

Although 'Dissolved,' America First Works Against War Effort

1/18/42 By Conrad Komorowski
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CHICAGO, Jan. 17.—The America First Committee has shed its skin. But it cannot disguise its snakelike activities in the battle lines of the American war effort and in preparation for the coming election.

Officially declared "dissolved" when the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor forced a strategic retreat upon it, America First still maintains a functioning national office in Chicago.

Generals Wood and Hammond have stepped out of the leadership of this outstanding fascist organization and stepped into leading posts in the war-time production set-up.

It is common information here that America First is busy reshaping its ranks.

This reporter called to ask when the office will be closed and was told it would be shut "when the business of clearing up records has been completed." More than a month has passed since the "dissolution" statement was made public.

STILL IN BUSINESS

America First has not given up the struggle; it has merely executed a sinister tactical maneuver.

America First leaders have been shut-mouthed since Dec. 7.

But America First, through its organ, the Chicago Daily Tribune, still today blatantly proclaims the very same ideas it voiced before Dec. 7.

In the "dissolution" statement, America First repudiated nothing of its shameless and pro-fascist past. In fact, it brazenly reaffirmed its stand. "Our principles were right," the declaration stated. "Had they been followed, war could have been avoided."

Not the Japanese war-lords, not Hitler, but our Government was the aggressor, this is what America First shouts!

And the Chicago Tribune repeats this infamous lie in a gloating editorial upon the appointment of Gen. Robert E. Wood and Gen. Thomas S. Hammond—outstanding America First leaders nationally and locally—as full time civilian members of the Chicago District Ordnance Staff.

This editorial, which appeared

ica First policy has not been fundamentally changed, but merely is disguised, examine another editorial in the Tribune, "Our Principal Enemy" (Jan. 14). "For the present, at least, our single war aim must be the crushing of the Japanese," this editorial declares. (My emphasis).

This is but the same old effort to turn American might away from the master fascist, Hitler, away from aid to the Soviet Union, Britain, China.

Before Dec. 7 the appeasers tried to disarm and isolate America and leave it at the mercy of the Axis by dishonest talk about building our national defenses and keeping out of foreign wars. They sabotaged American friendship and cooperation with the nations attacked by the fascist beast.

Now they use our war with Japan as an excuse to stop American aid to the nations allied with us in the common struggle against the axis, enemy of humanity.

But not all their weasel words can hide the deliberate betrayal of our national interest and of our allies contained in that Tribune editorial.

From long knowledge, the people of Chicago know that victory cannot be entrusted to the Chicago Tribune and America First.

The view of Chicago labor is emphatic on this issue. Labor here definitely declares that pro-fascists cannot be entrusted with the struggle against fascism. Labor remembers the Darlans, Petains, Quislings of Europe and then looks at these would-be Quislings at home.

LABOR OPPOSES

As Grant Oakes, National Chairman of the CIO Farm Equipment Workers Organizing Committee, put it, speaking spe-

on Jan. 12, was but one of a series which continues the America First line in the new war-time situation.

Elated by the appointment of two America First leaders, the Tribune brazenly championed the demand that Lindbergh be allowed to furnish "leadership" to the air force. Lindbergh's services, the Jan. 14 editorial claims, "come more nearly being indispensable at this juncture than those of any other man."

To illustrate further how Amer-

cifically of Wood and Hammond, "Nothing in their record justifies the appointment. They opposed all efforts of President Roosevelt to defeat the enemies of democracy. Their inclusion in the defense set-up weakens it and gives pleasure to our enemies abroad."

Another symptom of the anger of labor was the blast directed against the appointment that came from the floor at the re-

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cent meeting of Continental Can workers.

To judge from discussions with dozens of labor leaders, although no unions have adopted resolutions of protest, so far as is known, the sentiment against the appointments is strong, angry, and common to all groups of labor.

There is good reason for this. Labor scents danger when the Copperhead leader Lindbergh is reported holding secret meetings of America First. Pearson and Allen in the column, "Washington Merry Go Round," report that at a secret meeting Lindbergh "counselled his listeners to keep in the background for the present, that there would be an opportunity later for renewed activity and criticism of the America First type. . . ."

Labor considers, too, the secret activities of the Christian Front, associated with America First. Gen. Wood himself welcomed Father Coughlin's support.

PLAN TO DISRUPT

In its Jan. 10 issue, The Hour, an anti-fascist publication charges that "Christian Fronters, acting under instructions from Father Charles E. Coughlin and his Fifth column lieutenants, are flocking into civilian defense organizations . . . to dominate them . . . and in this way place themselves in a most strategic position to sabotage civilian defense work and spread dissension and panic when the 'right time' comes."

America First is preparing for the coming political campaign; the old plans have not been abandoned. All indications point to the conclusion that America First is going to throw its whole weight into saving such men as Senator Wayland Brooks and Representative Day from political annihilation by the people of Illinois.

In this campaign the high councils of the Republican Party will play their part. Gen. Hammond is chairman of the Republican Citizens' Finance Committee of Illinois.