college education. . . . There has been a revitalizing of Protestant fundamentalism, too . . .

The meaning of this "God-seeking" is apparent from such statements as that by Robert M. Hutchins, Chancellor of the University of Chicago, in an address to graduates a few years back:

. . . Civilization is doomed, unless the hearts and minds of men can be changed, unless we can bring about a moral, intellectual, and spiritual reformation, so deep and drastic as to be called a revolution, throughout the world.*

The present manufactured rage of religionism among bourgeois intellectuals has its direct services to capitalism. It is designed to paralyze the will to struggle against the imperialist enemies of mankind, by implanting a "guilt feeling" in the common man, disposing him to self-abnegation and self-humiliation, and leading him to fatalistic acceptance of suffering and destruction.

The vogue of religionism is reflected in the wide promotion of reactionary clerical books. Thus, Henry Morgan Robinson's novel, The Cardinal, designed to glorify the Roman


The “God-seekers” moreover, give a mystical, God-ordained purpose to American imperialism’s expansionist designs for the kingdom of earth.

Thus Arnold Toynbee, exponent-in-chief of the “God-seeking” cult, stated on Korea:

Religion is the center of our present ideological conflict between East and West. . . . Today America has been called upon to assume a position of world leadership.

Notwithstanding the wrapping of the Messiah’s robe about the devils of Wall Street, the current cult of religionism cannot even so much as lay claim to promoting “the brotherhood of man.” For, it stems so arrantly from contempt for man, from hatred of man. Robert M. Hutchins formulated this credo:

Unless we believe that every man is the child of God, we cannot love our neighbors. Most cats and most dogs are more attractive than most men.*

But the prize “humanist” among these “God-seekers” is Bertrand Russell, who declared in a recent New York interview that he “would favor the use of the hydrogen bomb if the latter offered the only hope of saving the Western world from defeat.”**

In a lecture that same evening, this defender of the “Western world” with hydrogen bombs opened up his heart and declared:

The root of the matter is . . . love, Christian love, or compassion.

Bertrand Russell, pride of bourgeois science, freshly crowned with the laurels of the Nobel prize, has thus achieved the perfect synthesis of Genocide and Godly love.

Yet what is the “Western world”? What is the nature of the danger that threatens it with defeat, to avert which the august philosopher is ready to use the hydrogen bomb? In the semantics of Bertrand Russell *et al.*, “Western world” is the synonym of Anglo-American imperialism and its way of life; mass impoverishment, colonial slavery, racism, the threat of fascism, brutal exploitation, and re-

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* Ibid.
curring crises and wars. The great danger to this "Western world," which the Russells well realize, but seek to hide, comes from the aspirations of the masses for economic security, for democratic rights, for national self-determination, for world peace, and from the inexorable march of the working class, leading the common people in each country of capitalism, toward the direct struggle for Socialism.

II. MANIFESTATIONS OF RESISTANCE

When we consider the positive counterforces for peace and the defense of culture, Peekskill stands out as a landmark of struggle. Peekskill brought masses into struggle, working-class and Negro masses, artists and intellectuals, people of the professions. There the working class, there the militant Negro people defended progressive culture and its creators against the Nazi-like attack inspired by the warmakers. There the valiant people's artist, Paul Robeson, defended with his art and with his life the cultural rights of his people and of the American working class. There, too, Howard Fast by his courageous stand demonstrated the vital role that democratic and peace-striving intellectuals can play in united-front struggle against the forces of fascism and war. Let us remember that masses of people can be reached and brought into motion around such vital cultural issues.

And the Hollywood Ten—the best tribute we can accord these courageous fighters against reaction in culture is to recognize that the anger of the ruling class against them is a measure of their value to the people. The struggle for freedom of the eight still behind bars is an issue around which masses of workers and professionals, here and abroad, have been rallied and many more can be reached.

