

The Party's Shortcomings, Mistakes and Problems

NOTE.—This is the third installment of the report for the Political Committee made by Jay Lovestone, at the recent Fifth National Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party held in New York City. This installment deals with "The Party's Shortcomings, Mistakes and Problems."

III. MISTAKES AND SHORTCOMINGS OF OUR PARTY.

1. Now for some mistakes and shortcomings of our Party. I will not enumerate them in the order of importance, but merely recount them. The Party has shown no capacity to conduct election campaigns. Our election campaigns are bad in every sense of the word. I speak of this not locally but nationally. We must learn to participate as Communists, as a Communist Party should participate, in the election campaigns. We must end our underestimation of the importance of election campaigns.

2. Secondly, there is an insufficient organization capitalization of the various political and trade union campaigns of our Party. We go into a strike like Passaic, or we go into another campaign—we go into a miners' campaign; we go into a campaign for the protection of the foreign-born. Large masses have thus been mobilized in struggle, but our Party has not yet learned to gain organizationally, to capitalize organizationally, sufficiently and in proper proportion the energy put into these campaigns. We must pay more attention to this. Here is one of the fundamental weaknesses of our Party.

3. Thirdly, the Party did not react quickly and well enough to the British general strike. Our Party could have done much more than it did in mobilizing masses for the British general strike.

4. There is insufficient political direction to the work of the youth. It is a sad commentary on our Party organization, that the YWL is so small compared with the membership of our own Party. The youth is not to be blamed for it, but the Party leadership. I speak of no group to be blamed. The Party as a Party must correct this error.

5. In reorganization we have made mistakes. On the whole, reorganization has been a success, a step forward. However, we have made mistakes, nationally and locally. Nationally, in having too mechanical an approach; locally in approaching in the American Party—nineteen language federations to reorganize, nineteen Parties to be welded into one Bolshevik Party. The mistakes we have made have been costly. We have lost a too great number of members. In speaking of reorganization, we must learn how to hold the new workers coming into our Party since reorganization. We have increased our membership by more than 5,000 but have not been able to hold all of them. This is one of the worst shortcomings of our Party. The costly excessive turnover of our membership must be ended quickly or the life of our Party will be sapped.

6. Further weaknesses: we have a too weak basis in the trade unions. True, we have made progress here, but our trade union basis is still too weak.

7. We have an insufficient proportion of native elements in our Party. I speak not in a deprecating sense of our Party members, but we must, in this country, if we are to Americanize ourselves in a Bolshevik sense, we must show bigger capacity to attract native elements, the workers born in this country, because our leadership in this country depends largely upon our capacity to draw such workers into our ranks. In the past two years we have drawn an increasing number of such workers into our ranks, but the Party as a Party is still weak in this respect. The ideological level of our Party is low; the number of efficient Communist functionaries is too small.

8. The sub-committees of the Party apparatus are not functioning well, and this applies to the CEC as much as to the sub-division of the Party apparatus.

9. Another weakness has been the launching of too many campaigns simultaneously. We start on one campaign and before the Party membership is ideologically prepared and mobilized we launch another campaign. This is a weakness of the Party, and the incoming CEC must correct this. This diffusion of energy must be stopped.

10. In Negro and women's work, there are weaknesses which must be corrected.

IV. OUR MAIN PARTY PROBLEMS

COMRADES, as a result of the objective conditions in the country and the weaknesses of our Party certain problems arise. I want to examine briefly some of these problems now facing us. The following are the six outstanding problems confronting our Party:

1. The effect of imperialism on the American working class. I would speak of this problem to a large extent under the heading, the bourgeoisification of the American working class.

2. The trade union work of the Party, the meaning of the offensive of the reactionary bureaucracy and the government against the Party.

3. The problems of developing a mass anti-war campaign.

4. The labor party problem.

5. The role of the Party in the united front movements.

6. Last but not least; the problem of developing in the districts a capacity to utilize local issues.

To handle the last problem first: I speak of local issues not in a deprecating sense. Our district organizations have been weak in the sense that they have been too largely politically abstract and not sufficiently locally political. Not enough of our organizations are able to pick up local issues and apply to these local issues the fundamental general principles of Bolshevism. This applies to every district of the Party in varying degrees. The extent to which a district of the Party can be called a well-functioning district is directly in proportion to the extent it has been able to respond to local issues and utilize local issues for fundamental class purposes. In New York, Pittsburgh, Minnesota, our comrades have shown increasing capacity for this work. In all districts there has been an increase in the ability to react to local issues. But our Party is still weak and this is one of our outstanding problems.

