

# The Party's Shortcomings, Mistakes and Problems

NOTE: This is the tenth 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."

## VI. Tasks and Perspectives.

In closing let me say something about the tasks and perspectives of our Party. We feel that immediately after the Convention the Party will have two main tasks. The first task is the strengthening of the Party organization. Immediately after the Convention we should get into a campaign of strengthening the Party, building The DAILY WORKER, improving the units of our Party, increasing the membership, bringing in five or ten thousand new members, learning to hold these new members. Thus one of the best antidotes to the recurrence of the factional struggle will have been achieved.

We cannot and must not overlook the weakness of starting too many campaigns simultaneously.

The second biggest campaign, the political campaign, must be against the war danger and for defense of the Soviet Union. I am sure as a result of the experiences of the trade union delegation that went to Soviet Russia, we will have a somewhat broader basis for this fight.

But what are the outstanding basic political tasks of the Party? The primary task of the Party is still to hasten the development of the workingclass politically—to have the workingclass be born politically as a class. America is the only big imperialist country where the workingclass does not have a mass political party. Toward the achievement of this end there are three main roads: first of all the fight against the war danger into which I will not go in detail because it will be covered by a subsequent reporter. Secondly, the entrenchment of our Party in the trade union movement. Thirdly, the Labor Party campaign, organizationally as well as agitational.

In the trade union work our tasks concretely are as follows: first, we must draw the Party much more into trade unions than it is today. The comrades inside the unions must be made more active than they are today. Strengthen and build the factions in the trade unions. We must realize seriously and earnestly the important role of the TUEL, broaden and strengthen it. We must broaden and strengthen the organ of the left wing—Labor Unity. We must organize the unorganized. In this country more than anywhere is this a basic

task, because of the fact that these unorganized masses are a reservoir to draw upon and with which to combat the reactionary union leadership. The slogan of amalgamation of the existing craft unions into militant industrial unions is now more than ever a vital slogan for the campaign to mobilize the unions against the reactionary bureaucracy. In our trade union work we must develop a positive program, positive slogans to fight company unionism and class collaboration schemes. Merely denouncing them may be good but it is not sufficient.

In our agricultural work, the paper which has been established must be built into a mass paper. The United Farmers' Educational League must be given deeper roots. It must engage in more united front movements. The Party must take concrete steps to develop its agricultural program. The American Negro Labor Congress must be given more support than hitherto. We must make more efforts to penetrate the basic Negro mass organizations. We must get out more literature that will appeal to Negro masses not as Negro masses alone, but as one of the more important sections of the whole group of oppressed and exploited working masses in this country.

In the women's work there must be organized a national women's department. We must concentrate our energies particularly on women in industry more than in any other field.

In the cooperatives our present policy should be continued but we must build up a strong directing centre.

In reference to the youth, more political guidance. We must help the youth organizationally and must avoid under all circumstances that the youth should ever again be drawn in as the youth into the internal, Party struggle.

The campaign of the foreign born is a vital phase of the next campaign to build the Party and here the Party must strengthen its directing centre. We have made headway in this field. We have established contacts with conservative trade union leaders. We have reached conservative sections of the workingclass, but we have only barely scratched the surface of this field.

Next, we must raise the ideological level of the Party membership. Our Party apparatus must be strengthened. Errors must be and can be corrected. District committees must be built on a much firmer basis than they existed up to date. We must prepare to build an apparatus that will be able to serve us to withstand any attack on the Party, in case the attack takes the form of denying us the right to exist as we do today.

when, in spite of the slanders heaped upon us by labor officialdom and the capitalist press, a non-party worker writes frankly to our official organ, expressing his faith in our party and asking its assistance in the industry in which he works.

It goes without saying that the opinion of this one worker is based largely upon the deeds of our party as well as upon its statements. In the specific matter with which he deals, as well as those which an increasing number of workers will call to our attention as the deadly effects of official labor corruption make themselves felt, our party must give speedy and energetic attention to the necessary steps toward building a left wing which will be able to counteract corruption and give organization movements sufficient vitality to withstand and survive the efforts of crooked and incompetent union officials to demoralize them.

## Mencken's Post Mortem Discovery of Sacco and Vanzetti.

H. L. Mencken, in one of his syndicated little essays, published in the New York World last Sunday, finally condescends to make some remarks about Sacco and Vanzetti. "Those earnest, and, in the main, quite honest ladies and gentlemen who continue to roar about the Sacco and Vanzetti case," says Mencken with his customary complacency, "fall into an ancient error."

