

# The Work Before Us

**DEAR COMRADES:** In the month that has gone since the last political letter has been sent you by the Secretariat, there have been some new developments in the economic and political situation. We herewith review briefly these factors, examine the party activities and shortcomings in recent weeks, and outline the tasks before the party in the face of the present objective conditions.

## 1. The Economic Situation

Not since 1921 was there so much unemployment in "prosperous" America. According to the most conservative sources of the Coolidge Administration, at least six out of every hundred workers who were on a job last year at this time, are now out of jobs. At least twelve out of every hundred workers employed in 1923 are now unemployed.

Wage cuts are increasing in frequency. As usual, the New England Textile mills are setting the pace in wage-slashing. The non-union coal fields are not far behind and are preparing new wage reductions. There is talk of lower wages in the steel industry. Rumbblings of wage-cuts are heard even in the building trades. The western railway magnates are refusing to go thru with the award of a paltry wage increase of thirty cents a day given some time ago to their locomotive enginemen and firemen.

Within the last year the payroll totals have fallen by eight percent. Today the total wages are at least eleven percent less than in 1923. The New York lodging houses are "caring" for a record number this winter. Chicago now boasts of longer bread lines than it has had at any time since 1913.

Despite all the loud talk about farm prosperity, the farmers are still in the hole. Tho the crops harvested in the last fiscal year were the largest in the history of the country except

for the years 1915 and 1920, yet there was a drop of nearly six hundred million dollars in the combined value of crops and animal products within the last twelve months.

In short, the Coolidge prosperity bubble and bluff have broken. The trend of trade and industry is unmistakably downward and the workers are beginning to feel it.

## 2. The Political Situation

Both at home and abroad American capitalist reaction continues in full sway.

The Seventieth Congress has opened in the shadow of the most gigantic lobby of big business in the history of the country. At the head of the splendidly organized biggest capitalist interests now dominating the millionaire and lawyer-ridden Congress is the huge Power Trust. Vicious anti-labor legislation is being considered, particularly against foreign-born workers.

In the Republican Party, Mr. Hoover, representing the most conscious capitalist interests and whole-heartedly indorsed by Governor Fuller who murdered Sacco and Vanzetti, is leading the race for the nomination to fill the place now occupied by "King" Coolidge. In the Democratic Party, Governor Smith of New York who has worked overtime to ruin the garment workers' unions of his state and to shield the most sordid species of Tammany Hall corruption, is setting the pace in the Democratic chase for

the White House. The so-called progressives, the self-styled insurgent group led by Borah and Norris, have deserted the farmers' ship altogether. Especially treacherous has been the conduct of the so-called Farmer-Labor Senator Shipstead of Minnesota who is now registered as a Republican.

Energetic efforts are now being made by the imperialists to extend and perpetuate their domination. A special drive has been launched against Latin-America. Fake goodwill messengers of the type of Lindbergh are now being used to draw Mexico and other countries South of the Rio Grande closer to the United States so that these weaker countries may see and feel the prowess of American imperialism and stop being restive. Pres. Coolidge and his Secretary of State Kellogg are going to Havana, Cuba, on a warship, along with Charles E. Hughes, erstwhile secretary of state and agent for the biggest oil corporations, in order to "lend proper tone and atmosphere" to the Pan-American Union Congress soon to be held.

The silent, economy-loving Coolidge is now yelling for billions for the navy. The antagonisms with England are growing sharper. The bloody hands of Yankee imperialism are extending everywhere. New thrusts are being made by Wall Street in the Near, Middle and Far East. The Chinese militarists and imperialists lickspittles dined and planned with the American Admiral Bristol before they plunged into their barbarous butchery of defenseless workers in Canton and peasants in the provinces.

At the same time, there is developing increasing resistance to American imperialist aggrandizement. Huge cartels are being formed in Europe

to beat back America's invasion of the European capitalist markets. Germany is raising the tariff against American goods. England is again complaining about the burdensome war debts. The developing difficulties for the Dawes Plan are only embittering the European bourgeoisie and decreasing their willingness to continue to pay tribute to Wall Street.

