

MAX BEDACHT,

Secretariat, Central Committee, New York City, N. Y.

DEAR COMRADE: The subject matter of this letter could properly be presented in the form of a discussion article, but as I have been instructed to write on another matter in the discussion, I am taking this up with you direct. I have suggestions and criticisms to make of two recent documents issued by the party and the Trade Union Unity League.

THE ELECTION PLATFORM

(1) *Form of the pamphlet.*—It is my opinion that in any of our propaganda and agitational material it is always best to proceed from the facts about which the worker knows most to other more general facts, to link up the big political questions with the questions and problems which the worker understands and meets with in his daily life; in other words, to proceed from the "near-at-hand to the far-away." The platform does not do this. It raises as the first issue the danger of war. This before the industrial crisis, which, of course, intensifies the war danger, is mentioned.

The demands do not stand out in the draft. They are buried in the rest of the pamphlet and do not catch the eye at all. Furthermore, there are no outstanding slogans which can be popularized among the masses which express in concentrated form the immediate needs of the masses for which they can be mobilized for struggle. Slogans which typify the most burning issues, such as the struggle against rationalization, for the 7-hour day, 5-day week, struggle against war, down with all antilabor laws, full equality for the negro workers, unemployment insurance, etc., should be formulated and should stand out in the pamphlet.

The pamphlet is supposed to be the simplest pamphlet ever put out by the party. A brief reading of the pamphlet brings out the following words which few workers, and almost no southern workers, will understand: Commodities, ideology, moratorium, liquidate, dilemma, aeronautics, ghastly, impoverishment, lucrative, permeate. No doubt a more careful study would reveal many more.

(2) There is no indictment of the Republican and Democratic Parties by name. The names of these parties do not appear in the draft. At least a paragraph should be devoted to each, and the essential sameness of their programs showed, particularly as many workers expected much from the Democratic Party in the last elections should they have won. Also Hoover, as the head of the Republican Party, and the personification of the rule of finance capital and all it means to the workers should receive mention.

(3) Certainly such an important political phenomenon as the growing Fascist tendencies in the State power should receive mention in a communist election platform. I am also of the opinion that the Fascist character of the American Federation of Labor should be explained.

(4) While the platform calls for the immediate independence, etc., of colonial and semicolonial possessions of the United States, nothing is said of the necessity of the most active support of the revolutionary movements in those colonies by the American working class. Without this, to advance the slogan of independence is meaningless. The colonial struggle is not even mentioned and no explanation made of course of why American working class must support it.

(5) *Soviet Union.*—I do not think sufficient contrast is made between the Soviet Union on all fields and the United States. For instance, social insurance in the Soviet Union is not mentioned. The Soviet Union policy of peace as opposed to the United States policy of war and enslavement of colonial peoples is not mentioned. This contrast should be made on the question of disarmament; also re the proposals of the Soviet Union for complete disarmament. Also the religious campaign against the Soviet Union and the growing lead being taken by the United States in the campaign for war

against the Soviet Union should find a place in our platform. In general there is not sufficient emphasis on the fact that war against the Soviet Union is the main war danger.

(6) *Unemployment*.—The central tactic of the party, unity of the employed and unemployed, is not explained or mentioned. In our demands here it is, in my opinion, essential to demand relief for all unemployed, including those on strike and locked out. In the coming strikes in the South particularly we will have to raise this as one of the political demands of the strikers.

(7) Under the section on antilabor laws the essential factor in this whole attack is not brought out, namely, that these laws are used primarily not against individual workers, but in order to smash the revolutionary labor movement, and in particular the Communist Party. That the revival of all these laws represents a new attack on the ruling class caused by the sharpening class struggle. The immediate danger of the party being driven underground and of the necessity of struggle against this is not stressed. In this connection there is absolutely no mention of the bill to "investigate" the Communist Party just passed by Congress. No demand is made for the full right of revolutionary organizations to function and for freedom of the workers press and for freedom of assemblage for the working class. These are now burning issues before the workers.