Against the fascist blacklist and censorship campaign spearheaded by Red Channels and Counter-attack, there is gathering resentment which can be organized into a storm of protest. The statements issued by the Author's League of America, embracing the Dramatists', Screen-Writers', Radio Writers', and Authors' Guilds, branded the censorship of content and the blacklisting of artists for their political opinions as practices smacking of Hitlerism. A sharp statement against blacklisting was issued by Actors' Equity Association. The National Council of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions (A.S.P.) has not only condemned these attacks, but has shown their close tie-up with the attempt to silence the voices of peace. These protests can be consolidated into a broad united-front movement for cultural freedom. This movement will grow stronger as it comes to realize that its fight is part of the general fight for peace.

We should note, too, the manifestations of resistance in the ranks of scientists, though they are as yet
sporadic and weakly organized. For example, Linus C. Pauling, head of the chemistry division of the California Institute of Technology, sharply criticized Professor Urey for supporting the anti-Soviet atomic-bomb policy, declaring that Urey did not speak for the general body of American scientists in advocating force as the solution of present world problems. Leading men of science like Professor Harlow Shapley, Kirtley Mather, Anton J. Carlson, Philip Morrison, and Dirk Struik have been prominent in the cause of peace.

At the same time, it must be pointed out that the scientists as a group have not taken a clear and consistent stand against the attempt to pervert their knowledge in the service of imperialist destruction. All too many have allowed themselves to be silenced by the witch-hunt mania, and others have been bribed and corrupted.

A key point of the struggle against Nazi-like control of the mind is the gallant fight of the New York Teachers' Union against dictatorial firings, anti-Semitism, and discrimination. An outstanding example of resistance to fascization of the college campus has been the struggle against the "loyalty" oath in California. There is mounting indignation and protest on the part of parent-teacher associations against militarizing the public schools and terrorizing the minds of children with atom-bomb "defense" drills.

In many instances the fight against the blacklist, censorship, "loyalty" tests, and other forms of persecution has been seriously weakened by concessions to Red-baiting on the part of the victims of Red-baiting. This imposes on Communists and all progressives the duty to warn against this trap and to point out the inseparable connection between the attacks on the citizenship of Communists and on the rights of all Americans. It imposes, moreover, the necessity to arouse the labor movement in defense of the artists and professionals victimized by the thought-controlers and warmongers—a class duty toward allies which it has to date left shamefully unfulfilled.

Today there is a significant development of independent expressions of working-class and people's culture, such as People's Drama and New Playrights in New York, such as the highly talented group under the auspices of the Committee for the Negro in the Arts now producing Simple Speaks His Mind in Harlem, the People's Artists Singers, the Yiddish Theatre Ensemble, and other theatres and choruses of the national groups. An encouraging development is the formation of the film-production unit of the United Labor Action Committee. A welcome beginning, too, is the A.S.P.-sponsored series of cultural forums and programs. This movement for independent progressive expression in the arts is not limited to New York. It extends to Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Newark, and other
cities. Its importance in this period cannot be overstated. These fine beginnings should spur similar cultural formations in every section of the country. We must recognize with greater seriousness than ever before the need for stressing the responsibility of labor and progressive audiences to support such groups and help their growth.

We must emphasize here the vital necessity for building the Negro people’s theatre, both in the South and in the principal Negro communities in the North. It is a crime that the great creative talents of the Negro people—symbolized by such artists as Paul Robeson, Langston Hughes, Theodore Ward, Alice Childress, and Frank Silvera—should continue to be denied such a theatre throughout the land. It is the responsibility of the entire Left and progressive movement, not only to help bring into existence the Negro people’s theatre, but to help establish the Negro people’s House of Culture for all forms of cultural creation.

This great task demands of our Party the vanguard guidance deriving from the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the national question as it applies to the liberation movement of the Negro people. Concretely, here, this means that the historical roots of that attribute of nationhood defined by Stalin as a common psychological makeup manifested in a common culture are to be found in the Black Belt of the South, where the Negro people constitute a subject nation. It follows from this that the cultural strivings and affirmations of the Negro people as a whole, those realized and those still latent, draw their basic sustenance and strength from the cultural mainspring, the fountainhead, the subject nation. Consciousness of this principle will give us deeper understanding of the significant need for the development of a broad Negro people’s cultural movement as an integral part of the unfolding national-liberation struggle.