This ancient error according to Mencken, "is the belief that the gross unfairness which got into the prosecution was peculiar to the capitalistic system of government, and that under some other system it would have been avoided."

He continues his argument by asserting that if Sacco and Vanzetti had been Wall Street brokers and the scene of their trial had been Moscow instead of Boston, they would have been executed with the same vindictiveness.

This bizarre logic is a part of his familiar thesis about the inanity of democracy, and the principle of "rule by the inferior four-fifths of mankind" which he has been reiterating in one form or another for years.

The Moscow-Boston analogy which has been hurled triumphantly by various astute editorial writers is pretty thin. One fundamental difference escapes them all: the judicial frame-up as an institution is a peculiarly American one. In no other country of the world are political heresies used as a pretext by the dominant class. When the reactionary French government wishes to imprison the impertinent editors of L'Humanite, it does so, and declares openly that they are being jailed for a political offense. They are not framed on murder and robbery charges. Only "our" government hypocritically pretends to guarantee freedom of criticism of political institutions:

During the past few years the White Terror in Hungary and Bulgaria has imprisoned, tortured, murdered hundreds of the best workers in the labor and revolutionary movements in those countries. But they were publicly charged with attempting to overthrow the ruling group and prosecuted on that charge—none other.

Mr. Mencken, in his effervescent attacks against the principle of "democratic government" reveals not the slightest perception of the class-relation in present-day society. Conflicts he does recognize; but sometimes he shouts that they are struggles between the artistically sensitive and the boors, the "civilized minority" and the "boobs"; occasionally he hints that it might be a fight between the possessors and the dispossessed. But of the class struggle as the dominant principle of modern society he has no suspicion.

The basis of all this work for the Party is the Comintern resolution.

The DAILY WORKER must be made a mass paper. The best talents and energies of the Party must be placed at the disposal of The DAILY WORKER. The CEC must drop the policy of assigning comrades on the basis of who could be spared most and not on the basis of ability and usefulness. The DAILY WORKER is the face of the Party today more than ever before.

Party education: We have made only the beginnings of the organization of an apparatus for the establishment of effective Agitprop work. Such an Agitprop Department is one of the most effective means of raising the ideological level of the Party. This too is a good antidote to factionalism.

We must continue our efforts to unify the Party in more energetic manner than in the past.

A few words about pessimism:—Our Party will fight against any idea or propaganda which maintains there is no room for a Communist Party in this country. We realize there are tremendous difficulties, but we will conduct sharp struggles against pessimism and we will wage a relentless campaign against the attempt to spread the ideas of the bourgeoisie among the American masses. Every day, despite all the bourgeois propaganda, in spite of all the terror of the imperialists, our Party is showing increasing capacity to move forward and lead mass struggles; for Communists must lead in the separating of the working class from the bourgeoisie in this country. The future holds sharp class struggles in store for the American workers. Even today, with all the much-vaunted prosperity, there are class struggles. And in these class struggles our Party is showing substantial and increasing capacity of leadership.

It is true that the bureaucracy is still moving to the right. But here we must remember that the very logic of the bureaucracy's going to the right at a terrific velocity is going to hasten the development of a situation where these bureaucrats will stand out in the open, in the light, before the masses, so that big masses who are today opposed to us, tomorrow when they begin to fight for the most elementary demands, or when the very craft unions which exist today fight for their very right of existence, those masses will realize that the Communists are their true leaders, are worthy of leadership. Then the masses will come over to us.

The present prosperity is not permanent. Nor is the present domination of the labor movement by the reactionary bureaucracy permanent.

It is ridiculous to compare the disappearance of the IWW and the SP with the fate in store for our Party. Our Party is free from the limitations and errors of the IWW and SP. We are becoming a Bolshevik Party based on Marxism and Leninism and are free from social-democratic and syndicalist errors. We are free from the errors of the trade union capitalists. Only to the extent that we are able to avoid such errors creeping into our ranks, is there hope and a future and a basis for successful work by our Party.

There are forces in American imperialism, yes even in this apparently all-powerful American capitalism, undermining American imperialist supremacy. Let me recount very briefly some of these principal forces.

First, the United States is more and more exporting manufactured products. It is there becoming increasingly dependent on the world market.