#### **The Situation in the Labor Movement**

The whole trade union movement is fighting with its back to the wall. The once-powerful United Mine Workers of America is flat on its back—a victim of the blackest treachery in the darkest pages of the history of our labor movement. Lewis and Company, backed up by Green, Woll and the whole official leadership are guilty of paralyzing what was for many years the most effective fighting force in the trade union movement. Today, these reactionary labor-bureaucrats are criminally holding back the other workers from coming to the aid of the battling miners and are even crippling effective miners' relief by their do-nothing policy in the face of terrorism and outrages of an unparalleled sort being visited upon the starving coal-diggers from Pennsylvania, Ohio and Colorado.

A devastating injunction mania is menacing the workers. The old Palmer and Daugherty injunctions in the mine and railway strikes of 1919 and 1922 are messages of encouragement for the workers in comparison with the injunction against the coal miners in Pennsylvania issued by Federal Judge Schoonmaker and the injunction secured against the subway workers by the New York Interboro Rapid Transit Company.

The program of the capitalists is clear. They are out to destroy even the most conservative, docile craft

unions. They have no longer any need even for such unions. But the reactionary trade union leadership is doing nothing to lead the workers to resistance. On the contrary, they are aiding the employers to crush the most militant fighters, as in the New York needle trades, and are planning an abject surrender of all the rights won by the workers in many years of bitter struggle.

In this treachery the official leadership of the Socialist Party is playing an active and enthusiastic part. These so-called socialists are helping and even leading the expulsion of militants from the unions and are sabotaging every effort to organize a labor party or a united labor ticket for the coming presidential elections.

But there are also growing signs of rising militancy. The heroic spirit of the miners after nine months of struggle shows that there is still plenty of resistance left in the workers. The inspiring determination of the needle trades workers and their left-wing leaders indicates that the workers will fight to the last ditch to save their unions. The increasing sympathy for the Soviet Union in the ranks of the American trade unionists, despite the campaign of calumny and terrorism waged by Green, Woll and Company, is a most hopeful sign. Last but not least, the smash-up of the frenzied high finance schemes of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers' Banks is throwing a cold blanket even over the most ardent advocates of labor-banking and sundry other class collaboration schemes.

#### **What The Party Has Been Doing**

Within the last month there has been a considerable improvement in the working of the Party. Our slogan "Get Down to Work" has not fallen on deaf ears. The Party on the whole responded well in many in-

stances, tho there is considerable room for improvement.

The organization structure of the party and its functioning have made strides in the last weeks. Attendance at units is reported to be improving in many districts. There is more life in the shop and street nuclei. Shop papers are being revived and new ones being gotten out. Mass meetings are better attended, workers' schools are being set up and forums are increasing in number. Several national field organizers are now on the job. There are a number of special organizers in the mine strike area. This is the second consecutive month the Party Organizer is appearing.

In the campaign for a labor party, effective steps were taken by a number of districts toward the setting up of broad trade union committees. The possibilities in this field are good.

The last National TUEL Conference was successful in the face of vicious expulsion campaigns of the reactionary bureaucracy. A number of prominent American trade union militants will certainly develop as a result of the proceedings and deliberations of this historic gathering for the broadening of the left wing and the vitalizing of the trade union movement. On the whole, the Party organization responded well in doing its share for the building of this national conference of the TUEL.

Slowly but surely the Party is mobilizing itself for miners' relief. Today the Party members are the leaders in the whole relief campaign for the Pennsylvania, Ohio and Colorado strikers. In the A. F. of L's November Fourteenth Conference at Pittsburgh, it was only the voice of the left wing which was heard in behalf of the locked-out coal-diggers. In the Colorado fields, despite over-

whelming obstacles, our Party is sinking its roots and working most energetically to lead the strikers to victory.

Today, only the Cleveland District has done good work to meet the growing unemployment crisis.

The smash-the-injunction activities of the Party are going on apace. Nearly half a million leaflets have already been distributed in the industrial centers. In action our comrades have carried out the Party's policy by flagrantly violating every injunction order on test. A number of our comrades have been arrested for distributing anti-injunction leaflets and violating injunctions.

The campaign against the war danger has not developed as well as it should have done. Insufficient efforts, except for a few districts, have been made to organize the increasingly favorable sentiment for the Soviet Union. Until recently there was a dangerous notion in some of our ranks that the war danger has decreased. The bloody events at Canton show the very opposite to be true.

