

# Open Discussion on Immediate Party Tasks

Thesis on the Political Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Workers Party.

Submitted by Foster, Cannon, Bittelman, Browder, Dunne, Bertram, Abern

## THE ECONOMIC SITUATION.

1. The Dawes plan and the victory of reaction in the elections, with the election of Coolidge and Dawes, have raised the morale of the capitalist class in the United States but have not reversed any of the fundamental factors characterizing the present period of decline of world capitalism. The conflicts already appearing between the United States, Great Britain, and France, over the application of the Dawes plan, demonstrate the inability of capitalism to restore the world market. The process of disintegration continues and is bound to produce further crises with further sharpening of the class struggle.

2. A year ago the United States had entered upon a period of economic depression, which our party foresaw (Sept. 1923—resolution on economic situation for the Trade Union Educational League conference) and which we correctly judged to mark a crisis in American economic life (third convention, Workers Party and March 1924 thesis of C. E. C.). The development of this crisis followed the expected course up until Sept., 1924, except for a short period of slight recovery in the first quarter of 1924. In the month of August more than 2,000,000 workers were unemployed as the result of this crisis.

3. The expected low point in the crisis has not been reached. The sudden halt to the downward trend that occurred in September, and the slight but continuous recovery since that time (up to November 15) was the result in the first place of seasonal variations based upon the marketing of the grain crops, and, in the second place, of manipulations designed to artificially stimulate industry for the purpose of influencing the election (\$100,000,000 rail and equipment orders of the railroad corporations, etc.), carried over after the election in the hectic boom caused by the reactionary victory.

4. The normal operation of the capitalist system may be expected to overcome this halt in the development of crisis, so that 1925 holds the prospect of repeating the experiences of 1920-21 when 6,000,000 workers were unemployed. The war-time shortage of building operations has been overcome. Exports have been increasing, but not in the volume sufficient to affect the general course of events. There are, however, conflicting tendencies, the exact force of which cannot yet be measured.

A factor that now shows possibility of alleviating the crisis is the tendency to start great building projects of public and semi-public nature, not based upon immediately profitable investment. It is impossible to gauge exactly the possible effects of this building program and other artificial stimulants. The known and predictable forces at work all point to a renewed development of the crisis.

5. The immediate pressure of the agrarian crisis upon the agrarian masses has been tremendously lightened by the large grain crops of the United States in the face of a world shortage, resulting in a sharp increase of prices. While it is estimated that a very high percentage of the increased prices of grain will go directly into the hands of bankers and merchants, who hold first claim to the crop returns because of credit extended to the bankrupt and near-bankrupt poor farmers, yet it is a fact that the purchasing power of the agricultural population has been raised to a degree above what seemed possible a few months ago. The fundamental situation in agriculture remains, however, unchanged and presents the likelihood of another acute agrarian crisis in 1925, which will, in turn, intensify the industrial depression.

6. The overwhelming weight of economic tendencies now operative point to an intensification of the class struggle, resulting in renewed efforts of the employing class to cut wages, lengthen hours, and to destroy the unions. In the absence of effective leadership of organized labor, this will result in unorganized mass movements, "outlaw" strikes, rank and file movements, and intensification of struggle within the labor unions between the revolutionary forces and the bureaucracy, together with a tendency of the lower strata of the organized workers, the unorganized, and the unemployed, to look to the revolutionary elements for practical political leadership.

## THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

1. The victory of reaction in the presidential elections, which resulted in the election of Coolidge and Dawes by a tremendous majority after a campaign in which they stood openly as the candidates of big business, strengthens big capital in the seat of power in the United States. It demonstrated the tremendous power of the ruling class of this country, exercised through its machinery for molding opinion (the press, the radio, etc.), combined with the ability to manipu-

## SUMMARY OF THE C. E. C. THESIS ON THE ECONOMIC AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION AND THE TASKS OF THE WORKERS PARTY OF AMERICA

1. Sharpening of the Class Struggle. This is the period of the decline of capitalism. The chaos of the capitalist system in Europe is gradually extending itself to America. But in the United States capitalism is still strong, and is struggling desperately against the forces of dissolution. All predictable factors point, however, to an immediate downward plunge of American industry, overcoming the present slight upward tendency. It is not possible to predict how much capitalism can overcome the crisis with its present artificial program of great building operations, because, not being based upon normal investment for profit, it is not measurable. All known and predictable factors indicate renewed crisis, unemployment, and sharpening of the class struggle.

2. Farmer-Labor Party Movement Merges in LaFollette "third party." The outstanding change in the political situation is the appearance of the LaFollette petty bourgeois alliance and the merging with it of the farmer-labor party movement. This is the American expression of the "democratic-pacifist" period, of illusion on the part of the rebelling workers that their lot can be remedied by petty bourgeois reformism under the leadership of the middle class. It is the same political fact that was expressed in England by the MacDonald government, in France by the "left bloc" and the Herriot government, in Germany by the subordination of the social-democrats to the "center parties."

3. Struggle Against LaFollettism. The principal task of the Workers Party is to break away the workers and poor farmers from LaFollettism, and to win them for the class struggle. When a strong and independent movement for a farmer-labor party existed, an effective weapon for this end was found in the slogan "For a Farmer-Labor Party." Now that this movement has lost its independence and is merged in the LaFollette movement, the slogan has become ineffective. Now as before the united front is the principal tactic, but today it must be the united front to fight for specific demands, on burning issues, from below in the shape of "councils of action," unemployment councils, shop committees, etc., and not the united front from the top in the shape of farmer-labor parties.