(8) Under oppressive laws we must raise the slogan of the abolition of the poll tax and of all special qualifications for voters which are used to deprive large sections of the southern white workers and all negroes in the South of the right to vote. How about the right to vote for the Army and Navy? Workers in the Army are not mentioned at all. Also the right of negroes to vote and run for office is raised only in the too general and abstract form of full political equality. This question and the question of the poll tax and property qualifications for voters I consider most important.

(9) *On lynch law*.—In the platform this is entirely confined to negroes, while in life lynch law is used against the white workers also. I think our fundamental demand here should be for the right to bear arms and form workers defense corps. This also is not mentioned. Peonage, being bound to the soil, is not raised on the question of farmers; also imprisonment for debt. These are both big issues down here.

(10) *On the question of power*.—I want to say that this platform represents the first party platform where there has been any real attempt made to link up the struggle for immediate demands with the final struggle, at least any platforms I have seen. Still here the form in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is to be realized is not made clear. Our fundamental slogan in this connection—that of a worker's and farmers' government—is not mentioned at all. I think this slogan still holds good and must be widely popularized and linked up with the partial demands.

The second document I wish to deal with is the program on unemployment, issued by the Trade Union Unity League national bureau, which we have just received. Here just a couple of questions:

(1) The demand for the payment of relief and unemployment insurance to strikers and locked-out workers should be made.

(2) In these directives a radical change is made from the program adopted at New York in April. According to this there is to be no general councils, but only industrial councils under the direction of the industrial unions and leagues. While theoretically this is correct, it will not work in practice. We will not be able to secure proper direction from our weak unions and leagues. It will be most difficult to secure coordinated action on the part of these councils led by the various unions under the present circumstances. I think to make an effort to put our very weak organizational movement on such a basis at this time would seriously cripple it. It goes without saying that there must be the closest connection between the industrial unions and the workers in the unemployed councils of each industry to be secured through mutual representation, etc. Later on it may be possible to split them up. Also it will be impossible to set up with our forces in most districts a half dozen industrial unemployed councils, issue separate cards and stamps, as the present directives seem to call for. This is true now, at least and will continue to be true for some little time.

(3) I am entirely opposed to the proposal to take members of the unemployed council directly into the unions as full members. It says in the directives they are to be taken in if they are "ready to join." Of course they

will be ready to join, all of them in the unemployed councils, if joining involves no other obligation than coming to a meeting, etc. On this basis I can have a Trade Union Unity League of 400 members here in a week's time. We already have that many in the unemployed council. But when we have a Trade Union Unity League of that kind it won't mean a d— thing.

I think this proposal will afford an entirely too easy excuse for retreat from the difficulties of organizing the workers still in the shops. There will result a tendency to neglect this hard work and report big numbers in the Trade Union Unity League while they are mostly unemployed. I think the greatest care must be exercised in taking unemployed workers into full membership in the Trade Union Unity League and unions and only the very best brought in. If we are to achieve our goal of 50,000 new members in the Trade Union Unity League by the end of the month by this method we will be in as bad shape after we get them as we are now. It should be clear that it is very dangerous to base our Trade Union Unity League and all unions on the unemployed, and this is exactly what these directives will lead to. (See point 11 of the program.)

While I am at it I want to raise another point re unemployment. That is, the way the Daily Worker handles facts in the unemployment campaign. One day we have 8,000,000 unemployed, and the next 7,000,000. Last week, in the issue of the Daily Worker where the central committee statement on the discussion appears, in this statement 7,000,000 is used, while in an editorial on the same page (the front page) 8,000,000 is used. Our leading comrades should investigate and make up their minds one way or another and then stick to it. And all party editors, etc., should be informed of the figure to use. In all local propaganda we have used 8,000,000 because the Daily Worker gave us that lead; now it seems we must use 7,000,000. Such a treatment of facts will do us no good among the workers.

I am no shining political light, and I dislike to make you wade through this long letter, out of which you may get very little of benefit to the party, but these are my opinions, and if they are wrong I would like to know it and to know why.

With communist greetings,

_____, District Organizer.