
Survey of the Present

Political Situation in America:

Manifesto of the Communist Party of America.

[September 28, 1922]

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To the Workers of the United States:

1. Since the publication of the Labor Day Manifesto of the Communist Party of America there have been various changes in the industrial and political situation.

The strikes have practically come to an end: the coal strike is over in nearly all districts and the railroad strike is being settled.

A sweeping injunction was issued against the railroad workers by a Chicago court at the request of Attorney General Daugherty, startling the capitalist press and the majority of the railroad barons themselves because of its ridiculously drastic provisions.

The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor met and made far-reaching decisions. Primary elections have taken place in several states. These events and the development of the industrial and political situation generally have shown that our analysis of these events was correct. Two features stand out in this development: the workers of America stand before bitter struggles, since only a truce has been agreed upon between them and their exploiters; but, on the other hand, the workers are manifesting great determination to meet these struggles and fight them out to the end.

2. One of the significant events was the meeting of the Executive Council of the AFL. The Council meeting was called at a time of keen

struggle; the railroad workers were on strike and the Daugherty injunction was in force.

Large numbers of workers in all parts of the country had demanded that the AF of L call a General Strike in support of the striking shopmen. More than 200 central labor bodies had sent resolutions to this effect to the Executive Council, which denied its power even "to advise a General Strike."

Despite Gompers' flamboyant statements immediately after the issuance of the Daugherty injunction, in which he glibly spoke of a General Strike, at the Council meeting he declared himself against the General Strike. The Council even denounced a 24 hour strike as "un-American."

3. The Executive Council also took a decided stand against the formation of an independent labor party. Continuing its policy of "rewarding its friends and punishing its enemies," the Federation's Non-Partisan Political Campaign Committee is endorsing certain capitalist candidates, promised organized labor that labor's active part had "brought about the nomination of a considerable number of true and tried believers in democracy and government by the people and for the people."

These are the same promises that are made to the workers at each election, which have brought the workers to that pass in the United States that they now witness the government in all its branches acting *openly* in behalf of the capi-

talists against the workers.

4. The Executive Council also confirmed the expulsion of the Bookkeepers, Stenographers and Accountants' Union of New York, for alleged radical activities.

The Council denounced the "borers from within" and promised similar action wherever and whenever radical workers show themselves.

The head of another union, who hitherto has been regarded as progressive, William H. Johnston of the International Association of Machinists, has also declared war on the radicals in his union.

At a time when solidarity and unity of labor's ranks should be fostered, in order that the fight against the employers may be conducted with concentrated energy, the AF of L acts to split the ranks of the workers.

5. The Executive Council also decided that nationwide demonstrations should be held on October 1, in protest against the Daugherty injunction and in support of the then-striking shopmen.

The Council requested that resolutions be passed and sent to the Executive Offices of the AF of L and to members of Congress.

It is obvious that this is all that the Council intends doing in this crisis. How seriously even this decision is taken may be gleaned from the fact that the Central Trades and Labor Council of New York City, which was to hold the largest and most important demonstration on that day, has left the matter in the hands of its Executive Committee — which means its sabotage if not complete rejection.

Wherever such demonstrations are held, Communists must turn out en masse. They must induce all radical and progressive workers to be present, to offer and pass resolutions demanding militant action on the part of the organized workers in defense of their rights and interests.

6. The termination or partial termination of the railway shopmen's strike signifies a defeat of

the open shop movement on the part of the employers.

Using the reduction of wages as the excuse for a fight against the shopmen, their real intention was to break up the unions, since they know that the shopmen would not accept a cut in wages without a strike.

In coming to an agreement with the workers, they have been compelled to recognize the union, even though they refused to make a national agreement.

They were forced to make this agreement first because of the heroic fight that the shopmen waged — a fight against the worst odds that the workers of this country have faced, from the brutal attacks of the capitalists, their thugs, gunmen, and guards, to the courts and federal troops.

On the other hand, although the open shop movement did not win, the workers lost all their concrete demands. During the course of the strike, they made counter-demands, none of which, however, was granted in the settlement.

The grave matter of seniority, which acted as a stumbling-block in the negotiations between the workers and the capitalists, was left unsettled.

Several roads completely ignored this provision, it obviously being left to their discretion whether the strikers will be restored with full rights of seniority or be reinstated as new men.

This defeat of the workers, in the loss of their demands, was due to the treachery of the labor leaders, to the refusal of organized labor to stand by them with something more than words, but particularly to the Railroad Brotherhoods showing complete lack of solidarity.