In this period, the publishing problems of progressive, and certainly of Marxist, writers have, of course, vastly increased. The commercial book publishers and the editors of bourgeois periodicals have shut the door to realistic depictions of the world we live in. Only that which is distorted, cynical, debasing, or at best trivial and evasive, has a passport to print.

We must offer our help to every manifestation of resistance on the part of writers to this thought-repression and censorship. In addition, we must all the more cherish the cultural publications of the Left, as well as help the expansion of publication facilities for honest and courageous writing. Unquestionably, more and more writers of integrity will be looking to us for guidance and help, as well as encouragement, in reaching people with their message.

We should here greet the valuable role that Masses & Mainstream is playing on the cultural front. Con-
stantly strengthening itself in the struggle it is carrying on for peace and a people's culture, this magazine has made a distinct contribution in its three-year existence under the editorship of Samuel Sillen and the associate editors Lloyd L. Brown and Herbert Aptheker. The magazine should be warmly supported as the main publication medium for the progressive cultural forces today. It is gratifying to know that *Masses & Mainstream*, which has made available to American readers, in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, the writings of eminent world artists like Pablo Neruda, Nazim Hikmet, Ilya Ehrenburg, and Martin Andersen Nexö, is appreciated in many countries.

The *Daily Worker* in its cultural page has carried on a consistent struggle against bourgeois culture, in its various reactionary manifestations in literature and the arts, with particular emphasis on the mass media. It has made a solid contribution in showing the tie-up between such reactionary cultural manifestations and the imperialist drive toward war. It has tirelessly fought racist content in the arts and all white chauvinist practices, and it has championed the appreciation and proper utilization of the talents of Negro artists. Deserving of special mention is its militant film department conducted by David Platt, which has on a day-to-day basis exposed the dangerous content of the Hollywood product. The Party membership and the progressive forces, much more than in the past, should regard the *Daily Worker* as the central mass Marxist expression, not only in the economic and political spheres, but also in the sphere of culture. Its fight for Marxist clarity in culture should enlist the participation and support of all advanced cultural workers. But beyond that, ways must be found to bring its influence upon ever-wider sections of the working class, in the struggle against the fascization of culture as an organic part of the entire struggle against war and fascism.

**AS ARTIST AND AS CITIZEN**

In the actions for peace during the postwar years, sections of the intellectuals and various strata of professionals have played an outstanding role. The recent period, however, has seen a marked decline in the organized participation of cultural forces in the fight for peace from the high point of the 1949 Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace. This decline was noticeable in the campaign for signatures to the Stockholm Peace Petition. It was further apparent in the negligible involvement of artists and writers in the United States delegation to the Second World Peace Congress at Warsaw in November, 1950.

It would, however, be the gravest mistake to conclude from this fact that the bulk of the cultural forces have been won over to the war camp or that they are unconcerned with the
issue of war or peace. The error of such an assumption is evident, for example, from the dismal failure of General Clay’s so-called Freedom Crusade to win any mass support among cultural forces on a national scale.

What needs to be stated with respect to the peace-desiring intellectuals is that, in the absence of leadership by the working class, their traits of hesitancy and vacillation, characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie, tend to become intensified. For, only working class leadership will weld these forces into an important segment of the entire peace front, rendering them more steadfast and more consciously purposive.

The Party’s emphasis on the urgent need for a policy of concentration on the workers in basic industry has as a key objective the advancement of working-class leadership in the struggle for peace. In applying this correct policy, we have to guard against neglect of the peace forces among the intellectuals and professionals. The building of a peace front broad enough and effective enough to influence events and to force a change in the foreign policy of our country must have the active and significant participation of the cultural forces.

 Peekskill shows that the attack on culture is not a thing apart from reaction’s general drive, or marginal to it, but that it is one of the dominant expressions of the warmakers’ offensive. It was Robeson’s use of his great artistic talents and high cultural contributions as weapons for peace and the people’s rights that brought the wrath of fascism upon him. It was the progressive ideological content in the work of the Hollywood Ten that marked them for victimization by the un-American Committee. It was the anti-racist ideological essence of the play They Shall Not Die that brought the attacks of the Christian Front hoodlums upon the cast of People’s Drama.

