

# THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE PARTY

By WM. Z. FOSTER.

FOR a long time, we have talked of Americanizing the Party, that is, of winning the native-born American workers to its organization and its program of struggle. This has always loomed up as a gigantic and, to some, an almost hopeless cause of the various factors we have so often seen problem. The American-born workers, bediscussed, seemed to cling to bourgeois illusions with an almost unbreakable tenacity.

But now the Americanization of our Party is taking place. More rapidly, I am sure, than most of us realize. The Americans are joining the Party and TUUL movement, in ever increasing numbers. Communism is sinking its roots into the basic sections of the American proletariat.

It is curious that much as we have pondered and broken our heads over this problem in the past, it is actually being solved without our clearly remarking it. We must become more alert to what is going on and give real attention to this basically important development.

I am writing this article during a speaking tour through the West, and many facts bear witness to the influx of Americans into our Party and its general struggles. For example, just yesterday picking up a stray copy of the "Literary Digest" on a train, I read a wisecrack by some local editor, to the effect that the capitalists need have no fear of the Red movement, until its leading workers bear American names.

This statement piqued my curiosity and I looked at my list of TUUL secretaries in the cities where I am speaking on this tour, to learn what percentage of "American" names might be among them. I was more than surprised at the result. Here are the names and the cities: Youngstown, Karson; St. Louis, A. Milman; Kansas City, R. T. Pierce; Omaha, John Dawson; Denver, Colo., Charles Guynn; Salt Lake City, J. D. Graham; Los Angeles, Fred Firestone; San Francisco, M. Raport; Seattle, J. Laurie; Butte, Willis L. Wright; Duluth, Ben Gardner; Minneapolis, George Powers; Milwaukee, W. Clark; Gary, Joe Dallet; Johnstone, Naum Costoff.

This list of names speaks eloquently of the influx of Americans into our movement. The crisis, with its mass unemployment, wage cuts, speed-up, and terrorism, together with the healthy internal situation in our Party, is doing the job. Yes, and a very vital factor is the inspiring influence of the Soviet Union, with its tremendous victories in building Socialism. The meaning of it all is that the American workers, following the sense of our basic slogan, refuse to starve and will fight.

Perhaps our greatest advance into the ranks of the native-born workers is now taking place in Oklahoma, though the process is more or less general throughout the country, with vary-

ing tempo. In that state we have a real mass movement. The workers, the great majority of whom are native born, are in almost a state of revolt against the growing starvation. Their unemployment demonstrations are the most militant of any held any place in the country. It's the old Gastonia fighting spirit again, but upon a broader and deeper scale. There are 5,000 members enrolled in the unemployed councils in Oklahoma. They look enthusiastically to our Party as their leader. Hundreds of splendid young militants are coming forward in this struggle, ripe for recruitment into the revolutionary unions and our Party.

So far, I have been speaking of white Americans. But when we want to see the most basic flow of American born workers into our Party, we must look at the real progress we have made in the past year among the Negroes. But this is no longer news. Nevertheless, in the several cities that I have already spoken in on this tour (Youngstown, St. Louis and Kansas City), I have been astounded afresh at the large numbers of Negroes present, and at their great enthusiasm for and activities in our movement. Never fear, our Party, despite its mistakes and weaknesses, is now laying the basis for becoming the party of the tolling Negro masses in this country.

American born youth of Mexican parentage are also joining the Party. These are strategic elements among the agricultural workers in Colorado. In the Denver unit of the Young Communist League, there are 20 of these valuable workers, newly joined.

And speaking of Americans joining our movement—why in Oklahoma even many Indians are taking an active part in the local TUUL struggles and are distinguishing themselves for their militancy. Yes, and not long since, at one of my meetings, noticing a full-blooded Indian present, I asked him the name of his tribe. He said he was a Comanche and declared enthusiastically his support of the TUUL.

Ever since the birth of our Party, the main struggle has been carried through by the foreign-born workers. And bravely they have made the fight. But now they are being gradually reinforced by the native-born workers. All of which bodes no good for American capitalism.

This influx of Americans, black and white, into our movement, which is of basic significance politically, raises many important problems for our Party, and especially the Young Communist League. How to develop ideologically these new and promising young elements; how to transform their fiery enthusiasm and fighting spirit into a militant building of our Party and the revolutionary unions of the TUUL; how to make Communists of them—are urgent questions that we must become immediately conscious of and for which we must find quick and correct solutions.