4. The Comintern and the F.-L. P. The Communist International approved of our past farmer-labor party policy because it meant struggle within a mass movement for its penetration with Communism. But the facts have changed, the farmer-labor movement is no longer an independent mass movement, a change which the Comintern foresaw when it warned of the possible necessity of the Workers Party running its own candidates,

ate the economic factors of society, to compel the masses still to follow its lead. The economic basis for the victory of reaction was, to a considerable extent, the slight revival in agriculture and industry, enlarged and magnified by capitalist manipulation and publicity. The election demonstrated also the cowardice and the political weakness of the middle classes, which, although dissatisfied with the hegemony of big capital, and in spite of their grievances produced by the agrarian and industrial crises for which the republican party offered no remedy, refused to follow even such a mild course of protest as the one expressed by the LaFollette movement. It further exposed the complete inability of the official leadership of the labor movement to enthrone the working class for any kind of action. Big capital has thereby completed its task of mobilizing its forces for continued oppression and exploitation of the working masses. It is now the duty of the workers and poor farmers to awaken to the real state of affairs and to begin the mobilization of their own forces for the struggle against their oppressors. The comparative strength of the existing political parties cannot be gauged correctly by the election figures. The capitalist politicians controlling the election machinery have robbed the LaFollette movement of probably a million votes, and have cut down the vote of the Workers Party to a fraction of what was really cast.

2. The LaFollette movement, although supported in this election mainly by industrial workers and poor farmers, is a political alliance of five distinct social groups. These are: (a) small and medium bankers, merchants, and manufacturers; (b) rich and well-to-do farmers; (c) professional groups; (d) certain sections of the labor aristocracy; and (e) the trade-union bureaucracy.

on its own platform, under its own name, in the elections. To penetrate the C. P. P. A. (labor wing of the LaFollette movement) means participation in the "third party," which is absolutely unallowable.

5. Bolshevization of the Workers Party. In the difficult period of class struggle just ahead, the first necessity is a real Bolshevik party. The Workers Party must be made into such a party. It must be the leading figure in every struggle of the workers; it must educate its members in Marxism and Leninism; it must completely reorganize itself on the basis of shop nuclei; it must be a monolithic party, hewn of one piece, prohibiting factions, groups, and tendencies; it must make relentless struggle against opportunism in all its forms within the Workers Party, against the 2 1/2 international tendency, represented in the group around the Volkzeitung, as well as against the more insidious and menacing danger of farmer-laborism in our ranks.

6. No Substitutes for the Workers Party. Nothing can replace the Workers Party either as the leader of the proletarian revolution or as the practical leader in the everyday struggle. The idea that a "farmer-labor party" is the natural and only possible leader of the practical struggles of the workers, and that it is the duty of the Workers Party to create such a farmer-labor party, is a petty bourgeois deviation, it is opportunism, it is a revision of the fundamental theories of Leninism, and it leads directly to the liquidation of the Workers Party.

7. The Workers Party is the Only Class Party of the Workers. There is only one party that fights always and everywhere for the interests of the working class, that has no interests apart from those of the working class, and that party is the party of Communism, the Workers Party. The Workers Party must claim and fight for its position of leadership. No fake labor parties can be allowed to stand in the way. The Workers Party must tell the working class that only by following a revolutionary policy, only by accepting the leadership of the Communist International and its section, the Workers Party, either by joining the Workers Party or entering into a united front with it, can the working class fight for immediate betterment or final emancipation. The Workers Party, under its own name, its own banner, its own program of practical struggle, must enter into every battle of the workers against their oppressors, calling for and forming where possible all sorts of united fronts upon specific issues, and using every such struggle, whether alone or in a united front, as instruments for directly recruiting the workers into the Workers Party and building it into the mass Communist Party that will lead the proletarian revolution in America.

## 6. The Future Development of the LaFollette Movement.

Because of the pressure of capitalist development and exploitation, and in spite of the comparative weakness of the LaFollette movement, as demonstrated in the elections, this movement, comprising an alliance between petty-bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy, is bound to grow in volume and in power. Even though the LaFollette movement may continue in its present loose form, sooner or later it will be forced to overcome, partially at least, the contradictions of group and sectional interests within its ranks, sufficiently to crystallize into a new political party. As a party it will be based upon the small and middle sections of the bourgeoisie, the rich farmers, the professional groups, certain sections of the labor aristocracy, and the labor bureaucracy.

This party will represent a political alliance between the left wing of the bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the reactionary social-patriotic, class collaborationist wing of the labor movement on the other hand. It will function as the extreme left party of the American bourgeoisie and will continue to base its appeal mainly on two grounds: To the bourgeois middle classes this LaFollette movement will present the capitalist half of its physiognomy, that is, it will maintain that it alone is able to save American capitalism from destruction as a result of a violent revolution by the masses; while to the masses the LaFollette movement will present the so-called labor half of its physiognomy, claiming that it stands for the "just" demands of labor and against its being unfairly treated by capital. The masses of the workers and poor farmers, inasmuch as they reject the leadership of the old capitalist parties and are not yet ready to accept the leadership of and to give their support to the Workers Party, follow the lead of the LaFollette movement. This was emphatically demonstrated by the absorption of the farmer-labor party movement by the LaFollette movement, and by the vote of the industrial

## 3. Gompers and the Old Guard of A. F. of L. Bureaucracy.

The endorsement of the LaFollette campaign by the bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. was dictated primarily by a desire to preserve their leadership in the American labor movement, which was endangered by the following four facts: (a) the complete bankruptcy of the Gompersian trade union policies which resulted in weakening the unions to such an extent as to reduce their fighting ability almost to nothing; (b) the feeling throughout the rank and file that the coming attacks by the capitalists could not be resisted by the unions with their old tactics, policies, and forms of organization; (c) the demand from the rank and file for some measure of political influence for the unions in the hope that this may forestall or weaken the impact of these coming capitalist attacks; and (d) the brazen anti-labor attitude assumed by the national conventions of the two old parties which completed the disillusionment of the rank and file and made it impossible for Gompers to endorse either Coolidge or Davis without seriously endangering his leadership. The above facts prompted the bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. to enter into an alliance with the petty-bourgeoisie for common political action. Because of the comparative weakness of the LaFollette movement, as demonstrated

in the elections, the reactionary officialdom of the A. F. of L. may now be expected to try to convince the workers that even the middle-class revolt and its organization into an independent third party is hopeless, and that they must return to the old non-partisan tactics, which means to go to the back door of the old party councils, there to beg for crumbs in the time-honored Gompersian manner.