Secondly, the accumulation of capital and the concentration of ownership bring with them the proletarianization of great masses thru the expropriation of large sections of the petty bourgeoisie and farming masses.

Thirdly, American capitalism is developing a parasitic character. American capitalism, because it is becoming a capital-exporting nation to an increasing extent, is developing a parasitic character, living off other countries. This is a source of weakness and danger to the American imperialists.

Fourthly, as a result of the war the rest of the world owes America over twenty billion dollars. Here we have conflict within the bourgeoisie because finance capital demands the dropping of the tariff barriers, while the industrial capitalist interests demand higher tariff. Those who are not interested in the export of capital, are in favor of higher tariff. But the tendency is all in favor of withdrawing the tariff barriers, which must bring in its train a dropping of immigration barriers. This means a blow at the privileged position of certain sections of the working class.

The expropriation of the agricultural masses is continuing apace and is removing one of the most effective sources of strength for our bourgeoisie. The farming masses, except to the extent the bourgeoisie force them into proletarianization, are a reserve force and basic prop for capitalist reaction.

The migration of Negroes from the South:—In this phenomenon we witness a force leading to the disintegration of the two-party system in this country. The two-party system has been one of the basic obstacles to the development of a class party on a mass basis. The migration of Negroes from the South to the North is another means of proletarianization, consequently, the existence of this



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REMEMBER, in my student days, accompanying a graduate of the Imperial University of Tokio to see "The Mikado" by Gilbert and Sullivan. He hadn't heard it. Nowadays, I understand, they have taken a lesson from Ko-Ko and they always give the Japanese university students the libretto to read before they let them visit any English speaking countries, to get them used to it by degrees. This lad did his scandalised best to



Winthrop Ames

undecieve me during the play, with agonized whispers like this: "Japanese ladies NEVER crawl on their stomachs on the floor!"—The Emperor DOES NOT do those funny things with his hands!"—"They MUSTN'T chase him with an umbrella!" etc.

Well, that was many years ago. But Gilbert's quaint songs still have much truth in them, for America, for England, for most of the kingdoms of earth, however much they slander Japan. They may or they may not have had their Pooh-Bah's in the Land of the Rising Sun, but we have in America today our Andy Mellon's and Herbert Hoover's—"Lord High Everything Else;" and when Distiller Andy gets together with Secretary of the Treasury Mellon to decide whether bonded whiskey should be released, well, there is as Ko-Ko says, "absolute unanimity on a point of law." Yesterday also we had the Dollar-a-Year Men, who somehow managed, tho inordinately proud heads of corporations which had something to sell to the government to humble themselves tremendously in the matter of salary, and serve on the government boards which bought from those corporations.

"The Mikado" is the best and most popular of musical comedies. It would take a very bad company to entirely ruin it, and Winthrop Ames' production now running at the Royale is rather better than the average. The acting is more of a unit than any I have ever seen. There is more attention paid to the minor parts—one must mention the sword bearer, danced by Paula Langlen.

On the other hand perhaps William Williams, as Nanki Poo, is just a little too obese. Perhaps Fred Wright, as Ko-Ko is a trifle too refined. That part should be clowned, to my way of thinking. But this may be a matter of taste. It's a good company. Vera Ross as the Katisha is very good. Lois Bennet sings better than a Japanese, and is nearly as dainty. John Barclay's long legs make the Mikado.—V. S.

Doris Niles, at her dance performance in Carnegie Hall on October 25th, will introduce a new suite based on the life of Joan of Arc and arranged to music by Brahms and Humperdink.

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group as a reserve of capitalist reaction is likewise being undermined. The more we are able to reach the Negro masses with our propaganda, in their changed conditions, the more they can be a most valuable reserve for the revolutionary forces.

American imperialism will not enjoy its privileges as long as British imperialism did. America is not, as England once was, the only one in the field. Also we have today the existence of the Soviet Union, covering one-sixth of the territory of the earth and continuing ever to strengthen its socialist economy. Lenin pointed out that no country can ever again occupy the role of domination as long as Britain did.

On the basis of this analysis and having a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, we feel our Party will move forward.

On the basis of the various errors in the groupings of our Party having been corrected we can move forward.

On the basis of our Party realizing the need for greater unification; on the basis of the consciousness of every section of our Party to meet the increasing danger of war, to meet the menace against us, the incoming CEC, I am convinced, will move forward towards greater unity and towards more concrete and effective steps to build a mass Communist Party in America.

(The End)