

***The Question of a Labor Party in Norway***

By JOHN PEPPER.

The Communist Party of Norway is at present initiating a campaign which may attain great significance to the further development of the Norwegian labor movement. Our Party, only two years old, has become the driving force for the formation of a big Labor Party in Norway. Is this campaign in conformity with concrete conditions, does it contradict the traditions of the Norwegian labor movement, does it mean the liquidation of the Communist Party?

What are the conditions of the struggle for a Labor Party in Norway?

The chief form of organization of the political labor movement in Norway has been, from the beginning, the Labor Party. The Norwegian Workers' Party, which existed for several decades, was built up on the basis of the collective affiliation of the trade unions. The Social Democratic Party emerged from this Party as the result of a split. It was made up of elements which refused to accept the 21 points at the time of the affiliation of the Norwegian Workers' Party to the Communist International. As a result of a second split in this Party there emerged on the one hand a Communist Party, and on the other the Workers' Party at present under the leadership of Transmael, which even today conforms, not to the Social-Democratic, but to the Labor Party type (organization structure based upon collective membership of entire organizations rather than individual membership).

Hence the Labor Party organization form is the old tradition of the Norwegian labor movement, called forth by social composition of the proletariat similar to that which in Hungary resulted in the Social-Democratic Party, which is also organized in the Labor Party form. Neither the Norwegian Workers' Party nor the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party were produced by the social development which crystallized the labor party form of political organization in the countries of imperialism and the labor aristocracy (Great Britain, Australia, United States, etc.).

A powerful pressure for unity is at present making itself felt within the

Norwegian labor movement. This is shown equally by the pro-unity decisions of the trade union federation and the demagogic propaganda of the Tranmael Party for the "gathering" of the working class, for the calling of a "general workers' congress" of all workers' organizations and workers' parties. The workers' delegation to the U. S. S. R., which was made up of representatives of all three workers' parties, was also an expression of this unification trend. The slogan for the founding of a labor party was nothing other than an attempt to give organizational form to the pressure of the working masses for unity.

The analysis of the situation shows that the tactics of the Norwegian Communist Party in seizing the initiative for the formation of a Labor Party was absolutely correct. Of course there are dangers, and even very great dangers, connected with this correct united front tactic.

There are many elements of our Norwegian Party standing too far right, who do not fully comprehend the independent leading role of the Communist Party, so that the possibility might arise of our party's dissolution in the formless porridge of a Labor Party. For this reason it is a vital question that the Communist Party enter the Labor Party as an autonomous party in every respect, under the maintenance of its complete independence, its own organization, its discipline and its ideology.

On the other hand, however, there presents themselves also the dangers of ultra-left sectarianism, which opposes the Labor Party on principle and does not understand that thru the formation of such a Party we create a peerless tribune for Communist propaganda, and that we take into our own hands the mighty slogan of working class unity.

It would, therefore, be absolutely wrong to allow the ideological leadership in the campaign for a Labor Party, as a united front organization, to slip out of the hands of the Communist Party, but it would likewise be a mistake to found a Labor Party in miniature, as a mere cloak for the Communist Party.