## 4. The C. P. P. A. and the Socialist Party.

In endorsing the candidacy of LaFollette the C. P. P. A. has merely continued its old policy of political collaboration with the so-called "progressive group" in congress. The C. P. P. A. has been functioning as the labor wing of the LaFollette movement. It remains the dominant labor wing of the LaFollette movement, which is also subject to pressure by the Gompers machine. The C. P. P. A. was humbled by the results of the election, which fall below its expectations, yet it will continue the alliance with LaFollette and will remain one of the forces pushing the movement in the direction of a third, petty-bourgeois, party.

The socialist party, which up to July, 1924, was trying to retain a certain measure of independence as a political party, has since then almost completely merged with the C. P. P. A. in the LaFollette movement. The socialist party has practically ceased to exist as an independent political party. It will support the formation of the petty-bourgeois party under the phraseology of a "labor party."

## 5. The Bourgeois Wing of the LaFollette Combination.

For the bourgeois wing of the LaFollette combination, the alliance with the labor bureaucrats and with certain sections of the labor aristocracy is a perfectly profitable proposition, since this alliance in no way conflicts with the capitalist basis of the movement, while it secures for itself the support of large masses of workers and poor farmers. The professional-liberal group of this bourgeois wing, as represented by the Nation and the New Republic, demands the formation of a bourgeois third party which they often call a farmer-labor party. The practical politicians of the movement, who represent the well-to-do farmers, small bankers, and merchants, such as LaFollette, Wheeler, Brookhart, etc., whose fortunes are more closely bound up with the old capitalist parties, will hesitate with the immediate formation of the third party but will surely continue this political combination.

## 6. The Future Development of the LaFollette Movement.

Because of the pressure of capitalist development and exploitation, and in spite of the comparative weakness of the LaFollette movement, as demonstrated in the elections, this movement, comprising an alliance between petty-bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy, is bound to grow in volume and in power. Even though the LaFollette movement may continue in its present loose form, sooner or later it will be forced to overcome, partially at least, the contradictions of group and sectional interests within its ranks, sufficiently to crystallize into a new political party. As a party it will be based upon the small and middle sections of the bourgeoisie, the rich farmers, the professional groups, certain sections of the labor aristocracy, and the labor bureaucracy.

This party will represent a political alliance between the left wing of the bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the reactionary social-patriotic, class collaborationist wing of the labor movement on the other hand. It will function as the extreme left party of the American bourgeoisie and will continue to base its appeal mainly on two grounds: To the bourgeois middle classes this LaFollette movement will present the capitalist half of its physiognomy, that is, it will maintain that it alone is able to save American capitalism from destruction as a result of a violent revolution by the masses; while to the masses the LaFollette movement will present the so-called labor half of its physiognomy, claiming that it stands for the "just" demands of labor and against its being unfairly treated by capital. The masses of the workers and poor farmers, inasmuch as they reject the leadership of the old capitalist parties and are not yet ready to accept the leadership of and to give their support to the Workers Party, follow the lead of the LaFollette movement. This was emphatically demonstrated by the absorption of the farmer-labor party movement by the LaFollette movement, and by the vote of the industrial

## 3. Gompers and the Old Guard of A. F. of L. Bureaucracy.

The endorsement of the LaFollette campaign by the bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. was dictated primarily by a desire to preserve their leadership in the American labor movement, which was endangered by the following four facts: (a) the complete bankruptcy of the Gompersian trade union policies which resulted in weakening the unions to such an extent as to reduce their fighting ability almost to nothing; (b) the feeling throughout the rank and file that the coming attacks by the capitalists could not be resisted by the unions with their old tactics, policies, and forms of organization; (c) the demand from the rank and file for some measure of political influence for the unions in the hope that this may forestall or weaken the impact of these coming capitalist attacks; and (d) the brazen anti-labor attitude assumed by the national conventions of the two old parties which completed the disillusionment of the rank and file and made it impossible for Gompers to endorse either Coolidge or Davis without seriously endangering his leadership. The above facts prompted the bureaucracy of the A. F. of L. to enter into an alliance with the petty-bourgeoisie for common political action. Because of the comparative weakness of the LaFollette movement, as demonstrated

## ISSUE LETTER ON ORGANIZATION AND CONDUCT OF THE PARTY DISCUSSION

Federation Secretaries and City Central Committees on the organization and conduct of the party discussion. To be read at the next regular meetings of these committees throughout the party.

DEAR COMRADES:—It is the intention of the Central Executive Committee that in this pre-convention period the party membership be given the widest possible opportunity to study and discuss all phases of the central problem at present confronting the Workers Party, in order that the whole party membership may be able to arrive at a mature and well considered judgment before passing final decision.

To this end, for the most thorough and widespread discussion in the history of the party, the Central Executive Committee is making ample provisions to give the membership full opportunity to familiarize themselves with the points of view of the minority as well as that of the Central Executive Committee.

As a guarantee that the discussion will be carried on in a constructive manner, the Central Executive Committee considers it necessary to lay down some general principles regarding the conduct of the discussion for the advice and guidance of all party committees, which will be responsible to the Central Executive Committee for putting them into effect in all sections of the party under their supervision.

A fundamental condition for such a thorough and constructive discussion is that no attempt be made in any section of the party to force the membership to snap judgment or premature decision on the vital problems confronting the party. Such attempts are bound to produce destructive results and to militate against the party arriving at a sober and well-considered decision.

An example of what may result from any such attempts occurred at a general membership meeting in Chicago held on Nov. 19. At

this meeting, which was held on the eve of the full C. E. C. meeting where these were to be considered and the discussion officially opened, an attempt was made to force the meeting to an immediate decision on our central political problem. This attempt was bitterly resented by another section of the meeting which insisted upon a study of the theses and a more thorough discussion before coming to a decision. The result was to completely demoralize the meeting, to divert attention from the main questions of policy to questions of parliamentary procedure and technique, and to finally break up the meeting in disorder.

Similar attempts will inevitably produce similar results. The Central Executive Committee therefore calls upon all party committees to so organize and conduct the discussion as to prevent the occurrence anywhere in the party of incidents of this kind.

