

What the Record of the 83d Congress Shows

It Went Far Toward Setting Up A Police State in Our Country

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

THE 83RD CONGRESS has finished its business, packed up its bags, and gone home. And good riddance to it; for it was one of the most reactionary sessions of Congress ever held.

The general characteristics of the Congress were, a further fattening of the profits of monopoly capital, an arrogant disregard of the demands of labor, the Negro people, youth and the farmers, a continuation of Wall Street's war orientation, and a grave intensification of the danger of McCarthy fascism.

Among the many bills enacted to further enrich the wealthy capitalists was the spread of the Administration's give-away program to the field of atomic energy—the law on this subject being akin to the notorious handing over of the rich tidelands oil fields to the monopolists. An entering wedge was also started, eventually to give away TVA and other power projects to the trusts in this field. On top of all this, the wealthy were given a big tax slash at the expense of the taxpayers in the lower brackets.

THE 83RD CONGRESS was sharply militaristic and warlike. Its true sentiments in this respect were expressed by the fossilized Korean warmonger Syngman Rhee, who, feted and honored, demanded, before a joint session of Congress, an immediate third world war.

But the international situation made it impossible for this dream of Wall Street to be realized by Congress.

The Congress appropriated almost five and one-half billion for the Mutual Security Program—i.e., the building of an international war alliance against the USSR and People's China—and this on top of the many bil-

lions earlier appropriated to further militarize the U. S. To guard against the war mongers' running out of cash in the meantime, Congress raised the already sky-high national debt limit by another \$6 billion. All of which means rich profits to the munitions makers.

The reactionary nature of the 83rd Congress was especially made manifest by its reckless raids upon the Bill of Rights. These included the outlawing of the Communist Party, the revocation of the citizenship of persons "convicted of conspiring to overthrow the government," the application of the death penalty in cases of peacetime "espionage," the granting of "immunity" to Federal witnesses, to impel them to testify against themselves in plain violation of the Fifth Amendment and to make stoolpigeonry the official policy of the government.

One of the most dangerous features of all this fascist legislation is the Communist Control Act, which places the trade unions under the jurisdiction of the red-baiters on the Subversive Control Board (McCarran Act). Congress refused labor's demand to take up the Taft-Hartley Act for redrafting, but it is generally agreed that if it had done so it would have made this slave-labor law much worse even than it now is.

The 83rd Congress, with its disgraceful McCarthy - Army hearings and reactionary laws, went far towards building a police state in the U. S.

IN THIS REACTIONARY Congress, organized labor and the people, when they were not cold-shouldered altogether, got only a few crumbs from the rich man's bounteous table. Among these handouts were the totally inadequate five percent

wage increase to postal and other government workers, and the extension of the miserly social insurance system.

For the rest, the Congress ignored the glib promises made by Eisenhower to the Negro people in 1952, it refused the vote to the 18-year-olds, it slashed the Administration's skinny health program and it did nothing to alleviate the growing unemployment.

The most tragic feature regarding the 83rd Congress, however, was the feeble "fight" made against its reactionary work by the official leadership of organized labor. With its 15 million members, the trade union movement, and its farmer and Negro people allies, could, if they would, write the laws of this country.

But instead, labor stands around almost helpless, while reaction runs rampant in Washington. This is mainly because the top leaders of labor, tied up in close collaboration with the employers, are themselves in favor of large slabs of the latter's reactionary program.

In the November elections the workers will have a chance to deal real blows against McCarthyism and reaction in general. Every effort should be made to knock out the legislators mainly responsible for the sorry record made by the (now happily defunct) 83rd Congress.

The Program of the Communist Party, adopted at its recent National Elections Conference, explains just how this fight can best be organized. If organized labor and its allies do not make a solid struggle against McCarthy reaction in the coming elections it can surely expect that the next Congress will be far worse than even the one just ended.