We have noted how monopoly capital, bent on war and fascism, is subjecting every art form and every cultural medium on all audience levels to direct and overt political use for the propagation of its lying anti-Communist, anti-working class, anti-peace, and anti-humanist ideas. Dropped are the masks of “art for art’s sake” and of “pure science.”

The intellectuals’s work in the peace movement, however, has tended to be limited to the direct political plane, to participation only as “citizens.” Such activity, in the form of rallies, petitions, statements to the press, etc., is most valuable and needs to be greatly expanded through united-front efforts in many directions. Yet the full value of the contributions of men and women of the arts and sciences in such progressive coalition actions demands for its realization that they participate consciously as artists and as scientists in the great social struggles of our times. Such integrated cultural endeavor is vital to the development of the peace
movement and of an independent people's culture. A novelist who fights with his voice but not with his pen, an artist who gives his name to the fight but not his brush, a scientist who fights against the destruction of his civil rights but not of his science, fights with one hand, and with the other objectively aids the enemy.

Reactionary content in culture cannot be fought in the economic and political sphere solely; it must be challenged and fought with the counter-ideology of progressive and working-class culture, which the Communists must lead in developing. The “practicalism,” rationalized by the pressures of the work for peace, that cannot pause for concern with the content of the artist's or scientist's work, is opportunism, analogous to “economism” in the trade unions.

Nor can we effectively wage the broad battle of ideas, unless we battle for the advanced, Marxist-Leninist ideas in culture. For example, to combat the general run of anti-Soviet propaganda, but not to fight for the Marxist-Leninist principles in the Soviet discussions of the sciences, literature, and the arts, is to leave these vital cultural fields to the enemy and to weaken the struggle against anti-Sovietism as a whole.

However, it would manifestly be wrong to demand of everyone who participates on a political-cultural basis in a united-front peace activity or organization that he necessarily give full expression to the proletarian class ideology. What should be expected of him is that he express himself as citizen and as artist on the level of his own understanding. Of course, it is the task of Communists to help the non-Communists in the united front to understand that the cultural forces with their pursuits and talents can, in alliance with the working class, labor and struggle to hasten the end of a system which, historically doomed, enslaves and humiliates them.

THE PARTY AS A CULTURAL FORCE

A decisive turn is needed in the Party's cultural work. We must abandon the old concept that cultural work is activity only among cultural workers. Cultural work has to be viewed as organically related to the Party's mass tasks—not directed limitedly toward a single social stratum, but carried on among masses of the people, the working class, the rural poor, the Negro people, the national groups, the youth, and the cultural workers. Cultural activity is an essential phase of the Party's general ideological work, and as such is interconnected with the Party's struggles in the economic and political spheres. For Marxists-Leninists it should, therefore, be axiomatic that cultural work is for the Party inalienable from general mass work.

Not only must we end any negative approaches to cultural tasks, all vestiges of cultural nihilism, but we must learn to use the weapon of cul-
ture in respect to the main tasks before our Party: the struggle for peace and for civil rights; the struggle to advance the working class to the position of leader in the coalition movements of the people; the struggle to weld the alliance of the working class and the liberation movement of the Negro people, to bring forward the Negro workers as the leading force in that movement; and the Party's task of concentration in the shops of basic industry.

This task becomes all the more important because of the increased problems faced by the cultural workers in finding channels for their talents and professions. Actors' Equity Association figures for the theatrical year ending June 1950, showed the average player to have worked on the stage ten weeks and earned $840. With intensified chronic unemployment in the theatre, music, and other areas of the monopoly-owned "amusement field," more and more artists are being driven into industry. This condition hits most heavily the Negro artists. The worsening of the economic status of artists in all fields is accompanied by growing political repression, thought-control, regimentation, and blacklisting, which undermine the very basis for the cultural worker to function even in a minimum way with self-respect. Consequently, ever-increasing numbers of professionals and artists will be impelled to turn to the working class as the base and preserving force of their talents.

More than ever, therefore, it must become the conscious duty of the working class, particularly the progressive trade unions, and of the people's organizations to provide at least a minimum economic base at this stage for those artists and professionals who will build independent cultural organizations serving the working class. Such collaboration will enrich simultaneously the talents of the professionals and the culture of the working class.