We are enclosing herewith a copy of a C. E. C. resolution on the party discussion. This resolution, together with this letter, must be the guide of all responsible party committees during the party discussion. The discussion must be as thorough and complete as possible. All party members must be given full opportunity to hear and discuss all points of view and to freely express their own opinion. There must be no limitation or restriction of these rights in any section of the party. It is only by strictly adhering to these principles that we shall be able to mobilize the collective experience and intelligence of the party for a correct solution of our immediate problems, and to proceed from this to the strengthening of our party and its development towards a mass Communist Party capable of leading the toiling masses of America to a victory over the bourgeoisie.

Fraternally,  
The Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party of America.  
Wm. Z. Foster, Chairman,  
C. E. Ruthenberg, Secretary.

"The present democratic-pacifist governments, like governments of an analogical type which may still be formed, not only are incapable of carrying on a really democratic and peaceful policy, but on the contrary, will themselves become Fascist very quickly. The class struggle will by no means be stifled, but will burn all the more brightly in the bounds of these 'democratic' and 'pacifist' states. The change of regimes (democracy—fascism—democracy) will all the more certainly undermine the foundations of tottering capitalism. From each such change the masses of the people and, especially, the proletarian masses, will emerge all the richer in political experience, and seasoned with a greater readiness for the struggle, while the bourgeoisie and its servants, the social democratic leaders, will emerge with weakened forces, demoralized, and with no confidence left in themselves or in their policies. And thus the forces of the proletarian revolution will grow until its decisive victory."

## 7. The LaFollette Movement and the Labor Party.

The movement towards a farmer-labor party, that is, a political mass party based upon the economic mass organizations of the workers and the poorest sections of the farmers, and pursuing a policy independent of bourgeois parties, and more particularly the movement for a farmer-labor ticket in the presidential elections of 1924, these movements have been defeated by the going-over of the C. P. P. A. and the Gompers' machine into the LaFollette camp carrying with them the great mass of organized workers. In fact one of the reasons why the C. P. P. A. and the Gompers' machine so readily accepted the candidacy of LaFollette and entered into the alliance with the petty bourgeoisie was to block and to frustrate the further development of such a farmer-labor party by giving the masses a class-collaborationist substitute which the latter accept as their own movement.

From now on it will be the policy of LaFollette's labor lieutenants to represent the LaFollette movement as the political movement of the American workers. It will be claimed by the socialists, the C. P. P. A., and all the other labor lieutenants of LaFollette, that the LaFollette movement is representing labor on the political field. And for some time to come, that is until the LaFollette movement will begin showing concrete and practical signs of its antagonism to the working class, the great bulk of the laboring masses of this country will progressively accept the LaFollette movement as their political expression. This means, that the question of trying to build a farmer-labor party, which shall base itself on the mass organizations of the

workers and poorest sections of the farmers, is definitely out of the range of practical politics for the immediate future.

8. The United Front and Our Labor Party Tactics.

We accept the conception of the united front tactics as outlined and interpreted by the Fifth Congress of the Communist International. We look upon the tactics of the united front as a means of exposing the treachery of the trade union reactionaries, the class collaborationists, and social patriots, and as a means of winning over the masses for the struggle against capitalism under the leadership of the Communist Party. In short, as the central means of building the Workers Party into the mass Communist Party of America.

Three years ago our party adopted the position that a labor party policy was the only way of applying the tactics of the united front to the political conditions of America. To this decision our party was moved by the following considerations: The existence of the strong mass movement in the direction of a farmer-labor party as evidenced by a large number of local and state farmer-labor parties, and also by the formation of the C. P. P. A., which we interpreted as the result of this same mass pressure towards independent political action. We also realized that, unlike the Communist Parties of Europe, our task was not to win away the masses from reformist mass political parties speaking in the name of labor, because there were none at that time in the United States, but to compel the reactionary trade union leaders to break with their old non-partisan policies and to lead the unions into the political struggle as labor organizations; that is, to promote among the masses the growing movement in favor of independent political action, and thus compel the trade union bureaucracy to either form a labor party or expose themselves before the masses as enemies of the working class.

Our conception of a labor party was that of a political party based upon the trade unions of America, with the Workers Party functioning within it as its most conscious and militant section, striving to win the mass movement to the revolutionary class struggle and to the leadership of the Workers Party. We held to the correct idea that the formation of a labor party becomes possible and inevitable only inasmuch as the economic mass organizations of labor are compelled to join hands for independent political action. Because of the existence of such a movement, and because of the glaring bankruptcy and total ineffectiveness of the non-partisan tactics of Gompers and the C. P. P. A., our labor party slogan soon became a real fighting issue in the labor movement, appealing to wide circles of workers and poor farmers, and thus aiding us in our task of exposing the labor reactionaries and strengthening the influence of the Workers Party.

The first serious departure from this policy was made when the former majority of the Central Executive Committee abandoned the idea of a labor party based upon broad masses of organized workers, and adopted instead the policy of a labor party comprising only the Workers Party and its close circle of sympathizing organizations. This policy was later crystallized in the Federated Farmer-Labor Party and developed into a theory by the "August thesis," adopted at a C. E. C. meeting in August, 1923. This theory of a labor party consisting only of the Workers Party with its immediate circle of sympathizing organizations contained the menacing tendency of liquidating the Workers (Communist) Party and substituting for it a non-Communist organization. It further carried with it the isolation of the Workers Party from the mass movement for a farmer-labor party. For these reasons it was relentlessly combated by the former minority, now majority, of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party.

As the farmer-labor movement developed the LaFollette third-party movement developed simultaneously and threatened to absorb it. This raised before our party the problem of how to save the ideological and organizational independence of the farmer-labor movement. To solve this problem the C. E. C. adopted the policy of the "third party alliance," which, however, was not put into effect, by advice of the Communist International. The decision of the Communist International was correct. Experience has shown that the farmer-labor movement could not have been saved from absorption by the LaFollette movement even by the dangerous expedient of a "third party alliance." In the months preceding the election the LaFollette movement swept like a tidal wave over the farmer-labor movement, submerging it and drowning it out.

The defection to LaFollette of the former supporters of the farmer-labor party movement reduced the June 17 convention to a mere fraction of its anticipated size. By the time of the Cleveland conference of the C. P. P. A. those organizations not closely sympathetic to the Workers' Party and

(Continued on next page.)