This solidarity and unity of action must be prepared and built up if the workers are not to be defeated in all future battles.

7. National defense is the reason generally given to the gullible "public" for the maintenance of a standing army. Many months ago, General Pershing worked out a plan whereby an army of 3,000,000 would be available within a very short

period. Since the standing army was reduced to 115,000 by act of Congress, there has been considerable criticism.

The convention of the Military Order of the World War, which was attended by generals and high officers of the American army, was told the real reason for the existence of a standing army.

In addition to criticizing the manner in which army matters are conducted, so that, as Major General Reilly of New York stated, "if things continue to go on as they have been recently, we can expect to see Miss Jane Addams as President at the White House and William Z. Foster as Vice President, or Secretary of War," we are told that a minimum of 150,000 men and 13,000 officers is required to safeguard the country. Not to protect the country from external enemies, but from "disorders within."

"If there had been trouble during the recent coal and rail strikes, we should not have had sufficient men to guard the bridges and culverts," stated Major Gen. Harries, Commander-in-Chief of the Military Order of the World War. This frank declaration requires no comment.

8. The United Front idea as advocated by the three Internationals at the Berlin conference [April 2-5, 1922], which was speedily betrayed by the Second International with the Social Democrats of Germany at its head, was recently again betrayed by the Socialist Party of America.

In Rhode Island, the Workers Party, the Socialist Party, Socialist Labor Party, and some labor unions decided a few months ago to conduct a united campaign during the coming elections, in order that labor's vote might not be split up. A common program and action had been determined; candidates were nominated.

After this agreement had been reached, the National Executive Committee of the SP, true to form, withdrew the members of the SP who had been nominated on the joint ticket and refused to cooperate. In doing so, it denounced the Workers Party.

Thus, once more, the Socialists break the united front of the working class, in this way acting as the henchmen of capitalism. The workers and socialists of Rhode Island, and of the whole country, will doubtless learn the lessons of this new treachery of the SP.

9. The recent elections and primaries that have been held reveal positive tendencies that Communists must account with. The most striking feature is the vast and intense radicalization of the farmers, workers, and petty bourgeois elements in the country.

The usual opposition that confronts every administration this time was one with a definite radical tendency. A ferment is progressing in the Republican Party. Not only do we find large numbers of Republicans entering the Democratic ranks — as took place in the Maine elections in which the Democrats won 3,000 votes, while the Republicans lost more than 30,000; not only has a powerful left wing within the Republican Party been formed — witness the landslide in favor of LaFollette, who, although a Republican, fought the Administration on all its important measures; but we find also the formation of a Progressive Party with a radical program.

A Progressive Party has been formed before in America. It is a product of conditions in America that have not yet matured. The demand for a change has become insistent. The farmers, especially of the Non-Partisan League, have already demonstrated their will to change and are lending great impetus to the general demand for the protection of the rights of the workers of the country.

The workers, furthermore, also are voicing a demand for independent political action. The betrayal of the capitalist parties has become apparent. The futility of the Gompers policy of endorsing "good" men was emphasized during the recent labor struggles. The necessity of having labor represented in legislative and executive offices is gaining ground. Up to the present, many large

bodies of workers have endorsed independent political action, the more prominent being the “Big Four” railroad brotherhoods, the Rail Crafts of the AF of L, the United Mine Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the International Association of Machinists, the Women’s Trade Union League, the Chicago, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania State Federations of Labor. Recently the International Typographical Union endorsed such action, and will advocate the formation of an independent labor party at the next AF of L convention.

Even the fake “Labor Party” organized in New York City by the Socialist Party and the Farmer-Labor Party for the coming election campaign is a manifestation of the demand for independent labor action in the political field. It is obvious, however, that a *real* Labor Party would regard election campaigns as but one feature, a secondary feature, of its tasks.

10. With this labor momentum behind the idea of a Labor Party, the conference which is to be held in Chicago in December [Conference for Progressive Political Action] becomes one of the most important events in the life of labor in America. Should a genuine Labor Party be formed of these organized labor bodies, a new factor of great vigor and tremendous possibilities would enter the American political arena.

Communists must prepare to meet the eventualities of this conference — whether such a party be regarded as an advantage or a drawback to the Communist movement. Should a Labor Party result, it will represent an organization of more than 1,500,000 workers acting on class lines. The potentialities of this mass organization are gigantic.

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