Let us consider the problem of the effect of American imperialism on our working class and the resulting problem of bourgeoisification. The bourgeois press and its economic experts have been propagandizing the country with the idea that the American working class is becoming capitalist. This propaganda has been made not only by the bourgeois press but also by the so-called Socialist experts. The "Socialist" economic experts, such as Evans Clark, have spread in some measure the theory that the laboring masses are becoming capitalist in this country. These propagandists are pointing to the increase in the number of stockholders, to the increase in labor banks, automobiles, gas stations, radios, saving accounts. They even maintain that there are 10,000,000 stockholders in this country. They also point to a growth of the middle class in the United States. Instead of seeing the rise of technicians as the dominant source of the middle class in the country, with the development of large scale production, they speak of the middle class increasing as a class without analyzing its composition. They fail to see that large masses of the petty bourgeoisie, particularly among the farmers, are being expropriated. They fail to see that the highly advertised wealth diffusion in America is an illusion, not a reality.

This propaganda, comrades, has had effect on the working class. It has been a powerful, a well-planned, well-organized propaganda. It has effected all ranks of the working class, for 3 reasons. These are: primarily because of the power of American imperialism; secondly, because of the role of the labor aristocracy at present; thirdly, the labor movement's going to the right to the extent that it has gone. The Party must fight this effort of the bourgeoisie. The Party must fight this effort of the bourgeoisie and their agents ideologically and organizationally.

(To Be Continued.)

The Communist International, The War Danger and the Role of American Imperialism

Speech of ROBERT MINOR.

At Workers' Party Convention.

(Continuation)

OF course you know that much of the attention and energy of the Comintern during the past year was given to the unrest and disturbances in colonial countries, especially the heroic insurrection in Indonesia. I am not going to go into the question of the Indonesian affair for the reason that a careful treatment would not be possible in the amount of time at hand. A few words about the work in regard to China. From the very day that I arrived in Moscow the Comintern machinery was given over night and day to the most careful following up of the Chinese events. The development of the tremendous revolutionary movement, the victorious march which reached its peak in the capture of Shanghai, the sympathetic demonstrations of the workers throughout the world during that period are closely related to the work of the Comintern during that period. You know that that period of victory continued up to a certain time, when the traitor Chiang Kai-shek made his coupe d'etat in 1927. The martyrdom of the Communists in the Kuomintang, the declaration of the counter-revolution, the declaration of the bourgeoisie against the proletarian elements, the effort to break the growing ascendancy of the proletarian movement, followed as a result of the development of the proletarian phases of the revolution. Since that time we have seen the downfall of Chiang Kai-shek, his defeat and his retirement. We, of course, know that there are and that there is an inner play of intrigue between the different capitalist imperialist powers. You know of course that the British government is working for the preservation of their trade monopoly in Southern China. You know that Chiang Kai-shek was not in accord with the British policy, you know that two smaller generals were given a sudden supply of financial and other support to give them a mysterious ability to defeat Chiang Kai-shek and

cause his retirement. The British government was at work. You know the role that was played by the United States in that affair. I am going to omit a reference to or a description of the policy of the United States government in China for the reason that I share in the exposition of that policy which was put forward by Comrade Lovestone who reported on behalf of the Political Committee. I am going to make only a few remarks about subsequent events. We know, of course, that the Chinese revolution has not seen an even course of successes. We know that the most tragic defeats have been faced, we know that the road of the Chinese revolution may have many more defeats, many more set-backs. We have seen the Chinese Communist Party tested and we have witnessed the tragic fact of a part of the leadership failing to live up to its test. We have found the Youth, the Chinese Communist Youth, taking a better position and playing again the role of standing by the Comintern and preserving the Communist line. The Communist International has been obliged to level most severe criticisms at our Chinese Communist Party leadership which was in opposition to the Comintern policies, which flouted the instructions of the Comintern, which took the position that the Comintern could not understand the conditions in China, and which led from defeat to defeat through their weak and vacillating policies. When the Comintern understood and declared to the comrades of the Chinese party that it was necessary to turn loose the peasant revolution, to turn loose the masses of peasants to the immediate seizure of the land, directly and without hesitation, the majority of the Party leadership refused to obey the decisions and made the declaration that these instructions were not practical. The results are to be counted up in defeat after defeat. When the Comintern saw these actions, and saw the generals one by one betraying and lining up in coalition with the servants of imperialism, the Comintern called for a bold stand by our Communist Party and the left wing of the Kuomintang. The Comintern demanded