## GREAT LABOR CARTOONS

by such noted artists in the ranks of Labor as

FRED ELLIS  
HAY BALES  
WM. S. FANNING

in the December issue of the WORKERS MONTHLY.

GET IT!

# Open Discussion on Immediate Party Tasks

(Continued from Page 3)

which had participated in the June 17 convention, also deserted to LaFollette. The farmer-labor party movement thus lost its mass character, and the organization formed at St. Paul soon found itself reduced to little more than the Workers Party and a comparatively small circle of sympathizing organizations. It was a recognition of the fact that the farmer-labor movement had been absorbed by the LaFollette movement, and that the former no longer had the proportions of a mass movement, that dictated the action of the Workers Party on July 8 in withdrawing its support from the farmer-labor presidential candidates and nominating candidates of its own.

The events of the campaign have abundantly proved the correctness of our analysis of the situation and the policy we adopted for the campaign. It has strengthened the revolutionary morale of our membership, it has won for our party the sympathies and support of every class-conscious worker in America, and it has established the Workers Party as the only working class political party in the United States.

The fundamental conditions determining the attitude of our party toward the farmer-labor movement are the same now as at the beginning of our experience in this field on the basis of the united front tactics of the Communist International. At the time when the farmer-labor movement was developing a mass character, moving in the direction of an independent party, it was correct for our party itself to raise the slogan of "a farmer-labor party" and participate actively in the movement for it. When, as became apparent in July, 1924, and as it is apparent now, the idea of a farmer-labor party lacks mass support and appeal among industrial workers and poor farmers, the basic reasons for our support of this movement are not in existence. The Workers Party, therefore, cannot advantageously promulgate the slogan of a "farmer-labor party" at the present time. The further development of the class struggle may eventually again create a mass sentiment for the formation of a farmer-labor party. In such case the Workers Party may find it advantageous to again raise the slogan for such a party and actively participate in the movement for it. Our attitude toward it will depend on the advantages it offers to the Workers Party from the standpoint of promoting independent political action on a mass scale and of building the Workers Party into a mass Communist Party.

We are not opposed to the labor party in principle. Neither are we bound to the theory of the historic inevitability of the labor party in America. Still less do we hold the opinion that the labor party is the only medium through which independent class political action of the working masses can find expression. We approach this problem from the point of view of whether the labor party slogan can now be used as a means of mobilizing masses of workers for immediate class political action, and we say that neither for the present nor for the immediate future can the labor party slogan be employed successfully for this purpose.

The formation of a labor party becomes inevitable and possible only inasmuch as the economic mass organizations of labor are compelled to join hands for independent political action. But when the leaders of these organizations enter into a permanent alliance with the petty-bourgeoisie, and when such an alliance with the LaFollette movement receives the recognition and support of almost the entire organized labor movement, then the question of forming a labor party loses its basic foundation and ceases to be a fighting issue for immediate practical use.

## The Communist International and the Farmer-Labor Party.

It is claimed by the comrades who insist upon the farmer-labor party slogan continuing as the major slogan of our party, that the Communist International is in favor of their position. This is not correct. The Communist International has not yet passed judgment on the present disagreements in our party. The Central Executive Committee is seeking the advice of the Comintern on the labor party policy, which will become known in due time.

However, on all these occasions during the past three years when the Comintern expressed itself in favor of a farmer-labor party policy for our party, it always based its position on the following two grounds: (1) that there was in the United States a mass movement of workers and poor farmers taking the form of a movement toward a farmer-labor party; that this was a step in the right direction. (2) That by participating in this movement and instilling it with the ideas and practices of the class struggle, the Workers Party could best promote the development of the revolutionary movement in the United States and the upbuilding of itself into a mass Communist Party.

In the summer of 1922, delegates of the Workers Party to the Comintern presented the first proposal of our party to initiate a labor party policy. The first question asked by the pres-

## RESOLUTIONS OF CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON PARTY DISCUSSION

- The theses of the Central Executive Committee in its entirety shall be printed at once in single issues in all party papers. The theses of the minority in its entirety shall be printed in the following issue of each paper.
- Discussion of the theses in the party press shall commence immediately after their publication. Articles contributed to the discussion shall be printed in the DAILY WORKER in a special department under the heading "Party Discussion."
- All party papers are obligated, as a matter of party discipline, to print all articles relating to the party discussion sent to them thru the party press service.
- Preliminary discussion of the theses shall begin at once in the party branches.
- After the preliminary discussion in the party press and in the party branches has continued for the period of four weeks, general membership meetings shall be called to discuss the theses. The Central Executive Committee will send representatives of both the Central Executive Committee and of the minority to open and sum up the discussion at the membership meetings in the following cities: New York, Chicago, Boston, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, New Haven, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis-St. Paul.
- The Central Executive Committee will set the dates for the membership meetings in all the cities as listed above, to which it will send representatives.
- All general membership meetings now scheduled shall be postponed to comply with the provisions of this resolution.
- The convention date will be set by the Central Executive Committee as soon as approval has been secured from the Communist International. At least sixty days from the date of the publication of the Central Executive Committee political theses shall be allowed for discussion before the convention.
- This resolution is to be published immediately in the party press.
- All articles in all party papers must carry the signatures of their authors and no party paper shall carry unsigned editorial articles pertaining to the discussion.

idium of the Comintern and by every leading comrade on it was "Is there a mass movement for a farmer-labor party?" "Is the organized labor movement tending in the direction of a farmer-labor party?" and "Would a farmer-labor party policy enable the Workers Party to link itself up with this mass movement for the further development of the class struggle, and for the extension of the Communist influence over the working masses?" And when the Comintern finally agreed to the Workers Party adopting a labor party policy, it was mainly on the strength of the information supplied to the Comintern by our delegates, that there was in existence a strong mass movement towards a farmer-labor party.

Now the situation is totally changed. There are no longer present the basic conditions which moved our own party and the Comintern to adopt a farmer labor party policy. The coming of this change was foreseen by the Communist International when the American question was last discussed in the Comintern, that is when the judgement was passed on the proposed "third party alliance." In the theses then adopted by the Comintern jointly with the C. E. C. of our own party, in that section of it which deals with the June 17 convention, we find the following very significant words:

"In case of a split (at the June 17 convention) the question of whether or not the Workers Party shall act altogether independently in its own name, in the election campaign, or whether it shall launch a campaign under the name of the farmer-labor party, will depend largely upon whether or not it (the Workers Party) is successful in the shop and will depend on how far it maintains contact with the working masses at the June 17 conference."