Insofar as the quality of our literature and the Daily Worker is concerned, there is much improvement to be noted.

In the intense educational campaign waged by the Central Committee against Trotsky-Zinoviev Opposition, it was shown, by the results of the discussion and the voting in the principal districts, that the overwhelming majority of our Party is for the line of the Comintern, the CEC, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This campaign has done much to elevate the ideological level of the Party.

#### **Our Main Shortcomings**

Our Party has many shortcomings to overcome before it can function

well in the class struggle. We here mention only five of the main and most serious errors and shortcomings of our Party as shown in our recent activities. These are:

1. **THE PARTY SWAMP**—there is still too big a party swamp. There are too many members who do nothing for the Party except merely belong to it and sometimes pay dues. Remember, if you are a member of the Party swamp, you are only a millstone around the Party's neck. No member of the Party is worthy of the name Communist unless he or she is an active member—vigorously active in every Party activity. The work of the Party is falling upon too few shoulders.

2. **THE UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION**—We are now facing the first serious unemployment situation since our Party was reorganized on the shop and street nuclei basis. If our districts continue to pay inadequate attention to the unemployment crisis, then our units will be severely hit and we will lose many members. First of all, every unemployed Party member must keep in good standing by getting exempt stamps as long as he is out of a job. Secondly, unemployment activities must tie up the organized with the unorganized workers very closely. This means redoubled activities by the entire membership in the trade union work of the Party. Thirdly, as soon as possible, Unemployment Councils should be formed along the line of the one organized in Cleveland.

3. **THE FACE OF THE PARTY**—There is still too much of a tendency in our ranks to hide the face of the Party. Altogether too often do our members participate in such campaigns as the labor party, for the protection of the foreign-born workers, and in the work among the Negro

masses as mere individuals with certain special standing, influence or connection and with insufficient emphasis as representatives of the Party as a Communist Party. That is why we now and then tend to lose the initiative to wavering elements. Particularly must we avoid this danger in the labor party campaign. Our Minnesota comrades must be on special guard to develop a distinct **Party** position and activities in the campaign for a labor party so that the success of the campaign will be best insured, the wavering elements energized, and the traitorous conduct of the Shipsheds effectively exposed. Here also we must mention the need for sharpening the attack on the Socialist Party which, with the death of Debs, has lost the last fig leaf of traditions of militancy, hiding its treachery and sordid opportunism.

4. **THE PARTY PRESS**—The Daily Worker and the language press in particular are not reflecting sufficiently the life of the Party. Our Party press does not participate enough in the campaigns of the Party. They do not push the Party campaigns energetically. They are not sufficiently responsive organs of the Party. Not until the entire Party press is mobilized for the Party activities, will we be able to rally the Party and the masses for the struggle.

5. **FINANCES AND RECORDS**—For many months the Party has not waged any campaign for raising funds from the Party members. Our policy has been to raise funds as much as possible from the broad sympathetic working masses. But the Party members must learn to support more vigorously certain party institutions and activities. We have in mind especially the Daily Worker. Too many of our district organizers and active members look upon selling literature and building the Daily

Worker as little things. This is nonsense and very dangerous for the Party. It is just these so-called little things that will go a long way towards building a real big Bolshevik Party in the United States.

Our Party does not buy enough literature. Our members should read and study more. Our members must learn to pay for the literature they get. Otherwise we cannot print and distribute literature.

Dues must be paid more regularly. Today only about sixty five percent of our Party membership pays dues regularly. This is an impermissible condition. The unit organizers must learn to keep after every member to be in good standing. Unit records of finance and activities must be kept up regularly. The district organizers and various district department heads should follow the same advice.

#### **Clean Out the Party Swamp**

We need more members and we need better members. This is the best way to reduce the large turnover in Party membership. There is plenty of work to be done. The opportunities for building our Party organization and influence are many. The labor movement is in dire need of militant leadership. If our Party should fail, then there is no hope. But our Party will show its capacity for leadership in the present grave crisis confronting the American labor movement. Our membership will redouble their activities. Every Party member must become an active Party member. This is his communist duty.

The Central Executive Committee expects every Party member to do his or her duty.

**EVERY PARTY MEMBER ON THE JOB!**

**LET US CLEAN OUT THE PARTY SWAMP!**

**Jay Lovestone.**