The main responsibility for helping to realize this task devolves on the Party. It is an important task, one that affects the growth of the Party itself and the development of a mass class-consciousness. The Party’s recognition and acceptance of this responsibility, its consistent effort to carry through this task, will help to end the long era of labor's non-resistance to capital's attacks with the weapon of bourgeois culture.

The National Cultural Commission urges upon the Party adequate attention to developing cadres for work on the cultural front, to selecting and training such cadres, and to promoting leadership from among them, with special attention to Negro cadres, women cadres, and cadres from the youth. Our Party must strive to bring forward cadres in the cultural field who can be forces of the people, with unbounded faith in the working class.

This new orientation requires, further, a re-examination of the or-
ganizational forms within the Party, for the fulfillment of these tasks. It requires most particularly the recognition that cultural work is not the work of a department or of a few individuals, that it is the work of the Party. The Party must become as a whole, through its ranks and through the various levels of its leadership, conscious of the need to deal with this question adequately, and conscious of the opportunities that work in this field offers our Party and the working class.

Therefore, the question arises of establishing leading bodies in this field, commissions, committees, etc., and assignments of leading comrades on national, state, county, and section levels, particularly in industrial concentration areas.

The Commission takes the position that our cultural workers must no longer be isolated in separate Party organizations. Instead of separating them from the healthy influences of the proletarian membership of the Party and at the same time depriving the Party ranks in the basic organizations of their broad cultural experience, we should integrate our cultural forces with all Party organizations.

Our cultural work is more than a technique for rallying people. The American bourgeoisie, driving down the road of total national betrayal, strives to obliterate every revolutionary, democratic and militant tradition of the people, to destroy every expression of people's culture. In this fateful hour, the Party is called upon to lead in the defense of the people's cultural heritage and in the struggle to affirm the vital creativeness of the people. The progressive stream in the cultural heritage of the American people courses through the great struggles of the masses in the American Revolution, the Abolitionist movement, the unceasing freedom struggle of the Negro people, the great militant traditions of the working class in the fight against capitalist exploitation and imperialist war. This heritage is symbolized by such names as Tom Paine, Phillis Wheatley and Philip Freneau; Wendell Phillips and Frederick Douglass; Walt Whitman and Mark Twain; Joe Hill, Theodore Dreiser, and John Reed.

Our Party will carry this task to success, if it exercises its own independent, Marxist role in culture, as in the political and economic spheres. Cultural work for the Party should thus become an integral aspect of its whole activity. Only as it learns to grasp the weapon of culture and fights with it, only as our Party itself comes forward as a creative cultural force, will it be able to contribute effectively to the development of the cultural expressions of the working class and the people, and to mobilize them to fight with that weapon in defense of peace and culture itself.

A true understanding of our independent role should require that Communist cultural workers create in the interests of the working class and from the standpoint of its lib-
erating world outlook. The situation demands from our creative forces novels and plays, poems, paintings, musical compositions, popular songs, and criticism, vibrant with the Party spirit, the very essence of Socialist realism.

In carrying through these tasks, our Party must further unfold before the people the nature, purpose, scope, and world significance of the inspiring Socialist culture of the Soviet Union, as well as the rising culture of the free peoples in the New China and the European countries of People’s Democracy. We must make known to the people the true essence of the science and art of the emancipated society of the Socialist Soviet Union. We must show that Socialist culture rises on a foundation involving no human exploitation and anarchic production, no economic crises, no class antagonisms, no drives to fascism and war. The culture of the mighty Socialist state which is the bulwark of world peace and the freedom of nations, this truly civilized culture is based on the great scientific teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, which guide today the Soviet people’s course to Communism, and which give perspective, confidence, and inspiration to the forward-striving forces of mankind the world over.

As Marxists-Leninists, we voice the deepest needs and aspirations of the people, Negro and white, native and foreign-born. The warmongers and their decadent cultural apologists offer the people physical and spiritual impoverishment, the slow death of subservience and the swift death of the atom bomb. Our Party offers the people the science and culture of true human relations based on the guaranteed rights to material satisfaction and cultural fulfillment. We must go forward to the people with the message of peace, of freedom, of Socialist humanism.
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