With its usual far-sightedness, the Comintern distinctly foresaw the possibility of the farmer-labor movement being swallowed up by the petty-bourgeois LaFollette movement, and in such case provided that our party enter into the election campaign and take the political field under its own name, on its own program, and with its own candidates. This is conclusive proof of the fact that the Comintern's main guide in the question of a farmer-labor party is the existence of a mass movement taking the form of such a party, and that in the absence of such a movement the Workers Party cannot continue the use of the farmer-labor slogan and must look for other slogans and tactical means to mobilize the masses for the class struggle under its leadership.

The policy outlined in this thesis is based precisely upon the principle of the Comintern. Our approach to the question, our method of handling it, and our solution of it, which is that the present conditions no longer justify the use of the farmer-labor party slogan, is in complete accord with the position taken by the Communist International. The Communist International, proceeding upon its established principles for the labor party policy, will support the position of the C. E. C. as expressed in this thesis.

## The United Front and Our Present Objective.

The united front policy remains the central tactical means for the mobilization of the masses for the class struggle and for the building of the Workers Party into a mass Communist Party. We accept the united front tactics as elucidated and explained by the Fifth Congress of the Commu-

nist International. This means that it is the duty of our party first of all to establish contact with the rank and file of the working class for immediate struggles against the capitalists and their government. In all these united front campaigns it will be the duty of the Workers Party to bring forward its Communist position on all problems confronting the working class, frankly and severely attacking all the betrayals of the workers and utilizing these campaigns for the strengthening and upbuilding of the Workers Party.

At present the main objective of our united front policy is to start a movement from below to compel the so-called labor wing in the LaFollette movement to break its alliance with the petty-bourgeoisie and to win the masses to the class struggle and to the leadership of the Workers Party.

While powerful labor bureaucrats, such as Lewis, Hutchison, and Berry are openly allied with the parties of the big bourgeoisie, we must realize that the main obstacle to the further development of the class struggle in America is the social pacifist illusion spread and cultivated by the LaFollette movement among the working masses. At present the main strength of LaFolletteism and consequently the main danger to the class struggle, comes from the ideological hegemony of LaFolletteism over the minds of large sections of workers and poor farmers. We must therefore concentrate our energy to expose and defeat the petty-bourgeois influence of LaFolletteism in the labor movement. The only way in which this can be done effectively is by putting up against the LaFollette movement the program of consistent class political action, that is, to propagate the revolutionary class struggle as against social pacifism and social reformism, which means putting up against the LaFollette party the Workers Party.

This presents to us the problem of developing a series of campaigns designed to expose the bourgeois nature of LaFolletteism which can be accomplished in no other way than by raising concrete issues and by assisting and encouraging the rank and file in the formation of direct organs of mass struggle. The working masses will need organization and leadership in the shops, consequently we must urge and lead in the formation of shop committees. The growing army of unemployed will need leadership and organization, consequently, it will be the duty of the Workers Party by means of the united front tactics to initiate and lead in the organization of councils of unemployed. As the working masses gain militancy and aggressiveness the situation will become ripe and the necessity urgent for a general mobilization of all the forces of labor for a concerted struggle against the triumphant capitalist reaction. The working masses in America will then feel the need of a unifying center for leadership and direction and a general labor congress elected by the rank and file of labor in the trade unions and in the shops and amongst the unemployed will become the best means for the unification of the struggles of labor. It is the duty of the Workers Party to immediately begin to popularize the idea of such a labor congress, thus preparing the minds of the workers for the coming tasks. The guiding tactical principle in all these activities must be the following: That it is chiefly on the basis of the immediate needs of the workers and their immediate struggles that all these organs of the rank

and file will be brought into existence.

As the class struggle develops and our campaign against LaFolletteism progresses there will be found in a number of localities organized labor bodies ready to break their alliance with the petty bourgeoisie and to enter election campaigns as labor organizations. In such cases, it will be the duty of the Workers Party to secure the political support of these labor bodies for the Workers Party. Wherever this is impossible because of the immaturity of the masses, the Workers Party will propose united labor fronts for election purposes. In proposing whether such united fronts will be carried on under the auspices of labor congresses, councils of action, labor parties, etc., the Workers Party will be guided by one principle only, namely, whether they will promote the class struggle and enable the Workers Party to build itself into a mass Communist Party.

## IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE PARTY

### 1. Exposure of the Bourgeois Nature of LaFolletteism.

This becomes the central problem of our agitation and propaganda. It must be carried on along the following lines: (a) Formulate concrete political demands based on immediate burning needs of the masses; (b) popularize these demands among the masses; (c) call upon the rank and file in the shops, unions, among the unemployed, to address resolutions, petitions, and to hold mass meetings demanding that the "labor" wing in the LaFollette combination and the LaFollette group in congress propose legislation along the lines of the demands of the masses, at the same time creating the necessary united front rank and file organization for the struggle; (d) by these campaigns unmask the bourgeois nature of LaFolletteism and of the labor lieutenants of the LaFollette movement, expose the futility of democratic-pacifist parliamentarism and demonstrate the necessity of following the leadership of the only class political party, the Workers Party; (e) the economic and political slogans that will be employed in these campaigns should be grouped around the following central slogans: (a) break the alliance with the big, middle, and petty bourgeoisie; (b) form the united front from below of the workers and poor farmers with the Workers Party; (c) as against the LaFollette party, the Workers Party; (d) as against the futility of LaFollette's parliamentary reformism, the use of the organized mass power of the workers for political ends under the leadership of the revolutionary working class political party, the Workers Party.

### 2. Work Amongst the Agricultural Laborers and Poor Farmers.

With regard to the agricultural proletariat our party has practically the same duties to perform as with regard to the city proletariat. We must encourage and assist the organization and strengthening of unions of agricultural workers, giving full support to the I. W. W. where it is functioning as a mass union in this field. These agricultural unions to be linked up to the unions of the industrial workers for common action against the capitalists and rich farmers. Hand in hand with this must go the building up of the Workers Party branches. The class conscious elements among the agricultural workers must be organized as Communists and become part of the Workers Party.

While keeping in mind that the basis of our party is the industrial proletariat, we must also pay close attention to the semi-proletarian elements on the farms, the poorer sections of the farmers. These can be brought over politically very close to our party and eventually a considerable proportion of them may be assimilated into our party organization. In order to bring this about, our task will be to separate the semi-proletarian elements from the well-to-do farmers and the urban petty bourgeoisie on the basis of the specific economic and political needs of the tenant farmers and other groups of exploited farmers against the land-holding corporations, grain speculators, the banks, and the rich farmers. It will be the duty of the Workers Party, after it has established a Communist organizational base among the agricultural workers, to assist the semi-proletarian elements of the farms to form their own economic organizations and to link up their struggle with the general class struggle of the American working class. It is of supreme importance that the Central Executive Committee of the party establish an agrarian department with a responsible national head. The special nature of our agrarian work demands special means of agitation and organization, also a special agrarian press, which can best be taken

care of by an agrarian department of the party.

The party must realize the supreme importance for the success of the proletarian revolution that it is absolutely necessary to secure for our party and for the proletarian class struggle the sympathy and support of the agricultural workers and poor farmers.

**3. Work Amongst the Negroes.**  
The Negro masses of America, mostly workers and poor farmers, are the most oppressed and persecuted section of the toiling masses of America. The cause of the oppressed Negro masses is the cause of the Workers Party. We must extend our activities among the Negro workers and poor farmers, leading their struggles against all forms of race discrimination, for complete equality in industry, in the trade unions, and all other phases of social intercourse, and against capitalist exploitation. We must emphasize in our agitation among the Negro masses that their only salvation as a persecuted race and also as a part of the working class, lies in the revolutionary class struggle under the leadership of the Workers (Communist) Party.

### 4. Industrial Work.

In the future, as in the past, the task of securing the leadership of the workers in the industries and mobilizing them for the struggle remains the basic task of our party. To accomplish this task our party must hasten the reorganization on the shop nuclei basis, which will give us direct contact with the workers and an organizational basis in the shops. Thru the shop nuclei we shall be able to actively participate and win the leadership in the daily struggles of the workers, and thereby extend organized Communist influence in the trade unions. The organization of the militant left wing in the trade unions, as one of the main means of revolutionizing the trade unions, must be carried forward with renewed vigor and intensity. The organization of the unorganized masses must occupy an ever larger share of the attention of the Workers Party. We must realize once for all that only the organized efforts of the Communists, leading a militant left wing, will succeed in bringing the unorganized into the labor movement and in transforming labor's economic organizations into organs of revolutionary struggle, industrial in form, and based upon shop committees.

### 5. Imperialism and the Dawes Plan.

Driven by the development of the capitalist economy of the United States, the American ruling class is fast assuming the position of the foremost imperialist power in the world. American imperialism has already subdued and brought under its domination in various forms almost the entire continent of America, North and South. Now, thru the Dawes plan, American imperialism has made a bid for world domination. In consequence of this, militarism and navalism are rapidly coming to the forefront in the United States, which spells more oppression for the working class and the danger of new imperialist wars.

It will be the duty of the Workers Party to open the eyes of the American masses to the menace of American imperialism, to the treacherous role of Gompers and the labor bureaucracy generally in their support of the imperialist policies of American capitalism. The immediate task of the party is to mobilize the American working masses against the Dawes plan and against the imperialist and militaristic adventures of American capitalism in Central and South America. It will be the duty of our party to initiate a movement of the entire working class on the American continent for a defense of the rights and independence of the small nations and for a unified struggle against domination of American capital.

### 6. Struggle Against Unemployment.

As unemployment develops upon a mass scale, which is a definite and inevitable result of the growing contradictions of American capitalism, the party must take the lead immediately in stimulating, initiating, and organizing councils of the unemployed in co-operation with shop councils, trade unions and other workers' organizations, upon a local, regional, and national basis.

The following general principles shall guide our participation in this campaign which must be closely linked up with the general program of the party in all its phases: (a) unemployment is an inescapable phenomenon of capitalism and can be abolished only by the abolition of the system that produces it; (b) the struggle against unemployment must acquaint the workers with this fact without dampening their ardor for the immediate struggles but rather intensifying it; (c) to this end practical sets of demands must be formulated, slogans raised, and a program of action established designed to weld all protest and actions against unemployment into a national movement. This program must in turn be adjusted to each local and industrial situation in a practical manner; (d) the slogans and practical actions of the struggle will follow two general lines—political and economic. They will be directed against the government as the representative of the capitalist system and against the employing capitalists as the immediate exploiter. These two aspects will be intertwined and interchangeable; (e) we reaffirm our un-

employment program which outlines the slogans and forms of organization for the struggle against unemployment.

**THE BOLSHEVIZATION OF THE PARTY.**  
We subscribe fully to the decision of the Fifth Congress of the Communist International that, "The most important task in the present period of activity of the Comintern is to Bolshevize the sections of the Communist International." In accordance with the principles laid down by the Fifth Congress, the Workers' Party must become a real mass party. It must have the ability to maneuver, it must be able to resort to every strategic maneuver against the enemy. Its tactics must be neither dogmatic nor sectarian. The Workers' Party must be essentially a revolutionary and Marxist party, a centralized party, prohibiting factions, tendencies, and groups. It must be a monolithic party hewn of one piece. It must also carry on regular concrete propaganda in the capitalist army. It is only by Bolshevizing the Workers' Party, by instilling into it the true spirit of the teachings of Leninism, that we can succeed in our historic mission to lead the masses to the overthrow of capitalism in the United States.

### 1. Communist Education.

One of the most effective means of Bolshevizing our party is the education of our membership in the principles and tactics of Leninism. The previous experiences of our party demonstrate the great need for such systematic education. A beginning has already been made by the educational department of the party in establishing party study classes throughout the country, by the organization of party schools in New York, Chicago, and Boston, by commencing the publication of a number of important theoretical books and pamphlets, and by the organization in a number of districts of circuit study classes. This must be followed up with a more extensive net of study classes and by the further development of a comprehensive library of Marxism and Leninism. The central executive committee realizes the great importance of this work and has instructed the educational department to prepare a special thesis on Communist educational work.

### 2. Shop Nuclei.

Our party membership is gradually becoming convinced that the shop nuclei form of organization is the most effective means of transferring the Workers' Party into a mass Communist party. Only a small beginning has been made as yet in the actual work of reorganization. However, since the main difficulty of convincing our party membership of the necessity of such reorganization is being overcome, the process of reorganization will from now on proceed more rapidly. It will take the concerted effort of the entire general party organization, the support of the federation bureaus, and the guidance of the Communist International to complete the process of putting our party upon the basis of shop nuclei organization. The central executive committee will submit to the convention a special thesis on shop nuclei.

### 3. War Against Opportunism in the Party.

The greatest danger which may befall a Communist Party is to become infected with opportunism and opportunistic tendencies. The first step toward the real Bolshevization of our party must be the stamping out completely of every vestige and sign of such opportunistic tendencies.

**A. The Second and a Half International Tendencies.** As pointed out by the Communist International there are present within our party certain tendencies manifesting some remnants of the ideology of the Second and a Half International. These menacing tendencies were particularly noticeable in a number of articles which appeared in the New York Volkzeitung, edited by Comrade Lore. The spirit of these articles and their general trend are totally foreign to the spirit of Leninism and cannot be tolerated in a Communist Party.

We need only refer to the sympathetic attitude assumed by the Volkzeitung toward Paul Levi and toward Serrati when the latter opposed the Communist International. Also the super-critical attitude towards the Communist International and its leading comrades, that manifested itself in the Volkzeitung on various occasions. These are merely surface indications of menacing leanings which, if allowed to spread among the party members, will drive a wedge between our party and the Communist International to the lasting detriment of our party.

Other tendencies leaning toward opportunism are the hesitation and weakness exhibited by some of our comrades in the trades unions in various industries and localities in their struggle against the right wing. The party must realize that one of our principal fighting fronts is in the trade unions. Here our comrades have to meet daily the ferocious attacks of the lieutenants of capitalism in the labor movement. Here, more than anywhere else, must our comrades exhibit militancy, aggressiveness, ability to maneuver against the enemy constantly keeping before their eyes the main objectives of our movement.

The least deviation on this field of battle from the revolutionary lines of Leninism weakens and endangers our whole party. The way to guard against these weaknesses is strict adherence to the letter and spirit of the tactics of the Communist International and the Red International of Labor Unions, of which the representative in the United States is the Trade Union Educational League.

**B. The Right Deviation of Farmer-Laborism in our Party.** The Communist International has repeatedly pointed out that the united front tactics, although the most effective means for mobilizing the masses for the class struggle and for the upbuilding of a mass Communist Party, also carries with it serious dangers which Communist Parties must constantly guard against.

The application of the united front tactics in America, thru our fight to establish a farmer-labor party, has on the whole strengthened our party and extended its influence among the masses. But, at the same time, it gave rise within our party to a menacing tendency to make the farmer-labor party an end in itself and to relegate the Workers' Party to the background.

The position taken by the comrades of this tendency is that the only way to crystallize independent political action of workers and poor farmers is thru a farmer-labor party, forgetting the existence of the Workers' Party as the political class party of the workers and poor farmers. These comrades also take the position that the only way to build a mass Communist Party in America is thru a farmer-labor party, thus enunciating a new principle that the Workers' Party can never become a mass Communist Party except thru organizing and working within a farmer-labor party.

Notwithstanding the declaration of these comrades that they conceive the farmer-labor party merely as an instrument for the building up of the Workers' Party, the effect of this theory is to tend to liquidate the Workers (Communist) Party in favor of a non-Communist farmer-labor party. These comrades work under the delusion that the Workers' Party as such and under its own name cannot successfully appeal to and absorb into its ranks large masses of workers. Their theory is that the Workers' Party can at present appeal only to a small section of theoretically convinced Communists and that in order to approach with Communist propaganda larger masses of workers, our party must form new special political organizations, such as women's councils and a farmer-labor party. This non-Communist conception of the role of our party manifests itself particularly in the tendency to resort to all kinds of new political organizations, substitutes for the Workers' Party, whenever an opportunity presents itself to appeal to large masses of workers on concrete issues of everyday life.

The protagonists of this theory attempt to justify their false conceptions on the basis of the united front tactics of the Communist International. This is totally wrong. The fundamental idea of the united front tactics is to bring the Workers' Party itself into direct contact with the rank and file of the working class in their everyday struggles against the capitalists, and to popularize it as the leader of the fight for their daily needs. The attempt to set up a farmer-labor party in the absence of a powerful mass movement in the direction of such a party, means nothing else than the setting up of a semi-Communist substitute for the Workers' Party.

A fundamental principle of the united front tactics is that a Communist Party must absorb into its own ranks every section and group of the working class that accepts in the struggle the policies and slogans of the Communist Party. Therefore, every attempt by the Workers' Party to set up middle-of-the-way political bodies to take the place of the Workers' Party in the eyes of the masses is in direct violation of Communist principles, and if carried to any length will spell the liquidation of the Workers' (Communist) Party. This farmer-laborism opportunistic tendency with in the Workers' Party means death and destruction to the Communist movement of America. It manifests lack of faith in the appealing power of a Communist organization and in its ability to become the practical leader of the struggles of the workers. It is a right wing deviation which, in quest of imaginary immediate results, sacrifices the future of the Workers' Party. This tendency must be relentlessly combatted and stamped out.

The Workers' Party is still a small party, but it is on the right road to great influence in the labor movement. By applying the tactics of the united front from below on the basis of the economic and political struggles of the masses, we shall build the Workers' Party into a mass Communist Party, and thereby hasten the day of victory of the American proletariat.

**White Terror?**  
You will learn a good deal about it from the article "White Terror in Europe—Can America Be Far Behind?"  
By ROSE KARSNER.

Be sure to read it in the December issue of the WORKER MONTHLY—and you will get other splendid contributions if you SUBSCRIBE!